

Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Max Trenorden; Acting Speaker; Ms Dianne Guise; Mr Larry Graham; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Margaret Quirk; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Paul Omodei

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 1) 2003
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 2) 2003

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.N. SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [7.03 pm]: I started my speech this morning and, hopefully, I will be able to conclude it on this occasion. I cannot be accused of not being persistent. I will continue from where I left off. I was commenting on a media statement which was issued by the Treasurer on the Gascoyne region and which highlighted appropriations to projects within that region. I was basically working through a critique of some of those appropriations and I will continue.

The State Government has also made a commitment to the successful New Living projects, again within the Gascoyne region, particularly in the southern suburbs of Brockman and Morgantown in my home town of Carnarvon, where a total of 49 houses will be refurbished in the next financial year. I certainly hope that is true. That is a very large number of houses to undergo a renewal program in one year. I cannot help thinking that the Government is indulging in a bit of catch-up on maintenance. It has been interesting to see in the past five to 10 years the devaluation of the Department of Housing and Works inventory. I am not sure that we as a Government came to grips with the accelerated depreciation of the department's housing inventory. Much of that relates to antisocial and lawless behaviour within various sections of the Carnarvon community. Other areas in my electorate have experienced similar problems. I have made many submissions to Homeswest officers at a local and regional level to try to get an adequate maintenance budget put in place to stop the deterioration of housing department stocks. I know the areas of Brockman and Morgantown exceptionally well. Some of the houses there are not old - I do not consider a 25 or 26-year-old house to be an old residence - yet some of these houses might have to be pulled down. It would be almost as expensive to renovate those houses under a renewal problem as it would be to replace them. That is simply because maintenance has not been done as required. Things have been broken. The houses have been let go and have started to weather. Windows, roof sheets and wall panels have been broken. Moisture, water, vermin and all sorts of things have attacked the residences as a consequence of neglect by not only the tenants but also Homeswest, which simply did not have an adequate budget. Much of the Homeswest budget has been reassigned during the little over six years I have been a member. It was flat out trying to keep up with property damage and on many occasions simply did not have enough funds left for the required maintenance. Many people have contacted my office to request a simple repaint. Many tenants had not had their residences repainted in the entire 12, 15 or 16 years of their tenancies. Things were clearly getting out of control. The preceding paragraph of the Treasurer's press statement suggests that the refurbishment is part of the New Living program. However, I cannot help thinking that the refurbishment of the 49 houses relates to a catch-up in maintenance. Perhaps some of them are part of the renewal program.

The section of the statement that relates to Coral Bay states -

The Water Corporation has allocated \$7.5million to major capital works in the Gascoyne, including \$3.5million to address a potential pollution threat to the Ningaloo Marine Park at Coral Bay.

I remember the media reports of 12 months ago when the Premier, standing among scantily clad young ladies, announced that the State would provide \$7.5 million for a sewerage scheme at Coral Bay. I wonder whether in highlighting the expenditure of \$3.5 million to address a potential pollution threat the Government is breaking up that allocation of \$7.5 million, or whether this is simply the first step towards an effluent disposal system for Coral Bay. The release continues -

“A new sewerage treatment plant will be constructed, to provide a wastewater system for the town,” Mr Ripper said.

I wonder whether the Government is giving itself an escape route by which it can reduce the allocation of funds for an effluent disposal system for Coral Bay.

The release also refers to substantial infrastructure projects, and says that \$8.3 million will be allocated to complete the \$16.3 million Exmouth marina village and \$3.1 million will be spent on an infill sewerage system for South Carnarvon. The marina project is going like gang busters and is likely to be completed later this year. Everyone in the region hopes that this will be it. This is the second stage of that marina project; the part of the project that delivers a lot of residential land as well as a couple of resort sites. We hope that, having come this far and having spent so many public funds over the past three or four years, we can attract some developers into Exmouth to get the ball rolling for once and for all. We are hoping for the construction of four and five-star

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resorts that will attract more domestic visitors and particularly international visitors. Many other things will flow as a consequence of increased visitor numbers. Hopefully it will also lead to an improved air service for the Gascoyne region.

According to information I have from the minister's office and from the regional office of the Water Corporation, the \$3.1 million infill sewerage project for South Carnarvon will now go ahead. We have waited for this for many years. It has been on and off, funded and then not funded, and reprioritised. Finally it looks like it will get a guernsey, in line with commitments made by the minister's office and the Water Corporation to the community over the past couple of years. It will be great to see it go ahead. The previous Government spent a great deal of money on the infill sewerage program around the State. It is a great scheme for the environment, and also fosters further development, but there are no votes in it. The residents of Shark Bay went on strike when they got their first rate notices, after the Government had spent a little over \$5.5 million putting sewerage in. Going up there for public meetings was a pleasant experience. The shire president, Les Moss, is a very interesting and colourful character, and he is not backwards in coming forward when he gets an audience with any politician. We copped a bit of a sting for doing something we thought was a very good project for Denham, which was a priority for the infill program, because leachates were going out to sea and contaminating the marine environment in the world heritage area. Overcoming that took a bit of creativity by the Minister for Water Resources, Hon Kim Hames. He capped sewerage rates for standard residences at \$550. That was well received.

The Water Corporation has learnt a lot since those days. Now, before it commits to putting sewerage into a community, public meetings and consultations are held. The corporation also does quite exhaustive hypothecations on what the final rate to the residents might end up being, so that when people get their rate notices they are not surprised. In the case of Denham, I understand the residents were led to believe the rates would be somewhere between \$450 and \$550 in the first instance, but most residents ended up getting rate notices of between \$850 and \$900. There were a lot of unhappy people, as was the case in Onslow. Onslow experienced some difficulties over the years, but its residents are a far more mature group of people. They did not take it on the chin, but they did not go out on strike. They paid their rates, made their submissions and lobbied hard. They were as much a reason for the minister capping the residential sewerage rate as the people of Denham were. The sewerage treatment program for Onslow also cost about \$5 million. I know the Government underwrites those borrowings. They are good projects to do, but there are downsides. The Government will find that out as it starts digging up people's backyards in the south of Carnarvon. There will be very few bouquets, but I congratulate the Government on commencing this project. It has been long awaited, and should have been done 25 to 27 years ago, when the shire ran the sewerage scheme. A loan poll was taken at that time, and the \$100 000 already spent on the ground is still there as a monument to that past failure. Sewerage has been promised to that area for a long time, so it will be very good to see it put in at last.

An amount of \$1.2 million will also be provided across the region to put in new broadband computer technology. I am certainly very pleased to see that happening. It further develops the policy of the previous Government in putting computers into schools. This Government has the good sense to continue that program, and to upgrade the technology where it can. As well, \$390 000 will be spent upgrading Exmouth Campus of the Central West College of TAFE; another good move. The college program has been tailored to suit far more people. Last Thursday night in Carnarvon I went to the Carnarvon TAFE graduation dinner dance. It was a great evening, and many students were there to receive their certificates. It has been a very good program, and its diversity has been very helpful to the local fishing industry - with people doing navigational and similar courses - and the horticulture and aquaculture industries. TAFE has come a long way over time. The jury is still out on the amalgamation of the Departments of Education and Training, but already the vibes coming out, particularly from TAFE, are very positive.

The Piyarli Yardi Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre in Carnarvon was initially agreed to by Hon Hendy Cowan, the Deputy Premier in the last Government, and the first tranche of funding for that centre, about \$1.2 million, was allocated by that Government. That money has been held by the Gascoyne Development Commission basically in trust, waiting for this project to proceed. The Government has made many commitments in the two years that it has been in government but it is yet to follow through. I hope the allocation in this budget of \$4.5 million will enable the project to go ahead as a single project. Two or three weeks ago I spoke to a couple of the representative Aboriginal groups that are on the steering committee of this project, and they are becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of commitment by the Government. The Government has said a lot of things, and the groups have been anticipating a start date for at least the past six or seven months, so I hope this \$4.5 million indicates that this project is about to go to tender.

The press release states also -

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More than \$550,000 will also be allocated for the completion of the \$1million Carnarvon Storm Surge Barrier and work will commence on the construction stage of the \$2.75million, 100m long, land-backed wharf at Carnarvon Boat Harbour.

The storm surge barrier is another interesting project. When the Government came into office there was a significant deduction from that project, as there was from the Piyarli Yardi Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre project, via the priority assurance dividend, and that certainly set back both those projects for a while because it threw extra burdens and responsibilities on the proponents. The shire is the proponent of the storm surge barrier. The shire has been very anxious about getting that project off the ground. I hope this allocation of \$550 000 means that this project will also shortly go to tender. All in all, the Government is making some reasonable contributions to the Gascoyne electorate. Some of them have been foreshadowed for a long time, and we got our hopes up previously that some of these projects would go ahead in the subsequent financial year. It is hoped that all of the money that is outlined in the Treasurer's press release is allocated and these projects go ahead shortly.

In my remaining time I will elaborate further on some of the items that I referred to at the start of my speech. I referred in particular to the issue of wealth creation. This Government seems to be quick to tax but at the same time does not seem as enthusiastic, and perhaps does not even understand, what it takes to create wealth. Certainly the easiest way to raise revenue is to increase taxes and charges on the general community. It takes a lot more creativity and discipline to raise revenue by other means. I made the point that we need to look to wealth producers. The wealth producers are the mining companies, the manufacturers and the primary producers, and the people who take a product and value add, or in the first instance dig up a product as a raw commodity and then on-sell it. I am becoming increasingly concerned that our wealth producers are having too many hurdles put in front of them. Since time immemorial people have been saying there is too much red tape. It will forever be so. However, the Government can take a greater responsibility in clearing a lot of the hurdles so that we have more projects that are investor ready. It is interesting that I had faxed to me this afternoon an item that appeared on a web site. This is a follow on from an item that I saw on the business part of the ABC News last night. It was an interview with a Mr Weightman from GTL Resources (Australia) Pty Ltd, which is seeking to develop a methanol plant on the Burrup. The news program interviewed two or three different development proponents for the Burrup, and the common theme in what they said was that the cost of labour in this country was almost prohibitive. It is certainly the case in the Burrup and places adjacent to Karratha that the cost of labour is very high. I accept that. There are certainly lower wages regimes in other countries that provide a clear attraction and incentive for companies to develop there.

This article certainly highlights that GTL Resources (Australia) has a whole lot more to complain about than just the cost of labour in this country, such as the approvals process. The article states that interface manager Gordon Weightman was scathing of the conduct of the Department of Land Administration and LandCorp in delineating the easements for gas pipelines to and from his project. The company has already organised something like \$US290 million in funding, but it is unable to sign off on that funding until all the approvals are in place.

There are similarities between the experiences of this project and those of the Sally Malay Mining Ltd project. The Leader of the Opposition and I met with the proponents of that project about two weeks ago. It is a modest project as far as mining projects go. The mine is likely to yield a total of \$600 million worth of resources. It is not a significant resources development, but it is important nonetheless. The company will employ about 100 people during the life of the project. That is positive employment, which will create wealth through wages, royalties and everything else that will be paid out of the nickel produced by that operation. One of the points the proponents made, and it is similar to the point made by other resource proponents, is that, more than ever, they require a far more rapid approvals process, simply because of the rising value of the Australian dollar. At the time we spoke with the Sally Malay proponents, the Aussie dollar was valued at about US61c or US61.5c. They said that the \$50 million of finance they had ready to go was subject to change until they signed off on all the documentation, and that for every cent the Aussie dollar rose, it would leave them \$800 000 short. Today, the Aussie dollar is valued at about US65c. That means that they are more than \$2.5 million down on their project development costs. I certainly hope that does not cause them any increased hardship. They were certainly anxious to get everything ticked off and all the approvals in place so that they could draw upon their finance and not be hit by changes in the Aussie dollar.

In the short time I have left I will speak further about some of the issues the Government must look at in relation to wealth creation. I spend time reading *The Australian Financial Review* and the business section of *The West Australian*. Having a business background, I have a natural affinity with and affection for private enterprise and wealth producers. Politicians are often a bit timid to admit that. I know it got the Burke Administration of the 1980s into a whole lot of trouble. Some terrible mistakes were made. That Administration was naive, made

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some bad judgments, had some bad luck, and involved some incompetence and, on the odd occasion, a bit of corruption as well.

Mr L. Graham: No, there wasn't. In fact, the royal commission found that there was no corruption.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: Was that covering everyone?

Mr L. Graham: Yes.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: I am pleased to hear that, because I was reluctant to mention corruption. Now that we can look back over that decade, we can say that everybody overreacted to the excesses of the 1980s. We need to put those issues in perspective so that we can move on and live again, and politicians do not have to be scared or timid about talking to the heads of industry for fear of being seen as having some vested interest or garnering funds for a political campaign or whatever. They must be able to talk to the wealth producers of this State, because they are our future; they are the engine room of this State. If we are to give the residents of Western Australia some relief from taxes and charges in the future, it will be through facilitating and fostering wealth creation. I am talking not so much about partnerships between government and business, as the ability of politicians to talk to these people so that they can work out what can be done to ease the burden on business and to speed up the approvals process. That will enable businesses to create wealth, which will in turn create income and wealth for all Western Australians.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [7.24 pm]: I am pleased to be given an opportunity to respond to the budget that has been handed down by the Treasurer and to make a number of comments about the wonderful community I represent in the seat of Mandurah and the surrounding areas, which include Dawesville and the wider Peel region. I will make a number of comments about the budget and also highlight to the House a number of issues that I believe are very important to the citizens of the rapidly growing community of Mandurah.

First of all, I will highlight a couple of the key points in the budget and some of the benefits that will be derived from the budget in Mandurah and the wider Peel region. I turn first to the health care system, which is a very important priority that this Government, when it came to office, announced it would focus on, along with education, law and order, community infrastructure and the environment. I begin my comments on the health care system by saying that in July we will see the benefits of a 9.7 per cent or \$232 million increase in the state health budget. The number of renal dialysis rooms at the Peel Health Campus will be doubled - a 100 per cent expansion of the existing facility. That means that from July more of the people who live in the Mandurah electorate and who unfortunately suffer kidney diseases and require dialysis treatment will be able to be treated locally.

There is an ongoing building program at the Peel Health Campus. More than \$2.2 million will be expended on a capital works expansion of the oncology and day surgery services at the campus. That is very important for the growing population and underpins the Government's commitment to constantly improve health services at the Peel Health Campus and in the wider Peel region. I spoke to the Minister for Health and the Chief Executive Officer of the Peel Health Campus about this matter this morning. Over and above the adjustments to the expenditure, there is an increase of five per cent for core operational funding for the campus. That is very much welcomed by the Mandurah and Peel communities, because it means that once again the Government is acknowledging the growth that has occurred in this rapidly expanding area of Western Australia. It also means that more of the important services will be delivered to local Mandurah people at the Peel Health Campus.

Apart from that, we have already seen the Government's capital expenditure commitment. Some parking areas were badly needed at the campus. Unfortunately, when the campus was built, the parking area was already too small because of the growth in the area. However, there has been an expansion of the car park areas. A bus service for the health campus is now up and running, thanks to the work of the Gallop Labor Government.

The minister announced yesterday that recruitment to the region of obstetricians, gynaecologists and anaesthetists would be much easier because he had declared Peel an area of unmet need for five years. That is absolutely crucial for the people of Mandurah. Along with other members in the area, I had been pushing for that announcement, which acknowledges that there are real needs in the Peel region because of a lack of access to specialist doctors etc. Following that announcement by the Minister for Health, recruitment of those specialists will be much easier. With an average of 700 births, 157 caesarean sections and more than 245 neonates requiring special care each year, there is a crucial need for those obstetric, gynaecological and anaesthetist services. I welcome the Minister for Health's announcement, and I am pleased that he and the Government acknowledge the importance of providing these health services to the people of Mandurah.

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Apart from those very welcome initiatives, \$250 000 has been allocated for mosquito control. The planning for the new \$3 million community health building has been included in the budget. That will allow the construction of a new community health building in Mandurah and will ensure that allied health services are collocated on the health campus. That will be crucial to the growing community that I proudly represent. We are very pleased that the Government has made those commitments to the health sector. We must ensure that mental health is seen as a priority, and I am sure this concern is shared by many people in communities throughout the State. An excellent mental health team operates in Mandurah, but we need more resources, and I urge the Minister for Health to ensure that those resources are provided. As I have said, millions of dollars have been committed to the health budget by this Government now and into the future, and I commend the health minister and the Government for making that contribution.

All great nations are judged by the way they acknowledge the importance of education to their communities. I applaud the Gallop Labor Government for its ongoing commitment to education as a priority. The numerous schools that I represent in the seat of Mandurah are now seeing the benefits in their numeracy and literacy programs derived from earlier budgets and the current budget. Dudley Park Primary School has a wonderful and committed staff who work very hard for a wonderful group of children. They operate some very innovative preventive and intervention programs. Part of the funds which were made available for numeracy and literacy programs last year and this year and which will be made available in future budgets will ensure that those programs continue. The same can be said of the life-skill programs that operate at the Greenfields Primary School. It has some community-based learning initiatives. They are very important for the kids in that area and are well supported by the parents. That school also has a tremendous staff. Riverside Primary School operates some tremendous environmental learning programs. It, too, has a fantastic teaching staff, who are being supported by this Government through its commitment to education. Mandurah Primary School, the oldest primary school in the seat of Mandurah as well as in the city of Mandurah, has a tremendous teaching staff as well. They are doing some innovative things. It has an interesting catchment of students, but a reduced number of students than in the past, but it is a nice tight little school that is working hard to improve learning outcomes for its students. The wonderful staff at the school I used to teach at, North Mandurah Primary School, which is a great school, have been working very hard, along with parent support, to deliver some quality education outcomes for those students.

I turn now to the secondary school campuses in my electorate. Mandurah High School and the Coodanup Community College received funding for behaviour programs, which was made available by the minister when the Labor Party first came to government. That funding has been ongoing over the past two years and will continue for the next two years. Again, innovative programs have been put in place so that the staff and the school community can work together and the learning issues and concerns that arise in those schools can be tailored to the needs of the students. Some excellent intervention programs and preventive measures and some exciting cultural, arts and sporting programs have been put in place. The staff, the school community and the students of Mandurah High School and Coodanup Community College deserve recognition for the wonderful progress they are making.

Finally, I turn to Mandurah Senior College, which is now in its third year of operation. It is collocated with the TAFE campus and Murdoch University and operates a range of quality programs and initiatives. That school is building some very strong partnerships with businesses and wider community organisations. The outcomes of that collocation model, with all the years 11 and 12 students collocated on that campus, are absolutely wonderful. We can see now and into the future the fruits of those sorts of programs.

There are a couple of points that I really want put on the record with regard to education and the amount of spending this Government has committed and will commit into the future. Of course, through this year's budget, we know of the four per cent increase again in education spending and the \$98.1 million in the 2003-04 budget. For the Peel district that means \$1.6 million worth of funding is being made available for connecting all the remaining schools in the Peel education district with high band telecommunication services. An allocation of \$1.3 million has been made for special programs that will cover areas of behaviour management, discipline, retention and participation rates. It will also go towards linking families with school programs that deal with things such as speech and language - all very important programs. I know that the member for Albany is very supportive of them and when he visits Mandurah, I will show him around the quality education places in the area. Funding of \$200 000 has been targeted towards increasing retention rates and the training and employment of 15 to 19-year-olds in the region. Stage 2 of the senior college will receive \$2.5 million of funding that will see it completed for the opening of the 2004 school year. This is a tremendous investment by the Gallop Labor Government in education in Mandurah and the Peel region. On top of this, \$350 000 has been provided to continue the local learning and employment partnership pilot program - plenty of Ps there. That will make a big

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difference because it is aimed at providing local ownership of policy planning - there are some more Ps there - and delivery of services to assist young people in the transition from school into business or employment and training opportunities. This is absolutely crucial if we want to make sure that young people can be well skilled in terms of education and training to contribute to and take their rightful place in the community as fantastic young working adults.

I am very concerned about the announcement in the federal budget about the higher education contribution scheme. It is of crucial and grave concern - Mr Acting Speaker, you can probably see the furrows on my brow from the concern. Unfortunately, the Mandurah and the Peel region in the past has had low retention rates. In terms of participation and access to tertiary education and tertiary places in universities, the rate has been below other parts of the State and indeed other parts of Australia. The announcement by the federal Government about the HECS fees and the potential increase of up to 30 per cent will have a detrimental effect on the region's young people, many of whom come from low income earning families. I stress to the House - I have done this in the past and will continue to do it - that 60 per cent of the households in the Mandurah and Peel region are existing on below average incomes. With regard to the increasing HECS fees, we must make sure that places in university are made available for these people. I will certainly be writing to the federal minister to highlight the effect that this decision might have on the families in Mandurah. They have as much right as anybody else living in other parts of Australia to access tertiary education. Their chances should not be subjected to the further pressures that were announced in the federal budget last night.

I will now move on to the topic of community development infrastructure and a very important project; that is, the Mandurah Ocean Marina. This is a critical infrastructure project that will bring much employment and opportunity to the region that still has a high unemployment rate. This budget has announced that \$19.6 million will be spent on developing stage 2 of the Mandurah Ocean Marina project at a total cost of \$48.9 million. Again, the Gallop Labor Government is investing in the regions and making sure that it is recognised that by doing so, it is creating a range of opportunities for the people who are now being attracted there to live. That project will be crucial in generating employment.

The Peel region scheme, which this Government put before the House, was looking very shaky because, although the former Government initiated the scheme, opposition members in the upper House were playing games with it earlier this year. However, luckily it was passed by the upper House. We have allocated \$22 million over four years to implement that scheme, which includes \$3 million for the ongoing planing and land acquisition for the Peel deviation project.

I will refer to some other infrastructure projects. The rail link to Mandurah is crucial. I call it the Mandurah rail link because the people in Mandurah have been waiting a long time for it. I get very concerned when I hear members opposite waver in their commitment to it. Before the member for Ningaloo spoke on the appropriation Bills, he said the project should not be supported. That is a very interesting concept to me, because the rail project is important to not only the people of Mandurah but also the growth of the southern corridor and the Peel region. The Mandurah rail link, which will travel directly down the freeway, will deliver benefits for tourism and education and will create employment opportunities as well as other positive things for not only the people of Mandurah and those living along the line but also other communities in the Peel region.

I am pleased that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has come into the Chamber. She visited Mandurah recently and attended a very important Chamber of Commerce and Industry business lunch. Everyone at the meeting was riveted by the minister's comments. I was very pleased that the minister was able to address the luncheon. Unlike Liberal members opposite, the business community recognises the importance of the railway. It also recognises the importance of having a direct route to Mandurah.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: They said not to do it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If the member for Ningaloo spoke with those business representatives, he would be very surprised to hear - or perhaps he might not be surprised - people in the CCI tell him how daft the previous Government's decision was to take the railway to Kenwick. They applaud the decision made by the Gallop Government to make sure the railway travels straight down the middle of the freeway to Perth and to connect it with the northern suburbs rather than divert it like some of the deviates on the other side want to do.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Today during question time another alarming development occurred. The member for Ningaloo, who is the erstwhile opposition spokesperson on transport, indicated that had the former Government been re-elected, commonsense would have prevailed - that is his assessment of it - and it would not have built this railway line. That is a very interesting statement, because it was not made in isolation. The member for Warren-Blackwood and members of the National Party have made similar statements. That goes to show that the people in Mandurah must understand that if the mob opposite ever get back in, they will block the railway.

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is what they are indicating now. The minister is right; a number of opposition members in the upper House have made similar comments. I agree with the minister; there is grave concern in the city of Mandurah that if the mob opposite ever gets back into power, they will try to stop the railway to Mandurah from being built.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Their promises were mere weasel words.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Indeed. I congratulate the minister for demonstrating a commitment to Mandurah and for her deep interest in what is happening there.

The new bus station will open in July. That is a \$6.5 million project, which the Government has budgeted for and is now constructing. The minister will open it in July. I look forward to that day because she will be welcomed once again. We will see an integrated bus system put in place when the rail link arrives. The integrated public transport system will be in place. The city of Mandurah, with its 50 000 plus population, will now finally get a sensible, properly developed, integrated public transport system that it deserves - just like other communities.

I will not take too much longer. I am sure Mr Deputy Speaker hears that from many other members. I have a few more points to raise. The Peel waterways are crucial to the city of Mandurah and the Peel region. They are also critical to the environment of Western Australia. The waterways comprise the Serpentine and Murray Rivers, the Harvey estuary, the Harvey River and the Indian Ocean. The waterways are the jewel in the crown of the Peel region and the communities in the region. We must protect them; we must ensure that we put in place all the recommendations in the report released late last year. I am pleased to highlight to the House that the minister has seen the importance of those recommendations and will put in place an implementation group. I will chair the group and am very happy to do so. The group will ensure that the recommendations of the Peel waterways economic and recreational development plan will be implemented.

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: When are you going to start doing something?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: For eight years the member did nothing. The member represented the major part of it but did not get the Peel region scheme through. His side fiddled around with the Peel region scheme in the other House. The Peel region was put under threat. Nothing was done in eight years. The report has come out and I will chair the implementation group. I will ensure we work with all the government departments and agencies that have input into the recommendations. We will ensure the recommendations go forward. The member can bellyache as much as he likes. I will tell the member what we will do about the environment with this budget.

The Government has announced \$190 000 to go towards developing a water quality improvement plan for the Peel-Harvey estuary. It will see six co-founded projects linked to the water quality improvement plan being addressed. Some rivers are under great duress because of the environment, growing populations and some of the activities taking place around the catchment. We saw this earlier this year with a large fish kill in the Serpentine River. The Government will put in place the \$190 000 improvement plan. It will look at issues such as agricultural best management practice, load base licensing, stock exclusion and water sensitive design. An amount of \$230 000 will go to capital works for the Lane Poole Reserve in Dwellingup. Dwellingup is a beautiful part of the Peel region; it is a very important place that many Western Australians visit throughout the year. A further \$30 000 will be used to upgrade roads in the conservation park at Bob's Crossing. An additional \$30 000 is allocated for the Len Howard conservation park. It is named after the wonderful Len Howard, who was an excellent citizen of Mandurah and a wonderful conservationist. An amount of \$260 000 will go towards managing land in a sustainable way. That reflects the Government's ethos of sustainable development. It is another important announcement.

Regarding community development, I am pleased that \$160 000 will go towards assisting people with private rentals in Mandurah. Mandurah is becoming an attractive place for people from all sorts of economic backgrounds to live. Like many other communities that are very popular, Mandurah has a waiting list for its public housing. That means pressure is put on the rental market. Many people seeking to enter the rental market have difficulties accessing information and private rentals. I am pleased there has been an announcement that the Government will contribute funds to that. Young people also make up a large section of our community, and \$110 000 will assist the transition to independent living for young people who are leaving care. Those who have been in crisis and who need to move into medium and long-term accommodation will be able to access programs to assist them.

A total of \$400 000 has been provided to regional development initiatives. In the past two years there has been an oversubscription of submissions to the regional development scheme - 169 at the last round - which demonstrates the need in Mandurah and the wider Peel region. The fact is that a number of community groups

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are doing brilliant things with very little resources, and they are doing so willingly because they know it benefits the wider community. The regional development scheme money is being made available for very worthwhile causes. Earlier this year the member for Roleystone, who also represents part of the Peel region, and I presented cheques to a number of community groups throughout the region - Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Boddington, Murray, Waroona and Mandurah.

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: Is the Peel Development Commission being political? How come I did not get invited?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course not. What an outrageous thing to say. The member should go and talk to members of the commission.

These groups covered a whole range of issues and I will tell members about some of them. They included conservation projects; group projects working on improving the ecosystems along our riverbanks; and projects looking at indigenous issues and assisting indigenous people, who are a very important part of our community.

I will conclude by making a few points about my community. On a number of occasions I have said that I am proud to be in this place representing my community. This is a growing and changing community. Many people in this State and in this House do not yet understand the growth that has occurred in the city of Mandurah and in the Peel region in general. It has grown tremendously over the past 30 years, but particularly in the past 10. The population in the city of Mandurah is more than 50 000; it is expected to be 60 000 in a few short years. Those sorts of statistics raise a whole range of issues and challenges. This Government now recognises that, but I want other members to understand the pressures that that growth brings with it. We must make sure that this and future budgets reflect the growth and the needs of the area.

I now wish to acknowledge a couple of people as an example of my community's wonderful contribution to the State of Western Australia. I refer to young people such as Jeremy Snyder. I went to his play during the Stretch Festival in the city of Mandurah. Pinjarra has the horse festival and there are other festivals that are held in the Peel region throughout the year. These festivals are very important to our community, not only economically but also socially in celebrating what we are as a community. Young Jeremy Snyder is 17 and goes to the Mandurah Senior College. He wrote a play that was showcased in the Stretch Festival over the weekend. It had a tremendous cast. This young man is creative and innovative.

Mr P.B. Watson: Just like yourself.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Indeed; I will take that compliment. He dedicated this play to a young fellow who unfortunately committed suicide late last year. He wrote this play to try to reflect that young people want to be part of their community, and how they see and reflect on their communities. It got a tremendous reception. I am working with his teacher and his cast to try to get the play into the wider community so that people can share this excellent play.

Gabrielle Workman is a young sportswoman. She is a triathlete champion and I believe she will be in the Olympics in the future. She is a vibrant young woman, passionate about her sport, and a great ambassador for Mandurah, the Peel region and Western Australia. Gabrielle recently won a state youth award for endeavour and achievement. She epitomises the young people in our community who aspire to take their place as vibrant and great contributors to their state and country.

More than 25 per cent of the population in my electorate of Mandurah are over the age of 50, and that number is expected to increase. On one end of the scale the number of young people is increasing and, as many people in the House know, at the other end of the scale a significant number of the community are seniors. Seniors are among the most magnificent groups of people with whom I mix. I am patron of a range of groups, many of them seniors groups. One group is Peel Seniors Net, a group that operates computers at the senior citizens centre. Another group meets at the Royal Australian Airforce Association village in Meadow Springs. They ensure that our seniors share and enjoy innovations in technology as part of the new knowledge nation. I challenge members to dispute my belief that Mandurah has the most switched on seniors they could find. They are snapping up connections to the Internet in a way that members would not believe. In the future, they will lead the State as seniors who connect to the Internet.

I can talk at length about the sporting community in my electorate from which are emerging some fantastic sportsmen and women.

Mr P.B. Watson: Are you going to go on about your boxing career?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will not go on about my boxing career; I have done that in this place before. Mandurah is producing some fantastic netballers, barefoot skiers, volleyball players, hockey players and footballers. It is the veritable breeding ground of innovation and creativity.

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I refer, finally, to the arts community, a section of the community that is dear to me. Any country that values its arts is a rich and vibrant country. We must ensure that we not only embrace education, innovation and creativity but also ensure that the people involved in their field in the arts are nurtured and encouraged, because they make up an important plank in the community.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Is karaoke one of those planks?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I can talk about my karaoke exploits. Before I came to this place I was a singer of note. Every now and then, when I get the chance, I duck out and do a bit of karaoke. I will not go into that now. However, if the Treasurer is looking for innovative ways to give grants to karaoke, he should see me for advice. I would be pleased to talk to him.

Policing is a huge issue. I was pleased to hear the announcement about the funding allocations for policing in Western Australia. The 5.6 per cent increase in the police budget and the fantastic Labor government DNA initiatives will encourage better policing, with the emphasis on community safety. I have written my letter to the police minister saying that we want more police in Mandurah. It is a growing community. During holiday periods the population swells by more than half the usual population again. More and more resources are needed at those times.

I commend the budget and the Treasurer. He has done a fantastic job. We want to see more of this delivered to the people of Mandurah. We are waiting for the Perth-to-Mandurah rail to be built down the freeway. I say, hear, hear to the Treasurer and the Gallop Government budget for 2003-04!

MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [7.58 pm]: This state budget is a tale of two black holes: the health system -

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): I call to order the member for Albany for the first time.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is to fund a health system that is off the rails, a rail system that is off the tracks, a Minister for Health who cannot account for the money in hospitals and a minister who is free spending on a city railway that threatens the foundation of the State's finances. This Government was elected on a promise that it would not increase taxes and charges. One thing this Government has been consistent about is breaking election promises. Each of the three budgets delivered by this Labor Government contained increases in taxes and charges. The Government said that it would never increase taxes and charges, but in each of the three budgets it has done so, collectively boosting the State's coffers by \$687 million. Labor has again attacked the hip pocket of average Western Australians with \$182 million-worth of extra taxes and charges. The Treasurer was heard on the radio abusing the federal Government for its budget although it will give Western Australians \$6 to \$7 a week to pay for his taxes. What hypocrisy he shows with that stance.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Do you know by how much income tax per person is up?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Does the Treasurer know how much he is taxing people each week?

Mr E.S. Ripper: Income tax per capita is up \$264 under the federal budget.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Does the Treasurer think that people should not get \$500 or \$200 back so that they can pay the Treasurer's taxes?

Mr E.S. Ripper: They have got something back, but they are still paying \$264 more.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: They are no better off because the Treasurer has whipped the money out of their pockets. The federal Government has given it with one hand and the Treasurer has whipped it away with the other.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Somebody said this morning that they could spend it on -

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I will get to the Minister for Health in a minute.

Mr E.S. Ripper: The federal Government is whipping it away with \$264 extra in income tax per year.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It has also given some back.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Even after the tax cuts, it is still an extra \$264 tax.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: What has the Treasurer given back?

Mr E.S. Ripper: We have given \$232 million to the health system.

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Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: This is simply a high taxing Government, and that is all there is to it. Since being elected, the Labor Government has increased water, sewerage and drainage charges, motor vehicle registration and probate fees, payroll tax, court fees, land tax, public transport fares, drivers licence fees, third party motor vehicle insurance costs and stamp duty on homes, cars and insurance. That is not a bad little list for three budgets.

The Labor Government was unsuccessful in trying to implement its premium property tax, so it has targeted stamp duty instead. In the past two years it has hit homebuyers with stamp duty increases of almost 50 per cent. The Labor Government had its premium property tax taken out of circulation, so it could not implement it. It then introduced a tax on everybody. When the new rates come into effect on 1 July, stamp duty on a median-priced house will have risen from \$4 787 to \$7 015 in a 13-month period. That is not a bad tax hike. Cape Canaveral could hardly do better with a lift-off. As *The West Australian* pointed out, the Gallop Government is vying with Victoria for the title of Australia's property tax capital. It is such a dubious honour, albeit not surprising given the Premier's and the Treasurer's attempts to implement the premium property tax. It is no wonder that people have reacted so badly to this budget.

I remind all members of the water crisis that we endured last summer. That has already been forgotten by members on my left. In response to pressure from the National Party, the Government held a water forum. That water forum was a farce. The Government's other response to the water crisis was merely to increase water charges. There was no other response at all. The Premier and Treasurer took the opportunity yet again to tax families through increased charges. This budget makes blatantly clear why they were so keen to increase water charges for all Western Australians. It was so that they could take an extra \$21 million dividend from the Water Corporation to put into state coffers. That is another direct tax. We all know where the money has gone. It has gone on the Perth to Mandurah railway project and the health system.

The Treasurer had the audacity to say in his budget speech that Labor has avoided increasing payroll tax. It is because legislative changes have gone through this House. However, under this new arrangement, payroll tax will disadvantage 49 per cent of the businesses of this State. As the legislation was passed, there was no need to put tax increases in the budget; it has already been done separately. The Treasurer did not need to put up taxes, as he did in his modified tax system. Forty-seven per cent of businesses will pay higher payroll tax. The Treasurer said so himself.

In September last year, the National Party launched the Alannah-meter. We are pleased with the Alannah-meter, which is found on most fridges in rural Western Australian. However, country people have been shocked to the core. Communities experienced 80-hour electricity blackouts, and people are angry. Communities say roads are becoming dangerous, and people are fearful. Communities' health services have been withdrawn, and people are worried. Communities' police protection is often hours away, and people are frightened. Communities waiting for urgent help under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality are in total despair.

Mr M.P. Whitely: It sounds terrible out there! It's scary.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is. This is the worst Government in the past 25 years. Health and the Perth-Mandurah railway line are the major black holes into which resources are vanishing. It is disgraceful and tragic to see ministers standing at the head of a bucket line throwing dollars into a towering inferno. Money is vanishing with no outcomes for Western Australians. The Alannah-meter shows the mercury rising with the cost of the southern rail rising from \$1.1 billion in October 2000 to \$1.6 billion in September last year. The cost is going ever higher and threatens to break the bank. The funding requirements for the railway are pure guesswork. No facts and figures are involved in the process, and the railway line costings are made on the back of an envelope.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Can the member show me in the budget papers the costings for the Perth-Mandurah railway line? They are not there. We were told that the estimates for the tunnel from the Narrows Bridge to Perth central had skyrocketed from \$195.5 million last August in the master plan to \$214 million currently. This is a jump of \$18.5 million for one section of the railway project alone. We find \$40 million for the acquisition of CBD buildings hidden away in the Planning Commission budget. It is not even part of the railway line expenditure. This is happening without one sod of earth yet being turned.

Let us move onto health, which is a good issue to discuss. Minister Kucera is about to throw \$3 billion, including federal funds, at health but he cannot tell us exactly how money was spent in the past. Health is a disaster. It is chewing up a quarter of the State's revenue with no accountability. Labor was elected on a

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promise to fix the health system. It said it had a plan. Do members remember that? Unquestionably, that claim hurt the coalition.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Do you think we have the budget right for health? Would you put less money in health?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The Treasurer should listen; he will get my view on health shortly.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You sound like you are arguing for less money in health.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Yes, I am.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas): Order! I remind members that cross-Chamber conversations are highly unparliamentary and do not make it easy for Hansard to hear the speaker on his feet.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Prior to the last state election, Labor said that the Western Australian health system was lurching from crisis to crisis. Two and a half years later, we have a system lurching from catastrophe to catastrophe - it is running totally out of control. The Government has been in total denial for two and a half years in health. In August 2001, the Treasurer sounded the following warning -

We will reach a stage where we won't be able to police our streets and educate our children properly because of the amount of money we are putting into the health system.

We have now heard Labor admit that the health system is out of control and that it will now start reforming it. After two and a half years, the Government is recruiting people to start reforming the system. I remind members that the Treasurer, in his budget speech a few days ago, said -

Since coming to office, we have injected an additional \$2.45 billion into the health system . . .

He went on to say -

But despite this massive injection of funds, turning around the health system has proved to be a longer and more difficult process than we envisaged when we came to office.

This Government is still scratching its head and calling in yet another review expert at a cost of \$1 million-plus. The Government has not even tried to turn around this issue. In two and a half years the black hole catastrophe in health has not even deviated. The frail and the aged are still being cared for in spare hospital beds. No real attempt has been made to establish alternative nursing care facilities outside the big hospitals.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You had better go and talk to your federal colleagues about that because six years ago they took over aged care. I can tell you now that it is a disaster.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I read in the federal budget yesterday that they have increased spending in the health budget.

Mr R.C. Kucera: They have not increased spending. You should go and talk to people running aged care homes in your area and ask them whether that has happened.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Did the minister knock back an invitation to open the Brookton Nursing Home?

Mr R.C. Kucera: Go and talk to your federal colleagues.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Did the minister knock back an invitation to open the Brookton Nursing Home? The minister did not bother. The minister was begged to open the Brookton Nursing Home. It is a 20-bed establishment of which the community is very proud and the minister did not even bother to go there.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Did your federal member go?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is outside the metropolitan area. The Minister for Health is not interested in anything outside the metropolitan area.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Don't talk nonsense. I'd like you to publicise that because people will be interested to hear what a buffoon you are by saying that. You know how much time I spend in your electorate.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Why did the minister not open the Brookton Nursing Home?

Mr R.C. Kucera: Did your federal member go; the federal member who is under-funding it?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Why did the minister not open the Brookton Nursing Home? I remind members again about what Labor said prior to the state election.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I have seen a fair bit of substance. Prior to the state election, Labor said -

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In government, Labor has as its goals the highest standard of integrity, professionalism, -
I love this next bit -

transparency in decision-making, -
We have not seen any of that yet -
openness and accountability.

Accountability in health - what an absolute joke! It is amazing to me that the Minister for Health keeps his job.
On 28 May 2001 an article in *The West Australian* quoted the Minister for Health as saying -

Hospitals were spending money, sometimes well beyond the means of the public purse, but were not necessarily accountable for their actions.

What has changed today? What is different right now? Nothing is different. The Minister for Health made that statement two years ago and we are in exactly the same position now.

In 2002 the Western Australian Auditor General's office uncovered a maze of instances in which key performance indicators in hospitals and in the Department of Health were absent. Amounts between a few thousand dollars and millions of dollars allocated to not-for-profit community-based organisations did not meet activity and financial reporting obligations. How can any minister live with that? The Auditor General's office found that more than \$260 million in the 2002 financial year channelled through not-for-profit organisations could not be accurately accounted for. That is unbelievable. The Auditor General's office found also that a total of \$1.2 million, mostly for Aboriginal services, had been doled out without any assessment or, in some cases, documentation.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You are attacking the poor old Aboriginal groups again.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: No, I am attacking the minister; it is his responsibility. When he took on the role of minister, he swore that he would continue the accounting mechanisms established by the Financial Administration and Audit Act. He is responsible for them.

Mr R.C. Kucera: It is a typical National Party racist attitude to attack Aboriginal groups.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Is the minister saying that I am a racist for saying that he cannot control his budget?

Mr R.C. Kucera: Yes, you are. You singled out Aboriginal groups to attack them.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I singled out the minister. There was no assessment or documentation. That is the responsibility of the minister, not the Aboriginal groups. The Auditor General's office has had to qualify the accounts of the Minister for Health and the Department of Health. That is an unbelievable situation. The Acting Auditor General's audit opinion is -

As a result of the matters referred to in the qualification paragraphs, I am unable to form an opinion on the key performance indicators of the Department of Health.

If that is not an indictment of a minister, I have never heard one. This is the performance of a minister who is meant to oversee a budget appropriation for 2003-04 of \$2.652 billion. His budget has received a massive increase of \$231 million. He has no accountability. The estimates hearings will be next week, and this minister and the Department of Health will be unable to answer questions on health because their audit has been qualified. They will not be able to look us in the eye and give us a straight answer because the Auditor General's office has qualified their accounts. Those are the facts. That should be enough to have any minister tramped from his position. Where is the accountability of this Premier? This Premier claims to be open and accountable and to have introduced a code of ethics for ministers and the Government. Where is it? I would love to go through the history of Australia to find out which ministers have received an audit response like that. It is incredible; yet no-one on my left seems to be concerned about it. The fact that the minister cannot properly account for \$2.65 billion is not a worry for them, but it is a worry for me. Federal spending will put the state health budget at somewhere around \$3 billion, and for what known outcomes? We do not know what the outcomes are.

Mrs D.J. Guise: Additional nurses and reduced waiting lists.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The Auditor General's office says it is all qualified. The member cannot answer the question.

Mr R.C. Kucera: The Auditor General's office qualifies everyone. You know that.

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Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: He does not qualify everyone. The minister was five months late in submitting the annual reports. When will the haemorrhaging stop? When will this disaster come to an end? This Government needs to be scrutinised. We need to determine whether the Treasurer's announcement of \$232 million is additional spending. People who call me tell me that this year's health budget is somewhere between \$50 million and \$70 million in deficit. That means that the figure of \$232 million is in reality more like \$160 million.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I know what I am talking about. Is the minister telling me that none of the four teaching hospitals has a deficit? I heard a professor - I cannot remember for which university he works - being interviewed on ABC radio and saying that Royal Perth Hospital has a deficit of close to \$20 million.

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Is the minister denying that Royal Perth Hospital has a \$20 million deficit? He cannot hear much.

If we assume that the other three hospitals have similar deficits, the health budget as a whole has a deficit of \$80 million. The figure, as we stand here today, is about \$70 million or 80 million.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Are you writing the editorial for *The Gnowangerup Star*? That is the only newspaper you can get a run in.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The minister should answer the question: is Royal Perth Hospital \$20 million in the red? We do not get an answer, but we know that it is. That was said on ABC radio a few days ago. No-one challenged the good professor when he said it. If the health system runs along unchecked until next year's budget, the same thing will happen. There will be another deficit. The 9.7 per cent growth in health spending that the Government is crowing about is actually a six or seven per cent increase. The minister has already spent \$70 million or so of the increase because this year's health budget is in deficit. That cannot be spent twice. No matter how creative the Treasurer is, that money can be spent only once. By the Minister for Health's own admission, the Government is about two per cent behind on the eight per cent that he says is necessary to cut even.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You talk nonsense - absolute garbage and you know it.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is not nonsense. We know it is between \$50 million and \$70 million in the red as we speak today. The minister will have his chance during the Estimates Committee to tell us whether or not it is in the black. He is not prepared to tell us tonight, because he knows it is in deficit. People in rural Western Australia can expect to see very few of the benefits of increased spending on health.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Only a new hospital at Geraldton.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The budget speech actually said that people wanting health services in regional Western Australia should use the patient assisted transport service and go to Perth. All the money has been gobbled up in the city teaching hospitals. It is a disaster for country people.

Dr J.M. Woollard: Not Fremantle Hospital.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It will be in deficit as well. There is no plan to expand health services in the country, or to meet the health needs of the hundreds of thousands of Western Australians who live, work and invest in regional Western Australia.

Dr J.M. Woollard interjected.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Member for Avon, your voice has changed.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I fell down the stairs.

Regional health in Western Australia is a victim of the Functional Review Taskforce, with hospital beds now being closed and services being withdrawn throughout country areas. Derby is a prime example. The country hospital boards have been removed, control of decision making has been removed, and budgets have been vested totally in city-based bureaucrats. Finally, city bureaucrats have taken this Minister for Health captive and put in place the health system they have wanted for years, but which the previous Government would not make available to them.

I will move on to one of my other favourites: the Mandurah railway line. While health is a mess, the Mandurah railway line looms as a fiscal nightmare for this and future State Governments. The costs threaten to overwhelm the State's finances. The railway is already impacting on the ability of the Government to maintain and improve

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the road transport network. That puts the \$25 billion the Premier talked about with the resources people today in jeopardy.

Mr M.P. Whitely: In a public forum recently, you claimed that the cost of the railway would be \$2 billion. You made the bold statement that the cost would be \$1 billion under the previous Government, and \$2 billion under the present Government. Now that you are away from that rabble-rousing, can you outline where that \$2 billion will go?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is currently \$1.7 billion. The Government does not want to add the trains into the cost of the railway line.

Mr M.P. Whitely: So it is \$1.7 billion. Were you telling a fib the other day?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is not even finished. The Government will hit \$2 billion for that railway line with no difficulty at all. I have a lot of confidence in the Government to do that.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You were telling a fib.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is not a fib at all; it is \$1.7 billion now.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You said it was \$2 billion now. Were you telling a fib?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: No, it will be \$2 billion. From the moment the minister outlined the route, creating at least \$350 million worth of previously unnecessary capital works, the Government has been on the back foot in this program. Under the Kenwick option, we did not need to tunnel under the Perth central business district or to reconstruct two of the city's major traffic bridges. The Mandurah railway line is now almost two years late, and there is scant information about the project in the state budget. Just about everyone knows that the Government's \$1.4 billion estimate for the Mandurah line is pure guesswork. The final cost will be close to \$2 billion.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Where does that figure come from.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: From my guesstimates. I am as able to guess it as anyone. If the Government is allowed to put its guesstimates in the budget from the back of an envelope, why am I not? Where is the rule that the Government can do it on the back of an envelope and I cannot? Where is the rule that says that only government members can stretch the truth? They have no chance -

Several members interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: That is right. I am stretching it, because the Government said it will cost \$1.2 billion, and all of a sudden it is saying it will cost \$1.4 billion. If the rolling stock and the maintenance of the rolling stock were to be included, the cost of the line would already be up to \$1.7 billion.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: No. It will be \$2 billion easily. Despite the mind-boggling prospect of this railway line, the Government fails to provide us with any cost details. Can the Treasurer show me in the budget where he details the cost of the Mandurah railway line? There are no costings for the Mandurah railway line. It does not exist. It is no good the members on my left bleating about \$1.2 billion or \$1.4 billion. They cannot establish that any more than I can, but time will tell.

Mr M.P. Whitely: That does not stop you from standing up and talking about it!

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I am happier standing on my \$2 billion estimate than I would be trying to stand on the \$1.2 billion estimate that members opposite want. There is no detail at all. This is the single biggest government infrastructure project in Western Australia's history, yet the Treasurer cannot give us a sector-by-sector breakdown cost of the railway.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Do you demand a sector-by-sector costing for a power station, a transmission line, a school, a port or a bridge? It is costed in the budget papers in the same way as any other capital works project.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Rubbish! The reasoning behind this railway project has become dubious indeed.

Mr B.J. Grylls: What about the \$100 million a year it will cost to run?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I am about to get to that. While we are to have these whiz-bang new trains hurtling along the middle of the Kwinana Freeway, the minister has disclosed that 54 peak-hour buses will be running right alongside them. There will be a race. The buses will be going along the freeway at least at five kilometres an hour, or maybe at 10 kilometres an hour. The freeway will be choked. The bus lanes that currently exist will just happen to have trains on them. I look forward to the people who live south of Perth realising that driving to

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Perth from the suburbs from where they can see the central business district will take them some time. There will be trains as well as buses on the Kwinana Freeway. If the trains will be such tremendous passenger magnets, why is the minister wasting all this money doubling up on buses? If the minister is so confident about the trains, why does she also want to have buses? Why will the Melville bus passengers not be able to board the train at the Canning Bridge interchange? There are railway stations all the way along the northern freeway from which people can link onto buses. Why is the minister not providing that option for people who live just south of Perth? Why is she putting 54 peak-hour buses on the freeway to drive people bananas as they drive to work at five kilometres an hour? That is a very interesting question.

I now move to roads. As we search for information in the budget, which is hard to do, we are treated to the planning minister's illusionist talents. She is shuffling the deck of cards and including in the Main Roads budget millions of dollars worth of freeway bridgeworks for the Mandurah railway line. The minister is saying to local government, "Look at all the extra money we are spending on roads. Whoops! It is actually money we are spending on the railway, but we do not want to tell you that. We are telling you it is for roads. It is in the Main Roads budget, so it has to be for roads!" This little piece of fiscal trickery has been used to make the Main Roads budget look a bit brighter. However, people in regional Western Australia know exactly where the money has gone in this budget. There is an inordinate amount of \$49 million in the Main Roads budget for bridgeworks in the 2003-04 financial year. The \$49 million compares with just \$26 million last year and just over \$20 million in the previous two years. The bridgeworks are there because of the railway line, as you would know well, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas). The planned spending on the Narrows and Mount Henry Bridges this year is just part of the story, but it is a big part of the story. The insatiable appetite of the Mandurah railway will be able to be gauged when Main Roads goes to tender shortly for package E of the project. That contract will deliver civil works, earthworks, drainage and bridgeworks from the Narrows Bridge to the Glen Iris section. Huge amounts of money that should be spent on improving and maintaining the State's regional road transport network will be gobbled up by the railway over the next two years. As a direct result of changing the route, the minister intends to raid the Main Roads budget over the next two years to pay for railway works that were previously unnecessary. Madam Acting Speaker (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas), you will enjoy this. It will include spending \$20 million on strengthening the Narrows Bridge and constructing a new rail bridge; \$40 million on strengthening and modifying Mount Henry Bridge; \$17.8 million on civil works, earthworks and drainage; and \$9.6 million on freeway works, barriers and services.

Mr L. Graham: What about the Wiluna-Meekatharra Road? There is nothing.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Sorry, but it is not included. The minister will also spend \$1.6 million on the Canning Bridge bus ramp and \$654 000 on pier protection of existing bridges.

Mr L. Graham: What about the Peel bypass? It is not there.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is not there. Every time I go to Mandurah, all people want to talk to me about is the Peel bypass. It has not been included. More than \$90 million is about to be sucked from the State's road funding pool over the next two years. Much of it will come from the ailing regional road network, which is an issue close to our hearts. The core railway works will account for a further \$100 million of works between Glen Iris and the Narrows Bridge. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has no qualms about robbing the local government regional road groups of almost \$15 million, which was to be spent on vital local roads in 2003-04, and spending it on this one section of the railway. She has arrogantly torn up the local government funding agreement without any consultation with local government. She does not bat an eyelid about leaving 65 road projects without a cent in 2003-04. Unforgivably, 56 of those projects are in country Western Australia. We have an obsessive minister whose spending on this railway line is totally out of control.

Mr E.S. Ripper: And road spending is \$56 million more than it was last year.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It will mostly be spent on bridges for the railway line. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure spent \$3 million on a three-kilometre "Taj Mahal" bike path in her neighbourhood, which nobody uses.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That was commissioned by Murray Criddle.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It was not. We said that there could be a bike path; we did not say that it could cost \$3 million. Not even the Treasurer was going to go that far.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That was a Murray Criddle decision. That was a National Party bike path.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: If it had been a National Party bike path, it would have contained a fair number of potholes along the part of the path that passes through Mt Lawley. The minister found only \$3 million for the

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wheatbelt north regional road group, which looks after thousands of kilometres of local roads. She has called for ideas to dress up the Mt Lawley subway intersection in her neighbourhood, but can find only \$1 million to upgrade the important grain logistics network. We will hopefully have a good season and some wheat to move this year, but members on my left are not concerned about that. No funds are left for roads such as the vital Lancelin-Cervantes coastal road, which will delay the start of that project once again. The Wheatbelt Development Commission said that \$200 million of commercial activity was hanging on the development of that road. Can we get a cent for that road? No. Muirs Highway in the south west, which is a key tourism road, will remain hazardous. Yet again, the Government has abandoned the timber communities it promised so much to when it locked off the forests. Muirs Highway runs straight through Manjimup and Pemberton. No money will be spent on that road. Bussell Highway between Vasse and Margaret River, known locally as death alley, still remains a disgrace to the State. There is no money for that. This budget is a blatant exercise in railway indulgence and health bungling.

Mr E.S. Ripper: How much more money would you spend on the road project?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: A minimum of \$100 million.

Mr E.S. Ripper: A minimum of \$100 million is your commitment. Would you make that commitment a condition of entering coalition?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The Treasurer can sit down and negotiate with me as the months go by if he wishes.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Would you make that a commitment of going into coalition?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The Treasurer can sit down and negotiate with me as the months go by.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: He can tell me what the deal would be. Does the member for Pilbara think that is a fair offer?

Mr L. Graham interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas): Order, members! Leader of the National Party and members, it is very hard for Hansard to hear what is being discussed across the Chamber. The Leader of the National Party has the floor.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I apologise for having a bit of fun.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What portfolio would you have?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I would take sport and tourism. They are the great portfolios. Members would see me in the House once a year maybe.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Okay; \$100 million on roads, sport and tourism. There might be a deal.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The impact on road funding in this budget is enormous. The Treasurer told us that road funding had increased in this budget. However, we have already pointed out that if the railway expenditure is taken out of that, that is not quite true. He conveniently forgot to mention that tens of millions of dollars are for unnecessary Main Roads spending. I read out those items a few moments ago. The total appropriation for roads in 2003-04 is just \$664 million, of which \$192 million is from the federal Government. The Treasurer asked me a few minutes ago what I would do. An amount of \$853 million was invested in the State's road program in the final year of the Court-Cowan Government. That is a considerable difference of some \$200 million.

I will deal with one of the fascinating little fiascos that is happening around the place. We see more of Alannah the illusionist in this budget with the William Street tunnel fiasco. What a wonderful little game this is. We are told that a total of \$38 million will be required for the acquisition of the properties in the central business district precinct and for commercial compensations. This railway-associated expenditure is to be covered in the Western Australian Planning Commission's budget. What a surprise! It is nothing to do with the railway at all; it is something to do with planning. According to the minister, this massive piece of public spending is not part of the railway line costs. That is absolutely incredible. That is how the Government can keep the cost down to \$1.4 billion.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Spread it all over the place and rob Peter to pay Paul.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Yes, just spread it, hide it and tuck it away.

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Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I want to finish this before my time expires.

It is worth noting that the owners, the tenants and the subtenants are bracing to get a take-it-or-leave-it offer from LandCorp and a message to vacate by late August. The employees and the tenants in that area will be told that they must be out of their buildings by the end of August. However, there has been no negotiation - zero negotiation. If they refuse to accept the Government's offer, which they have not yet received, the buildings will be subjected to a compulsory acquisition and resumption order. They have been told that the Government is starting the resumption process now, they must be out by the end of August and, by the way, some time in that period the Government will make them an offer. We have a very kind, very caring Government. How many employees are involved - 200, 300 or 400? Who knows how many employees are involved in those businesses.

The Mandurah railway line will require an additional hundred million years -

Mr M.P. Whitely: A hundred million years?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It will take us that long to pay it off. The Mandurah railway line will require an additional \$100 million a year to operate. An extra \$40 million will be needed for passenger subsidies, and \$60 million will have to be found for the interest on borrowings. Money to maintain the new railcars will have to be found on top of the \$100 million.

I will change the subject again and deal with funding for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. This budget is a tragedy for the fight against salinity and land degradation. I am struggling. My throat is getting a little dry from all the shouting, so I will have to try to calm down. The massive commitment to health and the Mandurah railway line has left the Government gun shy about commitments to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. The National Party has learnt from the Minister for Agriculture in the Legislative Council that this budget includes no money - zip - for the national action plan. I repeat that there is no money for the national action plan in this budget. Western Australia remains the only State in Australia that has not signed off on the bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth, so the \$158 million on offer for a matching contribution just goes begging.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What would you do?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I would fund it.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You would fund the \$158 million?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Yes, I would. There is no question about that whatsoever.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That is \$258 million so far.

Mr B.J. Grylls: That is why it is not funded, is it? That is very interesting.

Mr E.S. Ripper: However, I have saved you \$258 million.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: We can save \$2 billion by cutting out the railway line. We all remember when the Government rushed out a media statement just before Christmas about submitting more than \$80 million in projects for commonwealth approval. However, the political stunts that have been pulled by the minister and the Premier on national action plan funding are clearly reflected in this budget. Again, there are no funds, not one cent, in the budget for the NAP. Amazingly, we are told by the Minister for Agriculture that funds will have to be found from outside the budget. The Government now must put funds into the budget to come up with the money. What does that mean? Does the Treasurer agree with the Minister for Agriculture that \$31 million can be pulled from outside his budget?

Mr E.S. Ripper: Well, it is all hot air, because the Prime Minister did not sign, even though his officials said that he would.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Western Australia is the only State that has not signed up to this plan, yet the Treasurer is trying to say that the federal Government is the problem. Every other State has signed up, yet the federal Government is the problem!

Mr E.S. Ripper: One might think that someone was playing politics. I think it is John Howard.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The Treasurer is just playing games with regional and rural Western Australia, as he always does.

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I turn now to police. Funding of \$1.7 million has been made available to employ 250 police officers over the next four years, but how many of them will be stationed in regional Western Australia?

Mr E.S. Ripper: As many as the Commissioner of Police says are needed for operational purposes.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: However, the member for Peel can get them in his electorate and the railway line can get them, but we cannot get them. The Government can direct the police to go wherever it wants whenever it wants. Fifty police officers will be stationed on the metropolitan railway line.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Fifty police officers will be stationed on the metropolitan railway line at the request of the State Government, so the Treasurer should not tell me to talk to the commissioner. If the Government can put them on the railway line, it can put them in Northam. Law and order is a core issue in regional Western Australia, and the razor gang's targeting of 22 police stations for closure or downgrading has sent shudders through us all. The budget papers do not recognise law and order as an issue in regional WA. The Government still has not got the message. We are pleased to see the commitment to dump the Functional Review Taskforce recommendation to close those nominated police stations, but we remain suspicious. We will keep watching the Government.

The Minister for Police needs to clarify exactly how the Government will make up savings of \$6.7 million a year by 2005-06. The obvious fear of regional constituents is that these savings will be made at their expense. The Government will pull the police presence out of small country towns, as well as towns the size of Northam. There is a crisis in Northam at the moment. The Government has a centralist policy that will see fewer police officers stationed in rural WA, and rural WA will be the loser. Police in regional areas are pillars of those communities. They are very respected people and are part of the glue that keeps those communities together. However, does the budget show significant capital allocation to back up the resources needed by those police officers? No, it does not. The Government believes the city is more important than the safety of regional people. The Government cannot even keep a police car on the roads in Northam.

I have an interest in the computer-aided dispatch and related communication system project, which had a starting cost of approximately \$60 million in the time of the Court-Cowan Government. It has now increased to \$300 million. This year the Delta communications and information technology project and the CADCOM project have received an extra \$40 million in the budget. Those projects are yet to be completed and their costs just keep blowing out. After two and a half years in government, the Labor Party is no closer to getting those projects started than was the previous Government, and there should be an inquiry into the two projects. They have cost the taxpayers of Western Australia well over \$300 million, and that is unacceptable.

Mr E.S. Ripper: I think that is an interesting suggestion.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I agree. I have no fears about our time in government. If our Government messed it up, that is no problem for me. The Government should not allow a project to blow out from \$60 million to well over \$300 million; it should not happen. It does not matter who is responsible for that blow-out, that is one process that should be examined.

Mr L. Graham: You move it and I will second it.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: We just might do that, member for Pilbara. This is the worst Government Western Australia has seen in 25 years. It has increased taxes and borrowings and has broken election promises. There is a massive black hole called the health budget and another massive black hole called the railway line. It is all out of control. Who is paying for it? Regional and rural WA are paying for it.

MRS D.J. GUISE (Wanneroo) [8.45 pm]: I rise to participate in this budget debate for 2003 and in doing so, I will address some of the fundamental economic management issues that need to be addressed and have been recognised by the Gallop Government. It is our view that the State needs to manage these things well and that it is the key to a healthy and happy community. The Government also recognises that the State cannot spend more than it earns and that the growth of unemployment and social services in Western Australia is dependent upon the Government getting the economic fundamentals correct. To that end, we have delivered the third budget surplus in three years. We have delivered on our promises in the key areas of health, education and law and order; the fundamental areas in which Western Australians demand better services. This has been done despite the Prime Minister, John Howard, raiding the pantry of Western Australia -

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I will get to that member. The Prime Minister has been taking out more than he has been prepared to put back in and starving Western Australians of the health and social services that their taxes should

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pay for. I recall the promises that were made when the goods and services tax was introduced. We were told that there would be a bonanza for State Governments and that the GST money would be returned to the States. We were told that State Governments would have more money to spend on hospitals and schools and to help provide a safe and secure community. What we were not told is how long this so-called bonanza would take to surface. We were not told that the federal Government would not keep its promises and that it would keep changing the goal posts in relation to the commonwealth grant funding - pretty nifty stuff. There is a \$3 billion difference between the money that this State pays to Canberra and the money that it receives back in grants. That is \$3 billion less funding that goes into the services that the State Government provides for Western Australians. As the Treasurer reminds us, that is \$1 700 per person in this State.

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas): Order, members! It is very difficult for Hansard staff to hear the member on her feet when conversations are being carried out across the Chamber. I remind members that it is highly disorderly to do that.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I can assure the member that I am not distracted. However, I am conscious of the needs of Hansard staff.

It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to represent the Wanneroo electorate and I will take some time to focus on its needs. The City of Wanneroo is the second fastest growing local government authority in the country and currently has 83 000 residents. In the next three years, 15 500 additional lots will be released for sale in the city of Wanneroo and the vast majority of them will be within the electorate of Wanneroo - even within the new boundaries. It is estimated that there will be at least 130 000 residents in the city of Wanneroo by 2010, and 290 000 residents by 2026. I have highlighted the growth rate of the Wanneroo region on many occasions in this House and I will no doubt continue to do so. However, while the revenue measures will have an impact on homebuyers in my electorate, it is my belief that they will not hold back the growth being experienced. I also raise this matter to acknowledge the need for increased revenue to meet the community's priorities in relation to health, education and community safety, to continue the roll out of the public transport system and to meet other needs.

In discussing this budget, I will concentrate on some of the ongoing investment in the Wanneroo region in the course of a number of budgets, a number of years and a term of government. It is an ongoing process. I will refer to the highlights of the Gallop Labor Government's achievements in the past two years of its first term of government. The Government has invested \$27 million in education infrastructure in the regions with five new schools being built in one term of government. We are opening new schools where children and young families live. The Government spent \$5 million on the new Carramar Primary School, \$5 million for a new school in east Marangaroo, \$6.7 million for a new school in Wanneroo to replace the current facilities in the area, \$5 million for the new Brighton Primary School in Butler, and \$5 million for the new Ashdale Gardens Primary School. This represents a significant investment in the education of our children in the region. We have invested money in areas that have grown and will continue to grow.

I cannot stress enough the importance of education. Investment in education and training statewide has been increased in the recurrent appropriation by four per cent, or \$91.8 million. We have provided 40 additional numeracy and literacy teachers on top of the 117 that were recruited over the past two years. We have reduced class sizes and targeted behaviour management and classroom discipline. We have spent \$26.9 million on telecommunications infrastructure for schools, which will enable government schools to be connected to high bandwidth telecommunications by the end of the year. This issue has plagued schools for some time. I was on the school grants resourcing committee that struggled with the difficulties of ensuring that children across the State had access to new technology and to make sure that the technology was evenly dispersed to give all Western Australian children access to the opportunities it provided. This is a good start by the Government.

Mr L. Graham interjected.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: The provision of technology is not without its challenges, as the member for Pilbara well knows.

The Government will invest \$3 million in the new police station in Wanneroo. For too long the honest and hard-working officers in Wanneroo have been working in a station that is old, run down and barely fit for human habitation. The new station is not only an investment in the future of policing in the area, but also a sign of the esteem in which we hold the officers who work in the area.

Jobs growth is also an important issue for the people of Wanneroo. It is one of the most significant challenges for the region. For far too long, planning has reflected a dormitory suburb mentality. We must create jobs where

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people live for the sake of local communities and families, for the sake of our congested roads and for the sake of air pollution and the environment. We must ensure that jobs are created where people live. We welcome an \$80 million joint investment with Wesbeam Pty Ltd for the value-adding timber plant in the Neerabup industrial estate. The Government has allocated \$5.5 million to invest in stage 3 of the Wangara enterprise industrial estate redevelopment.

It is probably timely to give notice to the Premier, the Treasurer and assorted ministers that a good start is just that. The Treasurer knows this because I have told him before. When they feel the tap on the shoulder in the coming year or so, it will be the member for Wanneroo. I will be right there; I am not going away. I will advocate on behalf of Wanneroo for the Government to provide it with resources to ensure that the community of Wanneroo is well catered for.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You will have to knock me out of the way.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I realise I will have some competition. That is okay, I am just putting them on notice.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I am giving you a warning; I can get violent sometimes.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: Please be gentle!

I refer to transport. It is indeed welcome news for the communities in the northern suburbs that the Clarkson railway station will open soon. The railway will extend to that area at a cost of \$15.5 million. Some \$70 million is being spent on the rail cars and a new depot will be built at Nowergup, which, as well as housing the rolling stock at night, will provide employment for local people.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I will be able to visit you in your electorate by rail from Mandurah. I look forward to that.

Mrs D.J. Guise: Watch out, because I will be coming the other way.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I will welcome you with open arms.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: Absolutely.

We have been able to negotiate successfully with the City of Wanneroo - the local government authority - a temporary road bridge at Hester Avenue. It would otherwise have required boom gates. It was a great success for the community. It was a great community effort and I congratulate everyone who participated, particularly the City of Wanneroo, mayor and councillors, who were prepared to think outside the square to find a solution on behalf of the community.

Wanneroo is well-known for conservation and its environment. Within the electorate are many wonderful areas, many of which are not all that well known to members in this place. They are certainly worth visiting. An amount of \$405 000 has been allocated for work in Yanchep National Park, including Crystal Cave, the lakefront barbecue and other visitor facilities. For members who do not know, the cave streams have dried up in recent years during summer. This has caused the root-mats to deteriorate in a way that concerns experts and visitors alike. The caves are certainly something to see. A recovery team has been put in place. Agencies are working together on an ambitious emergency plan to re-water two of the caves using water mounds specially created on the flank of the Gngangara water mound. Other work is being undertaken in the Yanchep National Park to ensure its restoration to a world-class tourism destination. It is a place of history with an environment worth seeing. Importantly, it is one worth preserving for future generations. An amount of \$750 000 over two years has been allocated to improve tourism facilities in Gngangara Park including recreational areas and walk trails for all to enjoy. We are also starting on a journey to take out the pines and create a park as an asset for the community. That is also welcome news to the growers in my electorate.

Once again, a successful partnership has been entered into with the local government authority, the City of Wanneroo, to build three groynes to deal with coastal erosion. The groynes will save what is a major regional beach; one that we were fast waving goodbye to. Thankfully, the two groynes in place are doing the job. It is always a difficult decision to build groynes. There needs to be a natural formation so further problems are not created. That is exactly what we have done and will do when the third groyne is built. It is great news indeed. People have their beach back; visitors will see them enjoying that recreation.

Lastly and most importantly, because it concerns safety for people enjoying the seaside environment, \$100 000 has been given as the final payment of the construction of the Mindarie-Quinns surf lifesaving club.

I have spoken briefly about environmental issues but I will now focus on water issues and the impact on my community. With the support of the respective ministers concerned, an east Wanneroo water management strategy group has been formed. It will work with the local community and the local government authority

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because we must deal with the serious issues of water extraction, consumption and usage as well as land usage and related planning issues. We must deal with the impacts on the valuable agricultural and horticultural industry as well as environmental issues. This is no easy task. Mistakes have been made in the past in which market gardens have been backed up against residential blocks. In a good year, the industry is an asset worth between \$120 million and \$140 million. Within a local government authority, it competes only with Carnarvon and Merredin in terms of the product. People in Perth do not have any idea how available the asset is. Wanneroo has a suitable all-year climate and it has the water. It is worth preserving. The area currently provides Perth with 75 per cent of its water. How these things are managed is a serious issue. People of the Wanneroo electorate deserve to have a clear strategy in place. More importantly, those working the land deserve some certainty over their investment. The State also needs to be assured of the long-term viability of the Gnangara mound and water management for the region and the State.

In closing, because I promised I would be reasonably brief, I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the career and volunteer firefighters serving the Wanneroo region. I invited some of the volunteers into Parliament the other night. Once again, my electorate has been hit by a number of fires; two recent ones in the summer months were very serious and threatened Two Rocks and also part of the townsite of Wanneroo. It was due to the skill, dedication and professionalism of these men and women that lives and property were saved. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and I salute them.

There are many facets to a community, and we in this place do our best to serve and present their views. Despite the doom and gloom merchants, I believe we have rightly addressed the key areas of concern to the community in health, education, and law and order. We have done so at some cost, that is true. However, we have done it with reduced revenue and without selling off any more of the State's crown jewels. I commend the Bills to the House.

MR L. GRAHAM (Pilbara) [9.00 pm]: What a good spot to come in! I know the Treasurer is listening with great interest. When speaking out in the bush, I refer to the Treasurer as a bean-counting Bolshevik, a title which I think fits. This is a poor budget, and it is a particularly poor budget for the Pilbara.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You started your speech so well, too.

Mr L. GRAHAM: It will get better. This is a particularly poor budget for the Pilbara and it is a very poor budget for regional Western Australia. This is the biggest taxing budget that has ever been presented in this State. I am amazed how people can talk about reduced revenue, because I want to put the budget in perspective. I started by looking at the budget of 1998-99. I only started with that year because it was the last CD-ROM that I had sitting around on my table, so it was not scientific research; it was a little more random. The revenue for the Government in the 1998-99 budget was \$8.9 billion. That Government estimated that this year the budget revenue would be \$10.4 billion. The budget revenue for this year is in fact \$11.7 billion, and that is a \$1.3 billion error or miscalculation. That is an increase of \$2.8 billion in state government revenue over six budgets; it is an increase of 31.5 per cent in six years. The forward estimates go out to 2006-07, and in round figures the Government's revenue is estimated then to be \$13 billion. Relating that back to the 1998-99 budget, it means that over nine budgets government revenue will have increased by \$4.1 billion, or around 46 per cent. That is extraordinary, and that is from my minimal research on that matter. People should not talk about the declining revenues of the State Government. By any yardstick, there have been significant increases in government revenue.

It is traditional for the Treasurer, when responding to the second reading debate, to thank members for their expressions and then move on to the estimates, but I specifically ask the Premier, sorry, Treasurer - it is becoming a common slip, is it not?

Mr E.S. Ripper: I am encouraging it.

Mr L. GRAHAM: I do not know whether it is Freudian, but it is becoming quite common - devalued, in fact. I thank the Treasurer for arranging the contacts this afternoon to allow me to clear up some of the matters about which I have concerns. The budget contains provisions for cash reserves. It contains a somewhat loose definition of cash reserves, and I am slightly better enlightened, having been briefed by Treasury officials. Nonetheless, I have concerns. Under cash reserves a subsequent classification is cash assets. I am still unable to determine the difference between the two, and the use for the two. It does not appear in the Treasurer's papers. I have added the cash reserves of each agency and the amount of \$580 million is sitting in government departments' cash reserves. In cash assets - some of this is common between the two funds - there is \$786.5 million. These are significant amounts of money. I would like the Treasurer to explain when he responds exactly why that money sits in those departments.

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Mr E.S. Ripper: Under our budgeting system, agencies are allowed to carry over budgeted money from previous financial years if it has not been expended for the purposes for which it was allocated. If a project runs into the next financial year the funding can be carried over.

Mr L. GRAHAM: I accept that; it was put to me today. However, that is not the situation in its entirety. At 30 June next year, those two figures will have decreased by about \$88 million and \$85 million. If what the Treasurer says is correct, one can assume that the expenditure in this year's budget will be \$88 million or \$85 million more than was budgeted for because departments will be drawing on reserves. That will still leave in round figures, based on my calculations, \$492.336 million in cash reserves and \$701.015 million in cash assets.

Mr E.S. Ripper: The operating balance is based on expenses and revenue received. Expenses may be in fact more than the appropriation. An example is in this year's budget where expenses for health will be \$3 billion but the appropriation is \$2.6 billion. The operating balance at the end of the year includes what has been spent as a result of appropriations, but also what has been spent as a result of the run-down of cash reserves. We must make a judgment about how agencies will run down those cash reserves. If they run them down that is part of our expenditure.

Mr L. GRAHAM: I accept that. I am seriously asking the Treasurer to explain the issue in detail and in an informed and serious way in his response. It gives me great concern for there to be half to three quarters of a billion dollars sloshing around in the state government budget, as loosely defined as that, particularly when I am daily confronted with ministers and departments that tell me they do not have any money. I find it very difficult to reconcile a minister's statement that the finances cannot be found with the fact that there is three quarters of a billion dollars sitting in cash reserves. I am sure there is a reason and I am looking forward to hearing it.

The other budget area with which I have great difficulty is in disability housing. I will have something further to say in the Estimates Committee about that. It is fair to say that the rate of spending on disability housing has slowed, if not, reduced. The authority for that in a general sense comes no further than from budget overview papers in which the Government has outlined that, in its first two years, it has provided accommodation services for 191 people. It will do that to the extent of 210 people over the forward estimates period, which is three years. The Government has catered for 191 people in two years and will cater for 210 people in three years. That represents a significant slowing in the rate of expenditure. It is interesting that 300 people are currently on the serious list. I do not have any notes, but from my memory of a paper that I read some time ago, about half those people are aged over 60 years. I would have thought that they were a traditional Labor constituency. I look forward to the coalition between the National Party and the Labor Party that will reintroduce socialism into the Australian Labor Party.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: I just wonder if you will be part of the process.

Mr L. GRAHAM: There are some questions I will answer and some questions I will not.

The major reason for my speaking tonight is to talk about a subject near and dear to my heart; that is, the royalties in Western Australia and federal-state financial agreements and arrangements. If people listened to this Government, they would be of the view that the cause of nearly every major ailment in Western Australia is the federal Government not funding, the goods and services package and Western Australia being shabbily treated by the Federation. I want to make this point: from the point of Federation to 1997, this State was a net beneficiary of the Federation and the arrangements within it. Every year for nigh on a century, the State Government could only balance its budget with assistance from the Federation. Every other change that has been made in the system has been made in agreement with the State - I stress "in agreement with the State". Whether the current Government agrees with the former Government and whether the former Government agreed with its predecessors is irrelevant. On every occasion, the State Government has reached agreement with the federal Government on revenue sharing arrangements. As we speak, it is in the process of reaching agreement on further agreements. It is not a case of these things being foisted on us.

The State Government has put in place some interesting arguments. I want to deal with some of them quite specifically. The first one is about royalties from the North West Shelf. A special arrangement is in place between the federal and State Governments on the sharing of royalties from the North West Shelf. The basis of that arrangement was two major events: one was the take-or-pay contracts which were entered into by the then State Government and the other was the pipeline. It is important when considering this to understand that the North West Shelf is not in Western Australia. It is simply a statement of fact that it is not within the jurisdiction of the State of Western Australia, nor is the vast bulk of the offshore oil industry. Nonetheless, an arrangement was entered into for the North West Shelf.

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The royalty sharing that the State Government complains about is in fact a universal process across Australia. The State never includes in its rhetoric the fact that it receives a share of mineral and petroleum royalties produced in other States. I concede that the State loses more than it gets from the other States. I might come back to the petroleum industry if I get time, but it is extremely important for people to understand that we will collect \$355 million this year from the iron ore industry on behalf of the Commonwealth. We get to keep that money to which we are not entitled and have no right. We collect it on behalf of the Commonwealth and we keep it, and at a later date it is included in the calculations for the distribution of the goods and services tax, and our GST allocation is reduced, broadly speaking, by the amount received. Also, some compensation and other components are involved. I would not mind a deal like that. I encourage the Treasurer to make that sort of offer to local government and regional government in the Pilbara, by which mineral and petroleum royalties should be paid up front to the local councils and then repaid under the same arrangement that the State has with the federal Government.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Did they invest in the infrastructure for the projects?

Mr L. GRAHAM: Let us deal with that aspect, as it is important. I will deal with iron ore, and we can argue whether the system is fair or unfair. Iron ore and other general minerals payments are worked back on a per capita basis. Again, I would happily put my neck on the chopping block and say that if the Treasurer offered the same sort of arrangement for local and regional government as exists between the Treasurer and the federal Government, regional bodies would accept it with haste and sign off on it.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Did taxpayers of the Pilbara enter into take-or-pay contracts for those projects?

Mr L. GRAHAM: No, but the Government of Western Australia did. The Treasurer is playing the blame the predecessor argument. I accept it. However, nobody asked the central State Government to support the project; it did it off its own bat for a project that would have proceeded anyway. It is impossible to envisage that one of the world's great gas fields would not have been developed. Back in the 1970s, when I am sure the Treasurer was a young man, we were told we would run out of gas. We were about to have this world oil shortage.

Mr E.S. Ripper: I remember that.

Mr L. GRAHAM: The world was about to grind to a halt, and thirty years on from that time, damn it, we have more gas than we had then. Terrible, is it not? It is impossible to conceive that the gas field would not have proceeded.

Let us consider the significant argument the State Government put to the review by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The Treasurer raised the question of infrastructure. The Treasurer said in his submission, which he expected the federal Government to take on board, the following -

For example, as far back as the 1960s the Western Australian government was active in securing the necessary conditions and agreements for the development of the State's iron ore industry (including helping to overcome obstacles imposed by Commonwealth export controls and migration policy). In the 1970s and 1980s the State played a pivotal role in securing the development of the North West Shelf Gas Project through agreements, assistance and infrastructure provision.

That is the basis of the Treasurer's argument in his interjection: look at all the good things we did. If we compare the rhetoric of contemporary Governments with the actions of the Government of the day, what did the State Government in Western Australia do that it now asks the federal Government to take into account when making federal allocations to the State? It is a good thing we have a system of agreement Acts because it makes the State's actions crystal clear - these are outlined in the Acts. First, it removed the rating right from local councils. Completely, without consultation and forever, it removed from local government the rate base of the biggest industry within its borders. Never more could it rate properties at anything other than the unimproved value. If the Federal Government ever did that in Western Australia, Governments of any persuasion would put on a big barney - and quite rightly, as it is inappropriate.

The Iron Ore (Mount Newman) Agreement Act of 1964 places obligations on the State. The Treasurer can read them in clause 2(a) of the first schedule. Basically, the Government had to do what it was told and pass legislation to approve the project. There was not much expense in that for the State to be recompensed 30 years on. However, when one considers what the State Government in the 1960s did to the iron ore industry, it is crystal clear that under the agreement the companies were required to build - this is not about secondary processing; I will come to that later if I have time - the mine, the transport systems, the harbour and the harbour development including dredging, provide the navigational aids and the services for the harbour, and build the railway between the mine and the wharf and build townsites. In those townsites were schools, hospitals, TV and radio stations, swimming pools, shopping centres, kindergartens, daycare centres, community health centres and

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airports. In any other region of the State, those matters would have been clearly the responsibility of the State Government. If the State Government had carried out its legitimate role, it would now 30 years on have the right to claim money from the federal Government, but it chose not to carry out that role. It chose to push that obligation onto the companies. Why is that important and why is it significant in an argument about finances between the State and federal Governments? It is because the provision of that infrastructure by private mining companies, which the State would normally have paid for, received relief from federal government income tax and corporate tax. The federal Government made its contribution in a way in which it was not otherwise obliged to, and the State abrogated its responsibility.

I believe that deals with the question of infrastructure in the iron ore industry. If it does not, I ask the Treasurer to let me know and I will be happy to have another more detailed crack at it, including a crack at the expenses and who paid what to whom. The only exclusion to that argument is a clause in an agreement Act - those agreement Acts were standard across all companies - that required the company to provide the services and facilities, subject to the company's bearing and paying the capital cost involved and reasonable charges for the maintenance and operation, except operation charges for education, hospital and police services. Therefore, the iron ore industry, having built the facilities and the houses, said that the State Government should pay the reasonable wages of the people who worked on those facilities, given that the facilities would then be handed over to the State Government as gifts. It is interesting to hear the State Government 30 years later say that it is being screwed over by the federal Government because the federal Government will not recognise that as a contribution. There is not a lot of substance to that argument.

I have dealt in part with the argument about cost shifting, which is similar to the argument for the increase in land tax in this budget. Stamp duty for first home buyers now almost entirely consumes the first home owners grant. In fact, stamp duty on a house valued at \$200 000 will attract stamp duty of \$300 more than the grant provides.

The question of infrastructure extends when one considers the Government's submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The current submission is for 2004. The logic of this Government's argument is that the federal Government should give the State Government more money because, not having learnt from the 1970s and not having poured taxpayers' money into development, the State Government is about to do it again.

We can argue the benefits or otherwise of government-provided infrastructure. The current State Government argues that it is providing a whack of infrastructure for the Burrup Peninsula. It formally put this forward - and did so in great detail with the use of photocopied pages of *The West Australian* - as a reason it should get money. Referring to the Burrup Peninsula may or may not be a smart thing to do. It is not open to the State Government to say that it is costing it money. The only significant budget item for the Pilbara is the infrastructure for the Burrup. I refer to government revenue from the Burrup projects. When Treasury briefed me, five projects were in train, although that is not the case now. The Government is spending \$136 million on common-use infrastructure, and would have received \$450 million a year in taxes directly from those five projects. How can the State Government possibly mount an argument that the federal Government should recompense it for spending a one-off amount of \$136 million when on today's figures it will forever more receive \$450 million a year? There is no need to seek compensation for that. If those figures are correct, it is a pretty good deal. The federal Government will make more. I suspect that therein lies the basis of the State's argument. It is not an argument of substance but an argument involving a little bit of green-eyed jealousy. The State Government will receive \$450 million, but the federal Government will receive about \$1.5 billion in corporate taxes.

Mr E.S. Ripper: With income tax it will amount to \$4.5 billion.

Mr L. GRAHAM: No; it will amount to \$2.8 billion.

Mr E.S. Ripper: The advice to me is \$4.5 billion.

Mr L. GRAHAM: I am happy to give the Treasurer the figures that were provided to me in the briefing by Treasury. If the Treasurer's figures are significantly different, it is best he talk to Treasury. I am happy to provide the breakdown: corporate tax will net \$1 545.7 million; royalties, \$254 million; personal tax, \$802 million; import duty, \$231 million; and fringe benefits tax, \$25 million. The total payment to the Commonwealth will be \$2 857.7 million.

Mr E.S. Ripper: For how many projects?

Mr L. GRAHAM: Five. They are Treasury's figures. I would not have thought there would be a difference of opinion. The point is that the State Government is putting the money up, and it is getting a good deal. Why should the federal Government take the expenditure on infrastructure into account in determining the grants?

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The State Government's submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission is totally silent on that. It is significantly underwhelming on that point.

I again refer to the petroleum royalties, because those projects are all petroleum based. It is important to remember that the projects of which I speak are not in Western Australia. We are talking about what the State can and cannot tax. It seems to me an important point that if a project is not in the State, the Government will probably have a difficulty applying a tax to it. It is a jurisdictional argument of some substance. I will explain what happens. I plead with people not to pillory me afterwards - they may if they like but I ask them not to - for loosely describing this as a five-year rolling average. That basically means the money received by the State of Western Australia is included over five years, with a series of other matters that the Grants Commission makes an annual assessment about. I am told that the commission starts from the basis that all the States will be treated equally in the distribution of the goods and services tax, and the movements go up and down based on expenditure and other considerations. In budget year 2003-04 we are confronted with North West Shelf returns royalties from about four years ago. That is, the fall-off in federal government grants to this State was entirely predictable. Not only is it predictable, it is a matter of agreement between the State Governments and the federal Government. To dress it up as the federal Government ripping off Western Australia - I think the term is killing the golden goose - is just a blatant lie. It does not bear close scrutiny. That is not a popular argument to put in Western Australia. Canberra-bashing has been raised to an art form. Canberra can look after itself. It does not need Larry Graham to protect it. God help it if it did, because I would not be there.

That is not, however, the essence of the argument. The essence of the argument is the entrenched and organised hypocrisy of the central Government in Western Australia, which does one thing in its rhetoric to Canberra and something totally different in its relationship to the regions. I am talking now about the Pilbara; not the seat, but the region. If the State Government were to offer the same sort of revenue-sharing arrangements with local government in the Pilbara as the State Government has with the federal Government, I have no doubt that those local governments would accept tomorrow. The problem is that local government in the Pilbara has been excluded from that kind of arrangement. It has been excluded by the system of agreement Acts from having any sort of a revenue base other than the rating of households. There is no compensation for local government. The exclusion is quite explicit. I know from the rhetoric of Governments that they find the argument uncomfortable, and I am usually confronted with misleading statements to the effect that the member for Pilbara wants all the royalties from the region left in the region. That is a lie; I have never said that in my life. In fact, I argue the exact opposite. Local government is penalised by the provisions of the agreement Acts. People genuinely do not understand the effect of these provisions. In any region, town, city or country, there are major industries that underpin the economy. If a superior jurisdiction removes the right to tax that industry, how can an economy be run? The short answer is, it cannot. That is as true for local government as it for federal and State Governments. The following paragraph appears in the Iron Ore (Mount Newman) Agreement Act 1964 -

notwithstanding the provisions of any Act or anything done or purported to be done under any Act the valuation of all lands (whether of a freehold or leasehold nature) the subject of this Agreement (except as to any part upon which a permanent residence shall be erected or which is occupied in connection therewith) shall for rating purposes be deemed to be on the unimproved value thereof and no such lands shall be subject to any discriminatory rate;

It is impossible for local government to rate any of the mining industry's premises that are covered by agreement Acts at anything other than unimproved value. That condition was imposed by the State Government. It gets worse than that, because there is another section in this Act that I can never find quickly, which in effect states that regardless of anything else, in this State's history nothing will ever be imposed that makes the company's financial position and its tax base worse than it was in 1964. With the exception of mineral royalties to the State - guess who wrote the agreement - that company's tax base will be forever frozen at 1964 levels. This is the argument that the State Government leaves out of its submission to the federal Government on why it should get a bigger share back from the federal Government. The Premier raised in his submission the question of infrastructure cost. I have to tell the Premier - this is getting to be a terrible habit!

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I see a great future for you, Treasurer!

Mr E.S. Ripper: He has promoted me once already tonight! This is very encouraging!

Mr L. GRAHAM: Yes. I just shook myself. It is all right. I have no axe to grind, other than the Treasurer just sign the cheque and we can all be very happy! It is not difficult!

The greatest mistake the Treasurer has made, with all due respect to his Government, is the Hismelt deal. To this day I am gobsmacked that the State and federal Government put an extra \$200 million into the pockets of one of the world's biggest corporations to comply with an agreement Act that it had already signed. It is

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unbelievable. Rio Tinto Ltd has an obligation under its various Acts to further process iron ore. It has had that obligation for in excess of 30 years. The trade was not infrastructure costs. The trade was access to some of the world's best iron ore deposits at low tax rates, with some infrastructure costs up-front and a commitment that it would further process. That was legislated. Rio Tinto should not have received one cent of taxpayers' money.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Can you set out what the federal Government contribution was?

Mr L. GRAHAM: I think it was about \$24.5 million from the State Government and \$170 million from the federal Government.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I do not think our contribution was that. What was the nature of our contribution?

Mr L. GRAHAM: Here is the Government's newspaper clipping. It is contained in the submission. It states that it was \$125 million from Canberra.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: In what form?

Mr L. GRAHAM: I do not know. It is simply a newspaper clipping that is included in Western Australia's submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission 2004 review. It is put in the submission under impediments to development and the cost of developing infrastructure in Western Australia. The newspaper clipping states -

Rio's development plan envisages a doubling of plant capacity to 1.6 million tonnes a year by the middle of next decade, at which point it will consider building a steel mill on site "if the economics are looking right".

The economics are fantastic. The Government has pumped money into something that the company needs to do and has had an obligation for 30 years to do. I do not know whether it is \$130 million or \$230 million. The newspaper clipping says \$130 million. It was \$200 million when it was reported in the north. The company should not have got a cracker. That is the principle. That is half the cost of a hospital for Port Hedland, out of the State Government's coffers. It should not have got a cent. Rio has received its benefit.

I want to move on to the other point that I made earlier. I obviously do not have much time, but I want to go through the Garnaut-FitzGerald report. Again I feel a consultancy coming on, Mr Deputy Speaker. If this is what people are paid large sums of money for, I am in the wrong business.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.D. McRae): Everybody who supports the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker is called Acting Speaker. I am not being pedantic, member for Pilbara, but you have struggled to work out who I am.

Mr L. GRAHAM: Sorry, Mr Acting Speaker. I have a problem with titles tonight. I keep promoting people. I shall revert to type.

When the Treasurer came back from Canada he made some extraordinary observations about Alberta, not the least of which was that he did not notice that for some 30 years Alberta has been putting its mining and petroleum royalties into a state fund, thereby reducing its dependency on its central Government. It is now a fully funded, self-supporting state.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: He does not have a good grasp of the Canadian system. The states are richer than the federation.

Mr E.S. Ripper: I agree that I do not have a full grasp of the Canadian system.

Mr L. GRAHAM: It is interesting that in the Garnaut-FitzGerald report, Alberta is held up as the State that receives the least from the federal Government in the federation. As I said, it is quite extraordinary, because neither the Treasurer nor the Garnaut-FitzGerald report mentioned the heritage fund into which Alberta's royalties have been put as a state savings scheme. Garnaut and FitzGerald also drew on the example of the United States of America, but overlooked the Alaska development fund. Again, the royalties have fundamentally changed that State's dependency on its central Government. They could also have considered Norway, which is the only European Union country that made a decision 30 years ago to inject its very extensive North Sea oil and gas royalties into a national savings fund to reduce dependency on its central Government. Like Alberta and Alaska, Norway now has the lowest taxes in its jurisdiction, the highest per capita disposable income and the lowest level of dependency on its central Government. These very noble and important people, and the Treasurer of Western Australia, are arguing for increased dependency on central government when the international experience is the exact opposite. It is not difficult. The Government could take a large cash flow - a large stream of money - and bite the bullet for five or six years; after a while the balance would change. The State would end up with significant cash reserves - we already have three-quarters of a billion dollars - and a

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system that actually produced wealth for the jurisdiction and relieved dependency on the central Government. That is what local and regional governments in the Pilbara are seeking to do, because they are sick to death of being told what to do by Perth.

One other comment in the Garnaut-FitzGerald report relates to statements made by Sir Charles Court. This shows once again the appalling ignorance of this report. The report states -

Sir Charles Court, a former Minister for Industry Development and Premier of Western Australia . . . provides eloquent testimony to the discouraging effect of equalisation in a submission to the Review. In Sir Charles' view, the development of Western Australia's large mineral resources involved huge political effort and acceptance of some political costs including, . . . the costs of confronting unhelpful Commonwealth Governments.

I have no particular axe to grind with old Charlie, but the evidence of the behaviour of Sir Charles is in the agreement Acts that he personally signed. Every one of those insidious agreements has his signature on it. The facts of life are that this State does not have a grand record in development and in the provision of infrastructure. It has a terrible record of neglect in the Pilbara region, which is repeated to this day in this budget. It is a record that does not provide for balanced development in the State. I have commented on this to a range of bureaucrats who have briefed me on this issue. Those bureaucrats have been most helpful; some might say they have been too helpful. We should have more debates such as this, because despite the politics of it and the partisan nature of federal-state arrangements, it is a significant and important matter. Western Australia must move on a little from its status as the State that supports the nation. It does not. I go back to where I started. For 97 or 98 years this State was a dependant of the Federation. We should recognise that.

Mr E.S. Ripper: While our economy was crippled by tariffs that supported Victorian industry.

Mr L. GRAHAM: I will deal with that quickly. It is interesting that when the Bass Strait oil projects were under way, Victoria received none of the benefits that this State receives from the North West Shelf - none whatsoever. In fact, Western Australia was a recipient of that wealth. For the entire time that the Bass Strait dominated the oil industry in Australia, Western Australia received its share of the royalties from it. I inform the Treasurer that that is a statement of fact, but we do not do it the other way around.

I know the Treasurer is a fair-minded chap - I have my tongue firmly in my cheek. I encourage the Treasurer to engage himself in the question of royalties and the disadvantage that exists towards the Pilbara.

MR J.L. BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [9.46 pm]: I rise to make some comments on the state budget. As we all know, this is the biggest taxing Government of all time in Western Australia. It is a sad fact that even though it is the biggest taxing Government in Western Australia's history, the money seems to be disappearing in different directions, but not in the right directions. Certainly, the electorate of Murray-Wellington is one of the electorates that is badly neglected in this budget. I have not managed to find anything in the budget for the electorate of Murray-Wellington. There are a few very important issues for the constituents of Murray-Wellington. One of them, for example, is the Brunswick Junction Primary School, which has been trying for many years to get a covered assembly area.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: So you reckon you won't have much of a post-political career as a lobbyist.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister is right. I think it is more to do with who is in government at the moment than being a political lobbyist in the current circumstances.

The situation at the Brunswick Junction Primary School is a sad state of affairs. It is a fantastic school that does a great job and has a dedicated principal and staff. A covered assembly area for the school has been at the top of the list for the district for many years. However, when the money is allocated by Treasury, it seems to go to other schools for their covered assembly areas and other upgrades. The Brunswick Junction Primary School needs not only a covered assembly area but also an upgrade of its office accommodation. There is no sick bay, as in many of the old schools, and the office facilities are totally inadequate in this day and age because they are all so old. Brunswick Junction Primary School is a relatively old school and needs a reasonable amount of money spent on it - not a large amount in the big picture but certainly a reasonable amount.

Another primary school in my electorate that, sadly, has been neglected is the Pinjarra Primary School. I visit the schools in my electorate on a regular basis, but I am not always shown the things that are the reason for visiting those schools. Last year the parents and citizens association started to get a bit anxious about some of the substandard facilities at the Pinjarra Primary School and invited me on a tour of the school. To my surprise, some of the classrooms at that school are below standard. I am absolutely amazed that the teachers are prepared to teach in those classrooms because they are so bad. They are very depressing, dark, dingy and ancient. It is

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time that something drastic was done at that school, which now has well over 600 students. The population in that area is growing. There are insufficient playing grounds at the school and the library is totally inadequate for 600-odd students. Money needs to be spent on the school. Last year I asked the Minister for Education and Training to visit the school and he said that he could not visit at that stage and that he would visit at the end of the year. That year has come and gone. I have made another request for him to inspect the school and, lo and behold, he rang and said that he could not come this year either. I note that he manages to visit some of the schools in the electorates of Labor members. It is a shame that he does not feel the same about some of the schools that are not in Labor electorates; however, he should still take an interest in them as the Minister for Education and Training in Western Australia. It is important that funds flow to these schools. I like to think that possibly next financial year these schools will receive adequate funding.

As I said, there are over 600 students at Pinjarra Primary School. The areas north and south of Yunderup are growing, as is Ravenswood, which now has a new subdivision called Ravenswood Sanctuary, which is on the edge of Pinjarra. There is considerable growth in the area. It is well and truly time that a new primary school was built in the Yunderup area, so that students do not have to travel so far to Pinjarra. It would take the pressure off the Pinjarra Primary School. However, Pinjarra Primary School still needs to be upgraded, even if student numbers drop off.

About two and a half years ago a committee was formed to inquire into the services provided by the *Australind*. At the time it seemed to me that the committee would consider whether train services would be extended to Busselton, Bridgetown and those sorts of areas. When the committee was first established, it was to report about February last year. Things did not run according to plan and the committee reported about two months ago, over a year late. What concerns me and my constituents is that all the committee seems to be worried about is people getting from Bunbury to Perth quicker than they do currently. All the committee is worried about is the people in Bunbury. Let us face it, even if half an hour or an hour were knocked off the train trip, people living in Bunbury would not rip up to Perth to work. The committee has put forward four or five options for how the train trip can be sped up. Most of the options cut out some of the stations between Bunbury and Perth. That is a great insult to the people in my electorate, because it means they are being treated as second-rate citizens.

When the *Australind* first commenced services in 1987 under the Burke Labor Government, the issue that concerned me was that the Government was more worried about getting people from Bunbury to Perth in the quickest time than it was about some of the people along the way. In those days people could not catch the train from Waroona to Perth and back again because the train did not stop at Waroona every time. We worked away at it until eventually the train stopped at Waroona. Another problem with the *Australind* when it first commenced services was that, for some silly reason, the railway stations were built too low. In Perth, people could walk straight onto the train at seat level, but if they caught the train at a station anywhere between Bunbury and Perth, such as at Pinjarra, Waroona, Harvey or Yarloop, they had to walk up steps to get onto the train. That meant that people in wheelchairs or disabled people could not get on the train unless somebody physically lifted them up and put them on the train. After much lobbying, those aspects are starting to change. Just over two years ago we managed to get a new station at Harvey. The Waroona station has just been upgraded and the Serpentine station also was upgraded a year or two ago.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: By whom? By us.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Not all of them were done by the Government.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We certainly did Waroona.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Waroona station, yes, but Harvey and Serpentine stations were not built by Labor. Again, in the case of the Waroona station, a federal election was coming up and it just happened to be in a marginal seat. Up popped the state government minister - I cannot remember whether she was the minister or shadow minister at the time - to make the big announcement that the station would be upgraded. Unfortunately for the Labor party's federal candidate, it did not work. Therefore, we now have a very good federal member there in Don Randall -

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Who is doing a fabulous job for you!

Mr R.C. Kucera: He is doing a great job for us.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Don't you believe it! He is a good operator.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan interjected.

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Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: One cannot win them all. The seat of Swan was a marginal one. However, when one considers that at the last federal election, when just about every candidate who stood against him, whether it was a Greens or a One Nation candidate -

Mr R.C. Kucera: What a great way to campaign - by spreading the kind of scurrilous things that he did about the Labor candidate and her illness.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I do not believe what the minister said.

Mr R.C. Kucera: He was absolutely scurrilous.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I never heard about it and I do not believe it because -

Mr R.C. Kucera: The poor woman was suffering from cancer and that got put around. What a lovely thing to do!

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Hang on, I think it was in the paper of her own volition -

Mr R.C. Kucera: Not the way it was put around by your candidate.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: He was claiming that she would not be fit to serve a term.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: In the heat of campaigns the rumours that go around and who is attributed with having started them is amazing. Knowing Don Randall, I would doubt very much -

Mr R.C. Kucera: You would not play the man; you would play the issues.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Correct, I have never played the man. I do not believe in doing that.

Mr R.C. Kucera: I think we should leave him alone because I do not think he is a good example to use. What he did was disgusting.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I do not believe that was the case, but we will move on from that.

The facts are that the *Australind* train is an important issue to me and my electorate. These recommendations in general cut out a few of the stations along the route, which means that the people living in those areas are being treated like second-rate citizens. That is not acceptable in this day and age, because if one wants a town to grow, one does not take services away from it. When a person is deciding whether to live close to Cookernup, Yarloop, Harvey or wherever, if he can catch the train to Perth from those places it adds a little more to the attraction of living in that area. The amount of time that will be saved in travel is insignificant. The big problems with the *Australind* are -

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We have noticed that the Opposition doesn't like fast trains. The very slow trains - VSTs - are its preference. You are always arguing against fast trains.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Hang on, I do not mind very fast trains as long as they stop to pick up my constituents. However, if they are going to zap through my electorate and forget about them, I am not interested in them and the Government can keep its fast trains.

What I was about to say before I was rudely interrupted was that -

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: At least I am listening to you. You should be flattered.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Yes, I am in a way. I did not know whether I should say that or not, that is all.

The passenger trains take longer to get to Perth because of the goods trains using the same tracks, which passenger trains sometimes have to wait for. I have been on the train, and when it gets to Armadale or past Armadale, it sits there waiting for the local traffic to go past.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: That is right, and there needs to be more crossing loops. This was supposed to be part of what the fabulous act of privatisation was going to deliver. This is why you sold a billion dollars worth of assets for less than \$500 million to achieve this sort of thing. We waited with bated breath for it to happen.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): It is not wise for the member to take interjections.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I am not sure that that was done so that the *Australind* could get from Bunbury to Perth more quickly. Regardless of what the Government does, if it cuts out those stations between Bunbury and Perth, it will not make enough of a difference to make people live in Bunbury and travel to Perth by train. I am interested to know how many people who live in Bunbury catch the train to Perth to get to work. Western Australia is different from England and other places where people live miles out of town because they cannot

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afford to live close to the city. People who live in those places spend a lot of time commuting. However, it is not necessary to do that in Western Australia. I think very few people in Bunbury, if any, travel to work on public transport every day. A couple that I know lived in Harvey and worked in Perth. Their jobs allowed them to work in Perth for a couple of days a week and work on their home computers for the rest of the week. Another couple in Dwellingup used to drive to Pinjarra and catch the train to work. Unfortunately, they moved on.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Was the train too slow?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: No, they got different jobs. They moved to Port Hedland for a while and they now live in Tasmania. I say it was sad because I liked them and socialised with them.

I hope the minister is listening. When a decision is made regarding the *Australind*, it will be important for the minister to take care of the people who live in Murray-Wellington and the surrounding electorates.

The member for Collie will be interested in this next matter. Some years ago the Burekup train station was closed completely. The people from Burekup who caught the train now have to drive to either Bunbury or Brunswick. Although Burekup is a growing suburb - it has a brand new primary school and nice subdivisions - the train no longer stops there. The residents have been deprived of that service.

The Alcoa plant at Wagerup has been a major issue in my electorate over the past five or six years. Initially the previous Government swept the matter under the carpet, and the current Government followed suit. Eventually the Government recognised the major problems involved. However, for some reason, the Department of Environmental Protection would not recognise them. It kept saying that things were okay. Even late last year the Minister for the Environment and Heritage was told there were no problems. I am sure that the previous ministers were told the same thing because I used to get silly letters from the department when I wrote to it. When the Government changed, I got the same type of letters. Although Alcoa spent a lot of money last year to fix the problem, the smells and emissions have remained. That is sad for the residents who have lived there for many years and others who would like to live there. Many people have taken the opportunity to sell their homes and leave the area. That has had bad consequences for Yarloop. The number of children who attend the school has halved.

The SPEAKER: Do the health problems still exist?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: People tell me that they do. People still complain to me about the emissions. Although Alcoa spent \$20 million or \$30 million to fix the problem, I still receive information daily that the smells and the noise emissions continue. It is a sad situation. I had my fingers crossed when Alcoa spent money in an attempt to fix the problem. I hoped that it would fix it. From 1984 to 1996 there were no problems with Alcoa; it was fantastic. In 1996, Alcoa built a liquor burning plant. There are only about three in the world, two of which are located in Western Australia. The liquor burning plant emits organic compounds. That is when the trouble started. After three or four years, Alcoa said that it had fixed the problem and therefore the liquor burning plant was not the cause of the problem. I am not sure whether that is correct. People still complain of having nose irritation, respiratory problems and runny eyes. However, only a percentage of the population suffers from those problems. I had hoped that the \$20 million to \$30 million spent would fix the problem. That has not been the case. The number of complaints has dropped off but Alcoa has also bought out a lot of local people. As a result, the people who moved in realised that there were problems and felt that they did not have the right to complain. The other problem is that Alcoa wants to expand by at least 50 per cent. Oddly enough, it had approval from the previous Government to expand emissions from 2.4 million tonnes to 3.2 million tonnes. It decided it wanted to expand to 3.6 million tonnes. About the same time there was a groundswell of complaint. Although people had been complaining for several years that there had not been the media focus, that eventually occurred. It has resulted in the Government being very cautious about allowing any expansion. The Department of Environmental Protection initially said there were no problems. Alcoa said there were no problems because it was operating within the emission controls. The facts are that people became ill. I have lived in the area for 35 years. People were telling me of their problems; I had complete faith in them. I was rung occasionally and asked to visit Yarloop or somewhere down the road to experience the emissions. They were quite pungent along the South Western Highway and Yarloop. They would burn a person's nostrils and mouth. On certain days, people had to either lock their doors and windows or leave town because they could not handle it any more. I do not believe the emissions are as potent as that now but they are still not good.

It is a sad state of affairs that there is still talk of expansion. A decent buffer zone has to be put in place. Alcoa has bought a lot of properties in what is called the "A" area, which will eventually become a buffer zone. The company has been renting back the houses it bought. Alcoa is in a difficult position because if it takes people out of the community, the school, hospital and shops will die. It would get the blame for that. Under the

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circumstances, it would be wrong to let people rent the houses because of the emissions. Alcoa could respond by saying that it does not believe its operations are causing any illness, therefore it is all right to rent the houses. If an expansion of the operations is ever approved a much better buffer zone must be put in place. However, it would result in the demise of the Yarloop town site. Alcoa's Wagerup refinery was built in the wrong place; it should have been built further towards the coast. It was probably built in its present location to be closer to the raw materials. It was just a matter of mining the materials and dropping them down a chute to the refinery. It would not have made a lot of difference to transport the materials three, four or even five kilometres. I am sure the company realises the mistake it made in trying to cut costs when the plant was established. I am sure it is regretting it.

Another area of concern in the electorate is the water in Wellington Dam. There is a high salinity problem. The Labor Party has never credited the Liberal Party for being environmentally conscious. Some years ago, Graham MacKinnon, who was then a minister, took up the challenge to try to fix the water in Wellington Dam. He started, despite great opposition from farmers in the shire of Collie. It was before my time and, even though I was living in the area, I was not well versed in the issues at the time. I know there was opposition to what was being done to buy back land and reforest it to try to overcome the salinity. That has probably stopped the salinity from rising, but the salt level is still over 1 000 parts per million. That water will not be good for irrigation until the salinity level is lowered. We cannot use it for horticulture or floriculture. Even though grass grows with that water, it does not grow as well as it would with water with a lower salinity level. Recently Harvey Water, formerly South West Irrigation, made an offer to the Government. It said that if it diverts a certain amount of water in the Collie catchment area, which produces most of the salinity, it will reduce the salinity in the Wellington Dam. Harvey Water offered the Government three billion litres of irrigation water for an improvement in water quality in the Wellington Dam. About \$30 million needs to be spent to fix this problem. An amount of \$15 million from the federal Government needs to be matched by the State Government, but for some reason the State Government seems to have difficulty coming up with those funds. The member for Avon referred to a national salt strategy or plan and the fact that the Government will not come to the party with \$150 million. I do not want \$150 million; I want just \$15 million for this area. Dardanup is in the member for Collie's area, and is serviced by the Wellington Dam. This will also help the Brunswick area in my electorate where the irrigation water comes from. Some of that three billion litres can also be sent to Perth. Harvey Water has indicated that it costs the Government several million dollars for each gegalitre of water in a dam or for putting down bores. If that three billion litres comes off what is being used by the farmers, they feel the Government can offset that with cost savings by building other dams etc. For some reason, the Government has not taken up this offer, which is pretty generous; it is difficult to give up a water allocation because the water does have a value. However, if the water quality can be improved, it means their grass will grow better and they will need less water anyway. They are prepared to offset that, but it is a bit poor of the Government not to take up the challenge to provide that \$15 million with the Commonwealth's \$15 million and fix the problem. It is not a major deal, but it is very important for the whole of Western Australia.

I recently received a letter from the Parents and Friends' Federation of Western Australia regarding private school funding. It is a bit of a shame that Governments over the years have tended to offer to private schools 25 per cent of the cost of providing education for public schoolchildren. It will provide 25 per cent of whatever it costs to send a child to a public school. Having students at private schools does save the State a lot of money, but for some reason, the amount provided does not reach the 25 per cent which is continually promised. Private schools were receiving 18.3 per cent of the cost of sending a student to a public school; this year it has dropped to 17.8 per cent, which means it will be more difficult for people sending their children to private schools. When we think of private schools, we think of flash schools such as Hale, Wesley College and the Presbyterian Ladies College. A lot of people probably have the funds to send their children to these schools, but there are also a lot of Christian schools to which people send their children, such as the one at Mandurah. Not all non-government schools are expensive private schools. Parents send their children to Catholic and other non-government schools for various reasons. Why should they not receive the direct benefit of their education taxes in the same way as everyone else does? If those children attended public schools, the increased number of students would create a major problem. Public schools would not be able to cope; their attendance would put too much pressure on the facilities. I am not blaming only this Government for the lack of funding. Previous Governments have neglected to increase the funding to 25 per cent. It is very important that more money is allocated to non-government schools.

One of the other important issues in my electorate is the Western Australian Agricultural College in Harvey, which, this year, is celebrating its fiftieth year of operation. The opportunity arose for the college to acquire the Wokalup research station land. The new Harvey Dam encroached on college land, which meant that it became less suitable as a place on which to train students. A great decision was made to gradually rebuild new school

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facilities on the Wokalup research station land. In the first year of the move, a new dairy was built on that land. However, at this stage that is about all that has been done.

The students are bussed down to the research station to run the property because the classrooms have remained on the old site along with the dormitories, the kitchen, the dining room and the workshops. The split location is not very convenient. I was under the impression that relocation would be undertaken over five years. When I asked some questions of the Minister for Education and Training last year, he indicated that no plan existed and that he did not know when the facilities would be built. The situation is not acceptable. Part of a new facility is four or five kilometres away from the old facilities and the students must catch a bus to get from one location to the other. Therefore, they must travel on South Western Highway, which is a busy road and makes the students more vulnerable to an accident. It is also inconvenient. If the students were living on the old Wokalup research station, now the Harvey agricultural college, they could wake up, get dressed and do their work. However, at present they have to be transported each way. I urge the Government to meet the challenge and find the money to construct the facilities on the Wokalup research station site sooner than planned.

After asking some questions - a decision had already been made - I suggested that the original agricultural college land be subdivided and sold to enable a greater return than if it were sold as farmland. I believe that is being done. Although no commitment has been made, I hope that the return from the sale of the land is used to pay for duplicating the college facilities at Wokalup.

One of the other issues that has popped up in the past few weeks concerns the Dampier-to-Bunbury gas pipeline. Two or three years ago a Bill was introduced to widen the Dampier-to-Bunbury gas pipeline corridor to enable additional pipelines to be constructed along the corridor. At the time, I thought it was not a bad idea to increase the width of the corridor from, I think, 40 metres to 100 metres. It is not an ideal situation because farmers do not like corridors of that nature running through their farms, but I did not think it was a major issue because a corridor already exists. The people residing along the proposed corridor recently received letters. It is proposed that the gas pipeline corridor be split just north of Waroona, so the old pipeline corridor would go in one direction and the new one would go in another direction. This would result in two pipeline corridors. The proposition is made because the old pipeline corridor goes through wetlands and the Government thinks that it should not interfere with wetlands any more but should upset farmers and put the pipeline corridor through another lot of farms.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Are you talking about the Peel deviation?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I am talking about the Bunbury to Dampier gas pipeline, which I do not think is anything to do with the minister.

My electorate has suffered from powerlines and water pipes being constructed on properties, the compensation for which is generally inadequate, so if people can avoid having them they do so. In this case it was decided not to go down the route of the old pipeline corridor because of the wetlands, but that is rubbish. The pipeline could be put through them, the dirt could be put back and there would be no problem. Once everything settled down, the environment would be as good as it was before. I therefore certainly do not support the plan to separate the corridors just north of Waroona and align one corridor in a different direction.

I hope that the minister will see the reasoning behind this. I have not approached the minister on this subject, but it is important that we try to avoid putting pipelines through people's properties because it is easier and the alternative might upset the environment. I do not think the environment would be upset by putting a pipeline through the wetlands. The environment probably was upset in the past. If I thought the proposition was to drain the wetlands, I would have problems with it, but that is not the case. It is important that we look at this sensibly instead of worrying farmers who do not want a gas pipeline through their land. It may be that they will get some compensation if it happens, but it is not what they want. They do not want their land interfered with. In the past if a powerline had to go across their land, farmers accepted it. In this case, when a pipeline does not have to go through their land, why do it? If it must go through wetlands - through which pipelines have been constructed in the past - I do not see a problem. The other question is, of course, who knows if a pipeline will ever be put in the proposed corridor? The corridor would be used only if it were decided in the future to extend the pipeline.

Drug addiction treatments have been fairly controversial for a long time. In the past few years Dr George O'Neil has been using his naltrexone treatment for drug addicts. He has certainly fought for some funding. When I was shadow Minister for Health many years ago, I visited different organisations that were treating drug addicts. I found that every organisation had some success. No one treatment has a 100 per cent success rate. Dr Neil Beck uses the buprenorphine treatment for addicts and claims he is having reasonable success. He is finding that the bureaucrats are fighting him, holding back his ability to prescribe drugs and making his life very difficult. Somebody might need to investigate whether his claims are correct. It seems to me from the information I have

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seen that Dr Beck is doing a good job and having some success, as are others, but bureaucrats are presenting him with difficulties. The same happened with Dr O'Neil. Over the years people promised him money to help him out; indeed, a lot of private money seems to go into both of their programs, both of which seem to have some success. It is important that the money be divided in a better way. Millions of dollars are directed to drug treatments. The Drug and Alcohol Office receives millions of dollars in funding, but there is a reticence by the Government to look after other people who have success in their own way in this field. I implore the Government to look at this aspect and to be a little fairer. The more people who have success, the greater the chance of preventing people continuing their addictions. It is important that sense applies with funding to these two people dedicated to treating drug addicts. I assume the case is similar with Dr Neil Beck, but Dr George O'Neil does not seem to act for monetary return; from what I gather it probably costs him money to run his treatment program. He needs more money. This money has been promised over the years, but it is always hard to get it from the Government. It is important that these people's programs be further funded. They will never be adequately funded, but they need more money from the system than is currently provided.

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [10.27 pm]: I add my comments to the appropriation Bills at this late hour of the night. I find it ironic that the Treasurer in question time today was very predictable in his comments about the federal budget. His immediate comment was that it was a typical budget and did not give us very much. The one difference between his budget and the federal budget is that we all received a tax cut and debt reduction with the Commonwealth's budget; it was not the case for the budget of the State of Western Australia, which has increased its debt to \$410 million over three years. I find that somewhat ironic.

I will give the Government some credit, particularly regarding the Geraldton region. I note that the member for Geraldton is not in the Chamber tonight, but I suspect, as is his wont, he will not speak on the budget. I recognise the capital works allocations in the Geraldton area, particularly in the city of Geraldton and the immediate hinterland. I refer to the part-funding of the southern transport corridor, the Geraldton port enhancement, the regional hospital and the TAFE Marine Centre for Excellence at Separation Point. These are on a rolling budget over three to five years, whatever the case may be. Money is allocated for a Water Corporation waste water treatment plant outside the city of Geraldton, and Western Power has received some money as well. I give the Government credit for those actions.

I suppose I could use the words the member for Stirling used in his contribution to the budget debate: I wonder why I am surprised. I am not surprised by these allocations because Geraldton is a marginal seat. This budget is very much a recycling of last year's announcements. Pretty much every program I read out tonight had the same capital item last year, although the expenditure has been raised a little this year. Of course, the Government is trying to keep its nose clean in Geraldton because it is a marginal seat.

Having given the Government some credit, I look at the other side of the equation. Two and a half years ago in the last state election campaign, the Labor Party claimed - the Premier must live with this for this term of government - that there would be no increases in taxes and charges. Again this budget has increased taxes and charges. This may be an opportunity to remind the House of those increases. Water and sewerage will increase by 3.3 per cent; stamp duty by 15 per cent; compulsory third party and drivers licences by three per cent; bus and train fares by three per cent; and home insurance by 25 per cent. Prior to the last election, the Premier ran the line that there would be no increases in taxes and charges. These increases will hit ordinary Western Australians - mums and dads, young people, families and those who can ill afford any of the items I have read out.

In the housing market there will be an increase in stamp duty. It is again timely to remind the House of these increases. The stamp duty on a \$100 000 home will increase from \$2 200 to \$2 530; on a \$150 000 home from \$4 275 to \$4 905; on a \$200 000 home from \$6 530 to \$7 280; and, finally, on a half million dollar home from \$21 300 to \$24 405. Those are significant sums of money. Obviously these increases will make a pretty big dent in the current subsidy that first home buyers get for their first home. It will also make a dent in the budgets of people who wish to move to a bigger or better home. This budget will not help any of the people I mentioned - families, young people or old people. They will be hit in the pocket for travelling, running a car, using water - which is a basic right - and insuring their home. It is to the detriment of people not to insure their home, given the crimes that are being committed nowadays. Whether or not those people like it, they must pay that increase. I again remind the Premier that he said there would be no increases in taxes and charges. The Treasurer can take some heart from the fact that his AAA credit rating is still in place. I remind him that in the three years he has been Treasurer, increases to taxes and charges have totalled \$410 million.

I move on to some issues that I believe are relevant to the State, but are particularly relevant to my electorate. One issue is road funding. In the financial years 2003-04 and 2006-07 reductions in road funding will amount to some \$200 million. I understand that Main Roads costs have risen, due in no small part to the return to a 37.5-hour working week and other conditions granted under the new industrial relations laws. The IR laws in that

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sector are starting to bite and have resulted in the loss of some flexibility in that work force. It is laughable that the Government calls itself a consultative Government. Local governments have probably been hit hardest by the road funding reductions. They have told me that the Government's notion of consultation is a matter of local governments being completely ignored and being told exactly what they will lose; that is, some \$14.2 million.

In 2000 an agreement was signed between the State Government of the day and local governments for on-funding over five years. Those figures were agreed to then. The agreement was put before this Government when it came to power and the Government committed itself to honouring that agreement which provided that \$92 million would be allocated in 2003-04. The budget for this year is only \$77.7 million. It is worth detailing how that money will be spent. According to the figures I have, \$1.3 million is to be put into the strategic and technical report, which relates to the Roman computer system that local governments use. Direct grants to councils equate to \$11.86 million. The main amount of money that local governments look for, and through the agreement have been receiving for some time, relates to the road project grants that are given to the regional road groups the councils contract to work on their roads. This is the area in which the \$14.3 million reduction has affected the councils. Only \$23.64 million will be spent in that area this year, as opposed to the \$37 million that was to have been spent under the agreement. Some \$12.1 million will be directed to traffic management and road safety, and \$2.49 million will be provided for road access to Aboriginal communities. Spending on bridges will equate to \$3.29 million, spending on roads within Department of Conservation and Land Management land, Rottneest Island and Kings Park will be worth \$2.5 million, and \$23.5 million will be provided for state initiatives for local roads. There has been a significant decrease in funding. On top of that, the State has cut its contributions to the supplementary fund, which is an emergency fund established for use by local government. The fund is generally kept at \$6 million and was used if there was damage resulting from cyclones, floods, earthquakes or other acts of God. Under the agreement, if the \$6 million was not used in any one year, the funds would be given to local governments to share. That has been stopped. The fund currently contains \$7 million, but it will not be distributed and then topped up. Local governments will not have the use of that \$7 million. The fund will be purely an emergency fund. That is another \$7 million that will not be given to local government.

Local governments expect funding for the first three items I itemised - the strategic and technical report, direct grants and road project grants - to comprise 60 per cent of the total road funding they receive. However, this year they will comprise only 47 per cent. That is significant, and will impact on local governments and the labour they use. It will have a huge impact on the local economies of regional towns, particularly those smaller towns in the wheatbelt and the great southern. It will have ramifications for road safety. I provide an illustration of some of the road safety issues that will arise from a reduction in road funding. A local winery in the Shire of Chapman Valley wrote to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure some time ago, and sent me a copy of that letter. It is worth reminding the minister of its contents. The letter refers to a road and states -

This road provides access for school buses, wheat trucks, stock carriers, commercial vehicles, the farming community and an increasing number of tourists taking advantage of the scenic route through the attractive hinterland. It also provides access to local vineyards and olive farms; a growing industry within the area bringing to the Midwest real potential for significant growth in the tourist trade.

This road, Howatharra Road, links the North West Coastal Highway to Chapman Valley Road, another significant road in the Chapman Valley area. The letter states -

Howatharra Road has the following problems:

- Minimal gravel base remaining, therefore grading provides only a few days respite from deep corrugations.
- Dangerous sharp curves which combined with the corrugations have caused 8 roll overs, numerous skids and a number of crashes into fences, bush and trees over the past 8 years.
- A narrow river crossing with minimal all weather surface remaining, resulting in deep pot holes and an unsafe crossing during winter.

Chapman Valley Wines was established 8 years ago, and has brought to the area a \$3 million dollar wine industry, employment for up to 20 people, and a tourist trade that brings to the region significant benefits. The visiting public, employees and local commuters constantly voice their concern about the condition of this road, and people are of the strong view that it is only a matter of time before a fatal accident occurs as a result of the road's condition.

I use that as an example because I believe that if that particular situation existed in the metropolitan area, it would have been fixed forthwith, with no argument. Because it is out in a region, it impacts on only a small

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percentage of people. The reason for the example can be understood from what I have read out. The problem is that we are returning to controlled decision-making on road priorities, and the right of local government to determine its own priorities for spending its own money is being taken away.

I remind the Treasurer and the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection that fuel prices in country areas are still way up in the clouds in comparison to the metropolitan area. I enjoy coming down to the metropolitan area in my vehicle because I can then get reasonably cheap fuel. When I go back to the mid west, I am still paying over \$1 a litre for fuel. I have no doubt, Mr Speaker, that in your part of the world, the Pilbara, you would also be experiencing that.

Another issue I wish to raise came through this House in legislation on land clearing. I have had some experience with my local farming community with land clearing. I warn the Government that it needs to be careful how the land clearing legislation is enacted. I understand that it is in the upper House, and has some 150 amendments. One of the members of the National Party commented on this issue, and I will do the same thing. The farming community is struggling after three or four years of drought in my area and other parts of the State. In the main the community is made up of genuine people who operate their farms as businesses. They do it for all the best reasons, and they are the last people who would want to see their farms devalued through bad decisions on clearing resulting in degrading of their land. It is in their own interests not to do that. I take some exception to this new environmental enforcement unit. It would be far better if the Environmental Protection Authority went in with the view of creating a partnership with the farming community, rather than targeting people and trying to use the heavy hand of enforcement. I will quote from an article in the *Countryman* of some weeks ago -

... new environmental enforcement unit chief, Det-Supt Richard Lane, would target those who have breached laws in the interim period -

That is, before the Bill is enacted -

as part of his review of environmental prosecution and enforcement which would start on Monday.

It is unfortunate that we are looking at enforcement rather than some sort of discussion with the farming community, through associations, the WA Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. I will comment again on the agricultural resource security, at both state and federal levels. It has been picked up by the National Farmers Federation President, Peter Corish, who said -

... the battle to maintain property rights will occupy centre stage over the coming months.

In his keynote address to the PGA annual conference last week -

The article does not have a date on it, but it is two or three weeks ago -

Mr Corish said farmers' right to farm was under greater threat than at any other time in recent history.

The Government needs to be careful about how it approaches this issue. It needs to seek advice from the farming community rather than try to impose its will on what farmers can and cannot do.

While I am speaking on farming, I want to also mention the Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Protection Board, which I think is now called Biosecurity. It is interesting to note that the Treasurer made no mention in his speech of agriculture. Agriculture is, of course, one of the largest industries in this State and nation. There has been a downsizing of the Department of Agriculture - I think that has been recognised even by the Government itself - and a downsizing of the former Agriculture Protection Board. In my area of the mid west, there has been a downsizing of field officers. There is now one APB officer who basically looks after the mid west region from Northampton through to Three Springs and out to Pindar; one maintenance officer on the fence, who I think operates out of Yalgoo; and one officer at Southern Cross. There is a real shortage of those officers. There is also a shortage of doggers in the area. That issue was raised again in debate last week. Again, the Government should look at the agricultural region and the staffing levels of the Department of Agriculture, which is supposed to be the support department for the farming community. Again, in terms of staff, we have a brand new office in Geraldton that I think is supposed to house some 60 people, but I gather that fewer than 40 people now operate out of that office and the Department of Agriculture is seeking to lease out some of the space.

While I am talking about agriculture, I also want to mention Johnne's disease. I think I am correct in saying that the third case of this disease has been reported in this State in the past 12 months; it might even be in only the past eight or nine months. Johnne's disease affects both cattle and sheep - it is both bovine and ovine. There has been one case in the south west, one case somewhere in the mid wheatbelt area, and one case in my part of the

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world. Immediately this disease is found on a farm, the farm is put into quarantine for three years and the farmers cannot do anything with the animals that they have. In the example I am talking about, the animals are worth probably \$4 000 on the hoof for their wool, and probably for their meat as well, but mainly for their wool because they are Angora goats and have the best gene pool in Australia. These farmers have been put into quarantine for three years, and because their farm cannot be used for the purpose of farming, they are now basically without an income for the next three years. There is a need for some infrastructure, and it will probably be up to the Government to take the lead role in this matter, to compensate people who through no fault of their own find themselves in this position. I am not saying it is something the Government should take the blame for; it is not. However, it is something that the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries needs to pick up, because there have been three instances of this disease in the past eight or nine months, and if this disease continues to break out there will be other people in similar situations. It is an area that needs to be addressed.

I will also speak about the supply of power to the northern wheatbelt area. I have previously raised this issue in this place and I intend to do so again. As has been said before, the power supply infrastructure in these areas is deteriorating. My colleagues from the National Party have raised this issue. This budget gives very little hope to the townships of Dongara and Kalbarri, which desperately require improvements to their power supply. The power supply to those areas is continually interrupted. If that were to happen in the metropolitan area, if every other day the lights went out for three, four or sometimes eight hours and the freezers of businesses went down for up to five or six hours, something would be done about it smartish; it would be done tomorrow. However, these power disruptions are occurring in regional Western Australia. I question the Government's commitment to those two communities. I have previously raised the example of the lime sands plant in Dongara. That is a financial operation. It needs only a small flicker in the power supply for the ignition flame to go out, and it can take anything up to four hours to relight. The lady who runs the local supermarket in Dongara said that the power sometimes goes down at one o'clock in the morning. She was not aware of the problem when she first took over the supermarket, and when the power came back on after her first blackout, 29 motors in the supermarket promptly burnt themselves out because they obviously took on too great a load. She now has an alarm system that works quite well, but she must still get up at one or two o'clock in the morning to turn off some of the motors so that they do not start up together.

A side comment is that I am sure the residents of Kalbarri and Dongara are pleased that \$17.3 million will be spent on underground power for their metropolitan cousins, while they still do not have an uninterrupted power supply. I will extrapolate that a bit more. If the capital contribution of some \$110 million that will be provided to the Government by Western Power or the Office of Energy this coming year were added to the \$17.3 million to be spent on underground power, the Government might have been able to construct some turbines or something of that ilk for these regional communities, particularly as the gas pipeline runs inland only 40 or 50 kilometres from one of these townships and about 10 kilometres inland from the other. I understand that major transmission works will continue on the voltage line from Pinjar to Cataby and Eneabba, and from Waterloo to Busselton and Moora to Wongan Hills. Some \$97.5 million will be spent on infrastructure to ensure the reliability and capacity of the network. That is fine for those who have a network that works. I may agree with the member for Stirling; perhaps the idea of no power, no pay would bring home to the Government how pissed off those communities are. They are thoroughly frustrated and upset with the power supply situation that they face.

Transport is another issue I will touch on. In general, the transport industry has probably accepted the accreditation system the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has introduced. Again, I come back to the effect on the farming community. I do not think there is enough flexibility in the accreditation system for the farming community. In the main, farmers use their trucks twice a year to cart seed and superphosphate to their properties during seeding time, and, of course, during harvest time to take the crop of grain to the bins. It seems that with the accreditation system as it now stands, these farmers must spend quite a lot of money to get accredited. They must do an enormous amount of paperwork. It is an onus on them that is not necessary.

Another area to which I draw attention is the lack of commonsense that so often overtakes bureaucrats, and perhaps in this case has also overtaken the minister, because she may not understand this situation. I say to the minister that under one of the new regulations, when large hay bales are carried on truck trailers or on the back of semitrailers, those vehicles cannot be driven at night. I cannot remember what the other regulation states, but certainly one of the regulations states that those vehicles cannot be driven at night because of the safety aspects involved. I have inspected the amount of overhang of one of these big hay bales on a truck. Quite frankly, it was no more than about three inches. If that is deemed a safety issue, I would eat my hat. A silly, petty regulation is being imposed on these farmers. I will put it this way: the machines that make the hay bales are built in the United States, I think, and they are built to a specification, as are the truck trailers that operate on our

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roads. The United States will certainly not change the specifications to which they build those balers, and the truck bodies will not be changed in this State or in Australia either. A bit of flexibility, commonsense and understanding needs to prevail. Again I say that perhaps the people who make these rules and regulations need to go to these areas and look at what they are asking the farming community to do. It is a stupid regulation that needs to be changed.

I also mention the issue of the school buses, which has been an ongoing problem. I gather that the school bus drivers are talking about striking in a month. It will be the first time in their history that they have gone on strike. This issue has gone on for too long. I believe that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure needs to take a positive lead on this issue. She said that she is doing so, but she is obviously not getting through to the school bus drivers. These people convey our children around the countryside in safety. I believe I am right in saying - touch wood - that there has not been an accident in the 70 years, or whatever it is, that they have been driving these buses. This issue needs to be resolved quickly.

I also raise the issue of the Morawa Hospital. About 12 or 15 months ago an upgrade of the existing hospital was planned. This Government decided to stop that and paid out the contractor some \$178 000 at that time. A new multipurpose service building was to be built for some \$5 million. That was all good and fine, and I give the Government credit for that. However, in this budget only \$20 000 has been allocated for plans and drawings. I believe the Morawa residents were expecting that a new hospital would be built in the next 18 months to two years. If the Government is spending only \$20 000 this year, that is not likely to happen, so the expectations of those people will not be realised. I give the Government credit for putting some \$7 million into the budget for the Geraldton Regional Hospital, and I believe work on that will start fairly swiftly.

I will quickly deal with the heritage issue. The new Bill for which we have been waiting two and a half years has still not been introduced to this House. Of course, the previous minister, Graham Kierath, put together a Bill in 2000. It did not make it to the Parliament. However, I believe it was agreed to by almost everybody. I wonder why the minister has still not managed to introduce that Bill to the House.

I will also comment on the East Perth power station. I asked a question about that in the House today. It seems that the minister is sitting on her hands on this issue. There have been plenty of meetings and discussions, but it does not seem to have progressed much further. Some people in the private sector are quite prepared to put together partnerships with some of the heritage agencies to try to save that icon - I do not like to use the word "icon", but I think that is what we must call it. It is part of the history of this State and some action needs to be taken pretty swiftly on it before it falls in a great heap. I understand that money needs to be spent on other issues such as health and education. However, it is the role of the Government to balance those moneys amongst all its portfolios.

The Sunset hospital, Edward Millen home, the lower land at Heathcote and the Treasury buildings are other heritage issues that this Government has not yet been able to come to terms with. I am aware that Minister Stephens is wringing his hands because it costs something like \$20 million a year to maintain those buildings. That is all good and fine, but he would be better off trying to find a solution rather than wringing his hands on the problem. I suggest to him that the previous Government set the example with Heathcote hospital, which is near the Raffles Hotel, and came to a very good arrangement that seems to be working well. Why try to reinvent the wheel? Maybe he should take a lesson out of the book that was used for Heathcote hospital.

There is a cut in funding for heritage grants of about \$1 million this year. That is not a great incentive to people who own heritage homes or buildings and wish to preserve them. The heritage grants were most helpful to many people, and many private owners used those heritage grants to attract other grants to keep the heritage of the State alive and in a good state. Again, that is an area that the Government is failing in and needs to address.

I will also comment on retail trading hours and the impact that deregulation will have in a country area such as the mid west. If deregulated trading hours are introduced in my area, some 900 jobs could be at stake. I know that the businesspeople in the Geraldton and mid west regions do not trust the Premier and the Government on this issue. Although we have heard lots of honeyed words, they do not believe the Premier; they believe that deregulation is a matter of course and they feel some trepidation about where it will lead. It will mean a loss of staff to many of those businesspeople and of course will have a knock-on effect on the people who supply the local grocers and bakers, particularly family supermarkets. The Premier needs to be very definitive about whether he will deregulate trading hours. At the moment he has left it hanging in the air and people are not sure which way they will have to jump.

Finally, I will comment on youth traineeships. I am aware that the local high school at Kalbarri is attempting to put in place a youth traineeship scheme. That is nothing new. I give credit to the Minister for Education and Training, because I have spoken to him and he is prepared to support that scheme. It is a very good initiative and

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it needs to be followed up. It is our young people who, hopefully, will run our State in years to come. If the best education we can give them is through traineeships and a good school education, I encourage the continuation of those traineeships. They probably work hand in hand with cadetships, which the member for Murdoch spoke about yesterday. It is a real shame that the minister responsible for that portfolio will not allow cadetships to continue. They were a wonderful idea and were very popular with young people.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [11.05 pm]: Tonight I will talk about the State Government's unflagging and continued commitment to public housing, which is manifest in the budget. I have spoken in this House frequently and elsewhere about the tremendous positive impact of the New Living program and, in particular, a component of that program, the New North development, which is in my electorate.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So you recognise the contribution of the former minister -

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have in the past, Leader of the Opposition, and I will continue to do so.

I have talked in this place on previous occasions about the outcomes of that program that continue to astound. However, today I will focus more on why the financial provision for public housing is important and also on the pending commonwealth-state housing agreement, which is due to expire on 30 June this year. Although that agreement has not yet been concluded, it has already become apparent that public housing resources in the State will be placed under additional stress. There are indications that unless a more integrated policy is developed, future demand for social housing - especially for the indigenous, the frail aged, the homeless and the disadvantaged - will escalate and it will become increasingly hard for this State to meet that demand. It is anticipated that the new CSHA will remain in force until 2008, but, as I said, the finalisation of the new agreement is likely to conclude shortly.

Recently, the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Amanda Vanstone, has claimed that the new agreement will provide a better deal for disadvantaged Australians. She further claims that the financial burden for the provision of social housing is disproportionately met by the Commonwealth. These claims cannot be sustained on any critical analysis for reasons that will follow.

As most members in this place are aware, the CSHA provides a special purpose payment from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories and it has provided capital funding for social housing in Australia since the Chifley era in 1945. CSHA funding consists of base funding, which is not tied to any specific housing program, and specific housing funding for indigenous housing, crisis accommodation and community housing. States and Territories must match this base funding on the basis of \$1 for every \$2 received. CSHA funding for Western Australia has declined in real terms from \$96 million in 1989-90 to \$76 million - in 1989-90 dollars - in 2002-03. This decline is attributed to a number of factors that include the lack of indexation of funds for price rises and the importation of an efficiency dividend of one per cent since 1996-97. The CSHA funding is the only specific purpose payment that is not currently subject to indexation. Although, as I will explain later, I am gratified that at least the Commonwealth in its new agreement intends to provide for some level of indexation.

Under the new proposed CSHA, which will be a five-year agreement, the States and Territories will receive \$4.75 billion in grants, and for that period Western Australia is estimated to receive a share of \$490 million. Unlike the earlier grants, under the new agreement there will be indexation of a wage cost component. Unfortunately, that will not start until the second year, 2004-05, and the so-called efficiency dividend of one per cent will continue to apply and will be deducted after indexation. The State will be required under the new CSHA agreement to match base funding. For Western Australia this figure is \$34 million in 2003-04 and \$175 million over the life of the agreement.

Of major significance in the context of the new agreement is that five per cent of base funding, in other words, \$3.5 million in 2003-04, will be dependent upon an adequate performance in two areas: reducing workforce disincentives for public tenants and increasing the amount of private investment in public housing. These conditions or incentives placed on the States are consistent with conditional funding that is provided in other areas where the Commonwealth seeks to impose its ideological frame of reference on the States. It is highly contestable whether such clumsy levers do anything other than provide the Commonwealth with an excuse to withhold funds. In the absence of a more comprehensive policy framework for housing in this country, such mechanisms are unlikely to produce effective outcomes.

The sanctions for non-performance of these conditions will result in the withholding of five per cent of base funding. Of most significance in the context of the forthcoming commonwealth-state housing agreement is the failure of the Commonwealth to compensate the States and Territories for substantial losses incurred through the goods and services tax. Residential rents are input taxed under the GST, which means that state housing authorities can neither charge GST on their rents nor claim back the cost of the GST on their operations. However, following a common stand by the state and territory ministers in 1999, at the time, the Commonwealth

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agreed in the “Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations” to provide compensation for the impact of GST on public housing of \$269 million over the last three years of the 1999 CSHA. Under that agreement, Western Australia received \$8.533 million in compensation each year. In addition, during that period the State provided an additional \$3.48 million per annum to compensate Homeswest for the quarantining of the GST compensation paid to beneficiaries and public housing from rent assessment. However, I understand that in the negotiations for the new CSHA, Senator Vanstone has specifically stated that there would be no further money from the Commonwealth in the next CSHA to compensate for the GST. This indication has significant financial implications for this State. Western Australia will not begin to receive a surplus of GST revenue over that which it would have received under previous financial arrangements until 2007 or 2008. This will have major adverse outcomes.

In the first year of the agreement, Western Australia is likely to lose \$9.5 million compared with 2002-03 and commonwealth funding would then rise by just over \$1 million per annum except during the years 2005-06 when additional funding for indigenous housing will cease. However, Senator Vanstone claims that under the new CSHA the offer represents an additional \$213 million compared with funding that the States and Territories would have received under the currency of the current agreement. However, this calculation has not taken into account the loss of GST compensation, which would have totalled approximately \$448 million over the five years of the currency of the agreement, and represents an Australia-wide loss of \$235 million in commonwealth funds for public housing in this country. In other words, the federal minister is saying the agreement represents an additional \$213 million; however, when the loss of compensation for the GST is taken into account, it represents a reduction of some \$235 million. From Western Australia’s perspective this means a net reduction of \$21 million over five years. I repeat, that means a loss to Western Australia of \$21 million over five years. In real terms, this represents a loss of some 200 new public housing dwelling commencements over the period.

Although provision has been made for indexation, because it does not start until the second year of the agreement, it also means that less revenue will flow to the States than could have reasonably been anticipated. The Commonwealth’s actions clearly speak louder than its rhetoric. The reduction attained clearly signals the Commonwealth’s intentions and philosophy. The Commonwealth is not even prepared to maintain the status quo. More significantly, the Commonwealth is not even prepared to address a range of very important emerging issues in the area of public housing. In the context of the discussions for the new commonwealth-state housing agreement, the Commonwealth was ideally placed to exercise leadership to ensure that a comprehensive policy framework existed, which was capable of addressing a range of emerging and pressing issues. Showing real leadership in this context means that a range of issues had to be addressed in a broad and comprehensive manner, including the first home owners scheme, tax settings, commonwealth rent assistance and the CSHA. Those issues need to be discussed and resolved in a cooperative and open manner in partnership with the States and Territories.

In the 2001 F. Oswald Barnett oration, “Out of the Policy Vacuum: Putting Housing Back on the Public Policy Agenda”, leading town planner and architect, Professor Terry Burke made some observations from findings of reviews over a number of years relating to housing needs and emerging issues. They included the 1998 housing review, the 1992 national housing strategy and the 1993 industry commission report into public housing. The observations, although somewhat lengthy, are apposite when we talk about the lost opportunity for the Commonwealth to become a leader and bring in a new policy framework on public housing in conjunction with the new CSHA. Professor Burke states -

As a society, we have a whole new set of housing and housing related problems to deal with, most of which were signposted in the above reviews and reports, but a set of policy levers which reflect a narrow interpretation of these problems - that is, rent assistance, with its emphasis on market processes - and an institutional structure comprising the CSHA and state housing agencies, which are hangovers from the modernist era. Most other problem areas have been pushed under the carpet, and policy initiatives such as the Better Cities program that enabled a broader solution have been abandoned. I think it is fair to say that, in housing policy, little is working well, although social housing agencies are doing their best in a harsh climate, and a whole set of problems and opportunities are being overlooked by lack of policy initiatives and the appropriate institutional structures.

Most importantly, the context created a new set of policy agendas for politicians and policy makers which pushed housing further out of the public and policy consciousness. The new agendas - globalisation, deregulation, privatisation, tax reform, federal-state relations and public sector reform - led to new concerns and new debates in which housing and urban issues largely disappeared. And yet these new agendas are highly relevant to housing. Indeed, one of the reasons that the housing problems

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alluded to earlier are all worse than a decade ago is because of the income distribution and housing market changes created by these very processes.

...

... over the last decade, the housing debate has been narrowed to one of housing assistance and even more sharply to one of public housing reform, despite the latter accounting for less than 6 per cent of stock. Why this was the case largely derives from the doctrine of economic rationalism which by the 1990s had affected virtually every area of public policy in Australia.

As this perspective basically sees the market as an effective allocator of resources, subject to minimum safety-net interventions, it is not surprising that the housing problems and policies were defined in terms of rationing assistance to potential safety-net households. Broad issues and problems that attracted concerns in earlier periods - for example, the role of housing markets affected by urban form, the achievement of home ownership, the role of housing as an economic driver, or issues of regional development - were no longer concerns of governments who believed in a minimalist state.

The market could be left to address these areas, with the housing problem becoming defined narrowly to an income assistance problem and the need for public housing reform. This narrowing of focus was accentuated in the mid- to late 1990s by the relatively unusual combination of all but one of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments being Coalition or Liberal. With a dominance of conservative regimes, which traditionally are more pro-market and less socially oriented than Labor governments, there was no policy window for a broader housing focus to emerge. There was, in effect, a policy hegemony that closed down alternative debate.

Mr Speaker, I regret the lost opportunity to formulate a comprehensive national housing policy in conjunction with the finalisation of the commonwealth-state housing agreement. That policy could have been innovative in the delivery of housing services and also have the capacity to provide further incentives for private investment. I also regret that the parsimony of the Commonwealth has placed more pressure on state finances, forcing us to do more with less.

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [11.23 pm]: I rise to comment on the Gallop Government's third budget and to highlight the concerns I hold for this budget, which brings with it bad news for all Western Australians. It is nothing more than a regurgitation of previous announcements. This is the worst budget I have seen in the six and a half years that I have been in this place. Quite frankly, the Government can dress it up with all the bells and whistles it likes, but Western Australian taxpayers are outraged by this Government's lack of direction and, more importantly, the contempt the Government seems to have for the community at large.

From my electorate's perspective, I am hard-pressed to find anything in the budget papers. There is nothing there for my community at all, except that it will wear the hikes in taxes and charges - a hike of \$182 million in taxes and charges that adds to the existing \$250 million burden imposed by the Gallop Government's first two budgets, plus the \$1 billion of further debt. So much for the Government's promise not to increase taxes and charges! What we have seen is yet another year of this Government's broken promises on its pre-election commitments. The huge blow-out in debt is, in our view, caused by the re-routing of the Mandurah to Perth railway, which is fast becoming a nightmare for the Government. Its total mismanagement of this infrastructure project has put at risk so many other key service areas that have been totally ignored and neglected, particularly the disability sector.

I will speak further about the Perth to Mandurah railway in due course. I reiterate the comments I have made previously, that this Government has its priorities all wrong.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr F.M. Logan: The constituents are very excited about that.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I am sure they are, but it is two years late and it will definitely not be on time.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: Or budget.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It will certainly not be within budget. I reiterate: this Government has its priorities totally wrong. The increase in stamp duty on home purchases, the increase in third party motor vehicle insurance rates and other general insurances, along with public transport fare hikes, are all bad news for Western Australians. The massive increase in stamp duty on home purchases is an absolute disincentive for people trying to purchase their own homes. My office has already received numerous calls, letters and e-mails from constituents who are concerned about this matter and the imposition of such a massive hike in taxes and charges.

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We have identified that \$50 million less than the amount budgeted for was spent on road construction, and we are now staring down the barrel of a further \$200 million cut from the Main Roads budget over the next four years - more bad news. Clearly, it is also more bad news for road safety, yet the Government is trying to convince the Opposition and the community that it is committed to road safety. We note not only these funding cuts but also that the Government is trying to prop up road maintenance with funds derived from Multanovas and red-light cameras. Having a good road system is the first step towards providing safe roads. It is time this Government got its priorities right in that area. It has shown a clear lack of commitment to road safety evidenced by the budget and the Government's over-reliance on Multanovas rather than relying on police to keep our roads safe. Multanovas cannot do the job of a police officer, particularly on the roads. They cannot pull over drivers who are speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol, failing to wear seatbelts or driving when their licence has been suspended. Our roads are not patrolled by enough police. Although I acknowledge the revenue raised from the use of Multanovas has decreased, which is a positive sign because it means the message not to speed is finally reaching the target audience, Multanovas will never do the job of police officers.

I firmly believe that the Government is hell-bent on putting revenue raising ahead of safety on our roads and is paying lip service to road safety. I recently attended a briefing with the police on the location of Multanovas. I found it very curious that the clear direction is not so much to place them in black spots but where the most number of motorists pass. Their placement is clearly a revenue raising exercise. They are a cash cow for a desperate Government. On 24 April I was driving down Stirling Highway and found it interesting that two Multanovas were in position - one near the rose garden on Stirling Highway in Nedlands and one near the Old Swan Brewery site. I am not convinced that that is about saving people's lives. It is not. It is simply aimed at raising revenue. It is not good enough, and I urge the Government to reconsider the distribution of Multanovas. The number of road tragedies on our State's roads has increased recently and we need to send the message to people that Multanovas will be placed where they will save lives.

Mr P.B. Watson: Don't you think that the strategy of placing two Multanovas on the same stretch of road to trap the motorists who think they can speed after passing through the first camera is a good one? The second camera has a better chance of picking up people further on, which occurs very successfully on country roads. After the first camera, people think there won't be any more cameras so they speed and get picked up by the second one. That is a good idea.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is true. However, in the metropolitan area the policy on Multanovas is that they are nothing more than revenue raisers. If we are serious about cutting our state road toll, Multanovas must be placed where they will send a clear message to motorists to slow down. That is the bottom line. I would support the placement of two cameras on country highways, but in the metropolitan area it is aimed at raising revenue.

An opposition member: Not at the bottom of a hill where people naturally speed up.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Yes. How many times do members see Multanovas in their electorates? On a couple of roads in my electorate cameras are placed at the bottom of a hill. We all know that cars naturally increase speed as they reach the bottom of a hill, which means one can be pinged.

Several members interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The member for Mandurah can laugh. I am sure he has never been picked up for speeding!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I will not be distracted. This area concerns all of us. We all want to see the number of deaths on our State's roads reduced. I do not believe that Multanovas should be placed in an area where the object is to catch unsuspecting motorists. The metropolitan area has many places with variable speeds. At one minute people are driving in a 60-kilometre speed limit. They then go through a 70-kilometre speed limit and into an 80-kilometre speed limit. Motorists must concentrate on so many things. They must try to observe the many speed variables.

We have regrettably seen an increase in the number of road fatalities. Since the beginning of the year, 74 people have died on the State's roads - six more than last year. This budget exposes the Government's lip service to road safety issues in so many ways. We have seen a cut in the number of hours that police have spent policing our roads. As my colleague the member for Kalgoorlie recently exposed, added to this, the real number of police recruited by the Gallop Government since its election in 2001 has been less than it promised. The Government has not delivered on its promise to increase police numbers by 250 officers over the term of its government. Since coming to office the Government has increased police numbers by only an extra 32. It is not meeting the

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attrition rate of police officers, which I understand is 194 officers who voluntarily leave the Police Service every year. To deliver on its election commitment it needs to deliver somewhere in the vicinity of 606 police officers in the next two years. It is a big ask. Certainly the Government is not keeping up with the rate of attrition and nor is it keeping up with its election commitment. I have said that this budget is all bad news. The Government is paying lip service to road safety at the expense of motorists in general.

The minister tabled the road safety spending report just prior to the budget. It included general road maintenance spending. The Government's attempt to try to fool Western Australians by including items like \$9 000 on private advertising signs, \$160 000 on fencing road reserves and street lighting as road safety initiatives will not go unnoticed. That funding should quite clearly come out of Main Roads budget, which, as I have already stated, has seen \$50 million less than was budgeted for spent on road construction, with a further \$200 million cut over the next four years. This Government stated in its pre-election commitments that it would use all speed and red-light camera proceeds to reduce the road toll. I refer to the Government's pre-election policy entitled "Getting transport back on track" in which it states -

Currently only one-third of the revenue collected from speed and red-light cameras is set aside specifically for road safety initiatives through the Road Trauma Trust Fund.

Labor believes that the unacceptably high incidence of death and injury on our roads is a serious issue that has not been adequately addressed by the Court Government.

Labor will use all speed and red light camera proceeds to reduce the road toll through the Road Trauma Trust Fund, the blackspot program and the road enhancement program.

They are great words in great rhetoric by the Labor Party before it was elected in 2001. However, road safety is about improving dangerous intersections and sections of road where there have been fatalities and serious accidents. It is about installing warning lights, more education campaigns and the like. It is not about streetscaping. It is certainly not about resealing roads, which is a maintenance issue, the cost of which should simply come out of the Main Roads budget and not be funded by speed camera and red-light revenue. Road trauma causes too many people in our community too much grief and heartache. We could talk about the number of accidents in our State. A recent tragedy occurred in my electorate in which a 19-year-old was killed on Marmion Avenue. A monument has been set up for him. Many white crosses are scattered across the State, and this serious issue should be dealt with it in a bipartisan manner. The road trauma trust fund should not be tied to red-light and speed camera revenue. A specific amount should be set aside and committed to ensure the safety of motorists on our road.

The Injury Control Council of Western Australia states in its position paper on road crash trauma that the cost of road trauma in Australia is estimated to be more than \$6 billion a year, and exceeds \$1 billion annually in Western Australia. How can the Government say it is committed to road safety when it has done no more than commit to road maintenance? I repeat that this should come from the already savaged Main Roads budget.

This budget highlights the Government's shallowness in terms of its pre-election commitments. We all have a great interest in the budget. I know that the coalition country members in the Chamber have serious concerns about country roads. Simply, those areas of concern are not alleviated in the budget.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: The south west region has received no money in the budget for any significant new road construction projects, and not one item is in the forward estimates. Road funding has gone from over \$60 million to around \$20 million. The direct result of that will be a dramatic reduction in road safety for people travelling in the south west region.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is correct, Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We will continue to see more fatalities on those roads.

Mr E.S. Ripper: He could continue the whole speech for you, if you want.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I was interested in the what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had to say, even if the Treasurer was not. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition advocated for his community and for the many people who shoot down to the south west to enjoy the wonderful region. I am sure the Treasurer visits on frequent occasions.

On another matter, the Government must recommit funding to the ongoing education and research programs, such as the Australasian Spinal Research Trust. I understand from discussions with the Australasian Spinal Research Trust, which is a world leader in brain and spinal cord research, that its research is under threat because there appears to be no guarantee from the Government that it will continue to fund the annual \$500 000 grant received until now for this invaluable research. This program could unfortunately be lost to the eastern States or

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overseas. Some 600 people suffer a brain or spinal cord injury every year, at a cost to the State of \$100 million. A significant proportion of spinal and brain injuries are the direct result of motor vehicle accidents. It is most appropriate that some of the proceeds from camera revenue should be directed to research to reduce the social and economic impact of neuro-trauma. The ongoing funding of this research could ultimately lead to a cure for spinal cord injury paralysis, and \$500 000 is a small price to pay for such work.

I will analyse what the Government has thus far committed to road safety and reflect on what we did when we were in government in the same areas of funding, funding that this Government claims it has increased since the election in 2001. In the financial year 2000-01 the coalition Government committed a third of its speed camera and red-light revenue to road safety, which at that stage was \$10 million; \$13 million to black spot funding; and \$42 million to road enhancement, which came from the Main Roads budget. That was a total commitment of \$65 million when we were in government. Under this Government in the financial year 2001-02 the road trauma trust fund, which gets a third of the camera and red-light revenue, received \$16.4 million. That was \$6.4 million more than we committed in the previous year. However, members must understand that that was a third of the revenue. Black spot funding was \$13 million in 2001-02. The Gallop Government gave a commitment to put in an extra \$2 million. That did not appear in last year's budget but apparently appears in this year's budget; there will, therefore, be an extra \$4 million this year in black spot funding. Do not ask me why that happened; that is how it appears. The funding for road enhancement in 2001-02 was \$32.9 million. The bottom line is that funding for road safety totalled \$62.3 million, compared with our commitment the previous year of \$65 million.

In the financial year 2002-03 a third of the revenue, \$20.6 million, will go to the road trauma trust fund; \$17 million to black spot funding - that is with the extra \$2 million, made up of \$2 million from last year and \$2 million from this year; and \$31.7 million to road enhancement, which is down slightly on last year's figure. That gives a total of \$69.3 million. Road safety funding, therefore, is up. However, further down the track in 2003-04 it is anticipated that \$20 million will go to the road trauma trust fund, \$15 million to black spot funding and \$26.9 million to road enhancement because of a major reduction in the Main Roads budget. Next year, therefore, even less - \$61.9 million - will be allocated to this very important area.

Another area that has had no funding allocation is driver education at rail crossings. I refer to the minister's media statement of 16 April 2002 titled "Action plan to build rail crossing safety". I have raised this matter in this place previously. I refer to the matter because three young lives - sons and daughters of the Broad, Smith and Jensen families - were lost at a rail crossing. The coroner had earlier recommended that the Government consider installing strobe lighting on all trains. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure did not adopt that recommendation. She did not believe that it would make any difference to saving people's lives. That is most unfortunate. Why do we have a coroner if we are not going to take up his recommendations? The minister's media statement states -

A Western Australian Government action plan to improve safety at rail crossings will include better locomotive lighting, upgrading level crossings and a public education campaign.

The statement goes on to say -

"We also want to develop a public awareness campaign to educate road users in rail crossing safety.

"This could include more focus on level crossing issues in driver training as well as an advertising campaign highlighting the potential dangers of crossing rail lines.

Where is that campaign? Here we are, 15 months later, and it still has not happened. It is still not in the budget. When will it happen? Frankly, it is not good enough. I am sure that the Broad, Smith and Jensen families will be further disappointed by this. It is no wonder that more and more people in the community are disillusioned with this Government's direction. The loss of those children's lives should never be forgotten. If the Government were really committed to road safety, the minister's "Working Together for Road Safety" document would speak volumes. It does not. It does not address the rising number of fatalities on our roads and is clearly another example of this Government's hypocrisy.

I will touch on the re-routing of the Mandurah-Perth rail line. I am sure that will encourage interjections from the member for Mandurah. As members know, I have a great interest in this significant infrastructure project, which I have already stated has in our view resulted in a huge blow-out in our debt. The Government continues to mislead the community by saying that the Liberal Party was never going to build the railway. I will highlight the commitment we made to this area of infrastructure, and the investment we made so that the project would come to fruition.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: When would the Liberal rail line have been up and running?

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Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It would have been here by 2005.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: When will the Labor rail line be here?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It will be here by 2007, if we are lucky.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The Government will save 12 minutes with its route, but it will be delivered more than two years late. Interestingly, the Labor Party's "Getting transport back on track" document said that a Labor Government would construct the south west metropolitan railway to Rockingham by the end of 2004. It is now promising that it will be completed by 2006. The Government originally promised to extend the line to Mandurah by the end of 2005.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I am sitting right behind the member, and I cannot hear her because some peanut on the other side is making funny noises.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): The member for Carine has the call. She is entitled to make her speech without interjections. It is unparliamentary to interject.

Debate Resumed

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Mr Acting Speaker -

Mr P.B. Watson: I cannot hear it!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I want to highlight a couple of the things we did when in government as part of our commitment to deliver a southern metropolitan railway by 2005.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Mr Acting Speaker, it is all right; I can speak above the rabble on that side.

We invested \$3.8 million in the 1999 master plan, which was underpinned by studies and involved community consultation. Our rail line to Mandurah would have been completed by 2005. However, this Government wants to delay it. It looks likely that the rail might not be here until 2008.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: We built two rail tunnels, one at Albany Highway and one at Roe Highway. That was an investment of \$37.3 million. We constructed wonderful express busways that successfully service the communities in the southern metropolitan region.

Members opposite say that we were not committed to the project. We were. We consulted with the local authorities. It is simply not good enough for members opposite to say we were never committed to that project, because we were.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Are you still committed?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I would like to see a railway to Mandurah.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It is incredibly difficult to find in the budget papers the detail for the Mandurah-Perth railway. Although the Government keeps telling us the project will be on time and on budget, no-one on this side is convinced that that will be the case. It is difficult to believe that it will be on time, particularly as the Labor Party went to the election, as I have already said, with a policy to deliver it to Rockingham by 2004 and to Mandurah by 2005. At best, the Government will be lucky if it is at Rockingham in 2006. It is more likely to be there in 2007, and it will not get to Mandurah until 2008.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is coming from a party that did not lay one metre of new track in eight years!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is a nonsense.

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Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): The member for Peel!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: What about the rail tunnels?

In June 2001 the minister finally admitted that she would not be able to deliver the railway on time. We are still seeing signs that there will be further delays. One sign is that we have seen absolutely nothing to date. No work has been done. There has just been a whole lot of talk. Absolutely nothing has been done.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: They have been talking about knocking out the dedicated bus lane.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: We may see that in years to come. I understand that the minister made a commitment to the convention centre proponents, that all the roadworks on the foreshore -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: I will make sure that the member for Carine is given a ticket on the very first train.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: If I am still a member in this place, and the member for Peel is still a member, I will get on that train with him.

I understand that the minister made a commitment to the convention centre proponents that those roadworks in front of the convention centre would be completed by the time the convention centre was completed. There is absolutely no confidence in the minister that that will happen. As for being on budget, we were told in a media statement of 16 July 2001 that the cost of the direct route would be contained within the existing budget estimates. That, to date, has proved to be an absolute nonsense; another broken promise.

Let us take, for example, the \$78 million for land acquisition that is found in the Western Australian Planning Commission budget. I understand \$38 million has been allocated for the acquisition of the old Myer building in William Street. It clearly shows the Government’s complete contempt for the owners, tenants and sub-tenants with lengthy leases, who have been promised a speedy and fair resolution of their situation. The speedy and fair resolution is that they will all be sitting out on the William Street verge with no place to go. The way in which this has been managed is totally inexcusable, and has left them all hanging out to dry. The fact that we find that \$38 million in the Western Australian Planning Commission budget is outrageous. I thought that would all have been under the Western Australian Government Railways Commission budget, where it should be, so that we can see what is actually being spent on this infrastructure project. Then there is the \$50 million in the Main Roads budget for railway bridges. That is interesting. It is at the expense of roads in country regions.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: And the Peel deviation.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: And the Peel deviation.

This Government is totally out of control in its management of the rail project. Quite frankly, it is not good enough for the Government to claim that the cost of the direct route will be contained within the existing budget estimates. It simply is not. For this Government to claim that it is open and accountable is total hypocrisy.

The ongoing saga of the State’s school bus operators is another area that highlights the Government’s lack of direction.

Mr P.B. Watson: What a legacy we have there!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I have said several times in this place before that the previous Government did not get it right. The member for Wanneroo stood on the steps of the Parliament and told school bus operators that she would make sure that this would not be the never-ending story. It has become the never-ending story. All that those school bus operators want is an extra \$8 million. The Government has committed \$1.3 billion to a railway project that most of the State does not want.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Who does not want it? Tell me! That is appalling behaviour! I will speak to them myself! How dare they!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): I call the member for Mandurah to order for the first time.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The school bus operators have been endeavouring to work with the Government to secure their tenure of contracts and their composite rate. This matter is at a stalemate. Two years-plus after the Government came into office, this matter still has not been resolved. The school bus operators have had to endure threats and bullying by the minister about their contracts. It is not just me saying that. It is what the school bus operators have told me - threats and intimidation. It is a case of the Government’s saying, “Put up or shut up; we will do whatever we like.” The school bus operators are seeking a fair go. It is as simple as that. They deliver thousands of students to schools across the State. They have a safety record that is second to none.

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To simply leave them hanging out to dry is not good enough. It is time the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure got on with the job and finalised this matter.

I will now touch briefly on rail and bus security. I will deal first with rail security. This is a bit of a positive, member for Albany. Recently I went on Radio 6PR and commended the Government - do members believe that? - on its announcement that it would ensure that there was one rail transit guard on every train during the day and two guards in the evening. I actually stated that if the Government delivered on that promise, I would be the first person to commend it; and I did commend it. If Premier Gallop can deliver on that promise, I will be the first person to wave the flag for the Gallop Government. Clearly we all want a positive outcome for rail commuters. However, to date there appears to be little evidence that that is happening. The Government has said in about nine media statements that it will do it, but so far it has just been rhetoric. The Government also committed to put 50 uniformed police on the rail. It is interesting that I had a person come and talk to me, who will remain anonymous -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: The only constituent for the year, is it?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: No, member for Peel. People come rushing through my door on a regular basis. The member for Peel may like to distract me on this issue, but I can tell members that at any given time and on any given shift, no more than five uniformed police are operating on the rail network. That is a far cry from 50. What has happened to the other 45? I bet it is the same for transit guards. I will be the first to commend the Gallop Government when it delivers on that promise, but so far -

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: Another broken promise!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Exactly. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has got it right. It is another broken promise. It simply has not been delivered.

I want to touch on the Government's determination to remove Roe stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme before I run out of time -

Mr P.B. Watson: Oh no! An extension!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: A member cannot get an extension in a budget debate, member for Albany.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): Members! I am finding it very difficult to hear the member for Carine. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition's voice was clearly heard while he was out of his seat. I ask members to maintain some quiet in the Chamber, so that the member for Carine can complete her speech. It is difficult to hear who is speaking otherwise.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. At the very least the minister should keep Roe Highway stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass in the metropolitan region scheme until such time as she can convince both the Opposition and the community that she will be able to deliver on her commitment of 30 per cent of freight being carried by rail. So far, I do not believe that that will be the case. I was unfortunately not here for question time - I was paired and out of the place - but I understand that the member for Riverton asked a dorothy dixer of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in relation to some funding for Roe Highway stage 8. I understand that the minister has received a media statement from federal transport minister John Anderson. With your indulgence, Mr Acting Speaker, I will quickly read that media statement, which is dated 13 May and headed "WA Government must support Roe Highway". It states -

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, has called on the Western Australian Government to complete the Roe Highway through to Fremantle now that an additional \$15 million has been provided in the 2003-04 Federal Budget.

"The Federal Government has provided these funds on the understanding the State Government discontinues its plans to rezone land set aside for connecting the Roe Highway to the Port of Fremantle," Mr Anderson said.

"We expect the State Government to stick to the deal as presented to the Commonwealth at the time the original Roads of National Importance (RONI) agreement was made."

The project will link the Great Eastern and Great Northern highways with Perth and Jandakot airports, the main access roads to the port of Fremantle, and the major industrial sites at Kwinana and Cockburn Sound.

"The Roe Highway extension will improve the movement of freight around Perth and reduce the number of trucks using suburban streets. It will also facilitate access to Rockingham and Mandurah.

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“The completion of the Roe Highway will bring benefits of nearly four times its cost and the Federal Government believes the investment will reap considerable community benefits provided the State Government does not take action which would preclude its full completion.

“I have written to the Western Australian Minister reinforcing the Commonwealth’s position on this issue.”

This is a very important matter and one that is of great concern to many people.

I will close with a couple of comments about my electorate. As I said earlier, my electorate will be the benefactor of nothing from this budget. It will get nothing from this budget except increases -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: They get you.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: They have me, for a little while. The member for Innaloo and I will compete at the next election for half of his seat and half of mine, so that should make for an interesting election.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: Let’s hope the best looking one wins.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The member for Innaloo?

I will summarise with two points. The infill sewerage program that the coalition rolled out and to which it made a commitment was a great project.

Mr P.D. Omodei: And a great minister.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Yes, and it involved a great minister in the member for Warren-Blackwood. My community was reaping great benefits from that project. As members know, I have a coastal seat. It is a difficult area in terms of -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: Fish?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Rail lines?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: No.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Sounds like?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I was thinking about rocks and other things that are very difficult to dig through. The infill sewerage program has been delayed for several years for my constituents.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Limestone.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is it; limestone. I thank the member for Warren-Blackwood. I was referring to the limestone along the coastal areas. The delaying of that program is a great loss for my electorate, as is the case with underground power. More areas of my electorate were keen for the State Government to fund that work. I understand that there have been significant cuts to that program. That is a tragedy for my electorate. At one stage the Minister for Education and Training committed to the Duncraig Senior High School that its education support unit would be upgraded. That does not appear to be in the budget papers, and I will certainly ask the minister if the announcement that he made some months ago still stands, because that is an important issue for my electorate.

It is late and I know that members are probably eager to return to their residences. I will complete my remarks by saying that I am bitterly disappointed by this Government’s third budget, and I look forward to the Estimates Committee hearings next week.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr J.A. McGinty (Attorney General).

House adjourned at 12.05 am (Thursday)
