

suffers a 1.4 per cent reduction in the amount required to fund its outputs. This 1.4 per cent reduction is based on the 2003-04 estimated actual. A reduction of 3.03 per cent applies when the budget is compared with the 2003-04 budget allocation. Accordingly, there is no way that anyone can conclude that agriculture has received a budget bonanza. In fact, it is far from that.

This year's budget allocation continues "Good News" Gallop's plan to eradicate regional Western Australia, so that everyone finishes up in the metropolitan area or at the end of the Mandurah railway. Perhaps that is the only way that the Mandurah railway can be profitable, but then again most of the people will not have an income because they will have moved to try to find jobs. We will find ourselves in a catch-22 situation. Since 2001-02, this Government has slashed more than \$13 million, or just over 10 per cent, from the budget of the Department of Agriculture. This is incredible. Quite frankly, I find it amazing that the Government has gone out of its way to downplay the value of the Department of Agriculture to Western Australia. The Department of Agriculture provides scientific innovation to the agricultural industry. It translates into more and/or better and larger crops and herds, which translates into more dollars being put into the community in this State; in other words, it keeps the engine room ticking over. It would seem that this Government is prepared to take the value added that the department achieves from its scientific innovation, but it is not prepared to continue to provide the funding required to sustain those sorts of achievements. The minister might argue that the out years provision will allow the Department of Agriculture to regain its financial status. Although those figures look good, I doubt that they will eventuate. Moreover, in real terms, the out years figures probably only account for a small increase on the 2001-02 actuals.

Members will recall various discussions and questions in this House about the wild dog problem in pastoral areas. Broadly, this problem comes under the responsibility of the Agriculture Protection Board. Since 2001-02, the APB has seen a reduction of \$149 million or 8.4 per cent in its net amount appropriated to deliver outputs. I believe the Government is out of touch. How can it reduce funding when there is a wild dog problem that needs to be addressed in a significant way. The answer comes back to the fact that the Government is totally city-centric and is unconcerned that it is bringing these outlying regions to their knees. However, I congratulate the Government on its decision to continue with the regional investment fund through the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, in particular the decision to increase the annual allocation from \$15 million to \$20 million. In view of the apparent success of the fund in delivering positive outcomes in the regions without the benefit of supporting legislation, I trust that the Government will now withdraw its basically defunct Regional Investment Fund Bill 2001, which has gone nowhere in a very long time. Effectively, why further waste Parliament's time on something that everyone has agreed is totally unnecessary? The only problem I have in principle with the regional investment fund is that I understand that the various development commissions can access the fund. This approach is fundamentally flawed because it provides another government agency with the opportunity to double dip into the consolidated fund without parliamentary scrutiny of part of the relevant development commission's funding.

Another reduction I have noted in the allocation to the Department of Local Government and Regional Development gives rise for concern. On page 346 of the *Budget Statements* there is no provision in the out years to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This non-government organisation undertakes an extremely valuable community role and it saddens me that the Gallop Government has apparently decided that it no longer deserves financial support from the Government.

I get the distinct impression that this Government is unsure about what it is doing or what are the responsibilities of its agencies, possibly leading to funding inefficiencies. I specifically refer to recent announcements by the Government about searches for potable water sources near Coral Bay and Kununurra. In the case of Coral Bay, the Water Corporation has been tasked whereas the Water and Rivers Commission has got the job for Kununurra. From the answer to question without notice 394 asked in this House today, it appears that it is not the function of the Water and Rivers Commission, although it has been providing the advice on the proposed alternatives to its drinking water source protection plan. In fact, we now have to go to LandCorp, which is developing a proposed drilling and investigation program of alternate sources. In both cases, with the bore field as the only apparent source of potable water, I am surprised that neither project has been mentioned in the details for either agency in the budget papers. One could well ask what is going on here? Which agency has the responsibility for searching for potable water supplies in this State and why has this single agency not been tasked? More importantly, the taxpayers in this State should and must ask if their money is being wasted through this obvious incompetence with which the department is handling these issues.

## RESIGNATION FROM LIBERAL PARTY

### *Statement*

**HON ALAN CADBY** (North Metropolitan) [5.36 pm]: I prepared about six different member's statements for this evening, depending on the mood I was in during the day. I just hope that the one I have selected reflects the mood of the moment. I was interested in some comments made last week by Hon Colin Barnett, the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party. I understand that yesterday he reinforced those comments, according to the media reports of the meeting of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. He spoke of the need for Liberals to be unified and loyal. I have now been placed in quite an interesting position. Loyalty is not just a word; it describes a set of actions that can be seen and easily

measured. In my time as a Liberal member of Parliament, I have given Colin Barnett and the Liberal Party considerable loyalty. During the recent challenging times, despite considerable prompting from the media and others, I have remained loyal and not publicly criticised anyone in the Liberal Party or any process of the Liberal Party. Despite this demonstration of my loyalty, I am disappointed that I have not received the same level of loyalty from some quarters of the Liberal Party. I must admit I was disappointed that Colin Barnett did not make any public comments of support towards me before my pre-selection or before the meeting of state council. I ask members to contrast this to the public support he rightly gave to sitting members John Day, Hon Simon O'Brien and Hon Barbara Scott. I think they deserve that support and I was pleased they received it from the leader. In addition, I ask members to consider the unconditional support he has given Peter Collier. Loyalty, as I said earlier, can be seen and measured. Let us compare the measurable loyalty of Colin Barnett with that of the Premier Geoff Gallop. We all know the Labor Party is having difficulty with its pre-selection process. However, the Premier has publicly demonstrated that he understands the meaning of loyalty. Although I am sure he does not like all of his colleagues - it would surprise me if he did - he has publicly stated he wants all his sitting members to be re-endorsed. It is quite a contrast to the experience we received in the Liberal Party. I suggest what a difference leadership can make to the cohesion of a team.

I can only speculate on the motivation for my dumping, but I do not believe it has anything to do with my work ethic or performance as a member of this House. I do not believe that it is in the best interests of the Liberal Party that I remain within an organisation that has no confidence in me. As a result of the party's non-endorsement, I have been left with no alternative but to announce today my resignation from the Parliamentary Liberal Party. I have received a tremendous amount of support from my colleagues in this House. They have all stated quite clearly that I should not burn my bridges. It is the same sort of advice I would give to them if the roles were reversed. Unfortunately, this is a point of principle from which there is no turning back. I have also been surprised by the support given to me by members of the Labor Party, even those from the other place whom I hardly know. I hope their motives are correct. I will now complete my term working for the constituents of the North Metropolitan Region as an Independent member of Parliament. As such, I will be able to consider all legislation on its merits and its benefits to my constituents. This consideration will be without regard of party political philosophies and based solely on the benefits to the electorate of the North Metropolitan Region.

What has happened to me in recent weeks is not extraordinary or unique. It is just part of political life. All of us in this House enter politics with our eyes wide open. We are prepared for any eventuality. We have positive and negative experiences in our job; it comes with the territory. It is important to me that I accept with grace the recent disappointments and move on to handle important legislation from an independent point of view that will be dealt with by this House. In my last comments as a Liberal, I thank my Liberal colleagues in this House for their support over the past three years. I apologise to them for leaving this homogeneous group in this way. I also thank those members of Moore division of the Liberal Party and other Liberals who have supported me over the years and, in particular, over the past three to four weeks. I thank them for their support; it has been an important factor in my term as a member of the Legislative Council. I am looking positively towards the future. Those people who hope that this experience will dampen my positive outlook on life will be very disappointed.

### **CHESTER PASS ROAD**

#### *Statement*

**HON FRANK HOUGH** (Agricultural) [5.42 pm]: All I can say to Hon Alan Cadby is that politics is a dirty game. I know how he feels but he should remember that from the lemon comes lemonade. I trust it will for him and I hope it does because he is a damn good person.

I asked a question without notice yesterday about Chester Pass Road, which runs from Lake Grace to Albany. It is an ordinary, narrow road that was built 40-odd years ago for eight-tonne trucks. I am referring to the grain season, which spans 200 days each year. Working on the basis of a 10-hour day, Chester Pass Road has 16-wheel trucks using it at the rate of 10 an hour. That is a lot of 16-wheel trucks delivering wheat. The minister is looking at me with interest. I have the Australian Wheat Board figures for the tonnages of wheat factored through 16-wheel vehicles throughout the period. Ten trucks an hour in a 10-hour day travelling one way represents 10 650 movements or 21 300 movements both ways. Chester Pass Road is not a big road. It goes through the Stirling Range. A lot of tourists visit the Stirling Range; it is absolutely gorgeous. A lot of Japanese and Chinese tourists stop and photograph kangaroos and the Porongurup Range. It is gorgeous for tourists. I have been told regularly that the tourists jump out of their motor vehicles - I have travelled the road many times - to take a photograph of a kangaroo or have a quick look but they leave open the doors. There are often two 16-wheel trucks travelling each way - one empty and one full - when these people have the car doors open. There have been suggestions of what the truck drivers should do: shut their eyes and keep going. However, that would not be good for our tourist trade. It endangers many people travelling in the area along the Chester Pass Road. There is only one passing lane from Lake Grace to Albany, which is a few kilometres from Albany. It is on the Borden side. It is the only passing lane in 240 kilometres of single-lane road. If two 16-wheel trucks are travelling either way, their outer wheels are in the gravel and there is one metre between them. It creates a danger. I am bringing up the complaints of the farming community. I know many roads are like that in Western Australia and that we cannot fix them all in one hit. This is an area of interest that is creating a danger. Another example is the Mullewa