

Another example is water policy, where the figures, as has already been outlined by the Minister for Water Resources, are just appalling. Of the \$1.6 billion WaterSmart Australia program, Western Australia has received just \$41.3 million. With a third of the continent, it would be thought that Western Australia would have some water issues that the commonwealth might want to pay some attention to. Instead, it gives us just three per cent of the funds.

However, the saddest two areas are the health and disability sectors. In 1996-97, funding for the state's public hospitals was split evenly between state and federal governments. In this financial year, the state government will contribute 70 per cent of total government funding for public hospitals, while the federal government will contribute just 30 per cent. How much difference does that make? It makes \$200 million a year difference to the funding available to our health system in 2006-07. That is \$200 million extra we could have if the commonwealth was living up to what it was doing in 1996-97. In disability services, the federal government promised Western Australia matched funding if the state government approved funding for disability services, but the federal government has now reneged on its promise. It is a \$100 million broken promise by Mal Brough, the federal minister. Once again, the federal government is treating this state with contempt.

The \$5 billion fiscal subsidy from Western Australia to the rest of the Federation is the headline issue, but breaking it down reveals specific deficiencies in road, water, health and disability funding. In area after area, this state is ripped off by the Howard government, and does not get its fair share.

BUSSELTON JETTY

668. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for South West:

Can the minister update the house on the state government's long-term plan for the repair and maintenance of the iconic Busselton jetty; and could the minister advise of alternative proposals and their impact on jobs, businesses and tourism in our great south west?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Collie-Wellington for the question. Members will be aware that, some months ago, the local council in Busselton accepted the state government's offer for revitalising the Busselton foreshore and the jetty. However, following the recent council election, the council has rescinded its approval of that proposal.

Mr T. Buswell: Not totally.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If the member wants the exact form of words, the council has revoked its approval. Members might recall the member for Vasse discussing this matter in this chamber, and constantly saying that the original approval by the council was temporary, and that we will see what happens in the future. The Busselton Chamber of Commerce stated -

Busselton is set to be left behind. The state government's offer was an opportunity to revitalise Busselton's foreshore not just for the sake of town-based businesses, but for the future of young people in our community, as one means of giving them an economic future worth staying for.

What we were trying to do was to provide jobs and opportunities for people in Busselton. What happened? The member for Vasse said that he did not support the original decision and that he would see what happened with the council. The member for Vasse has been the puppeteer of the Busselton council. He has been an evil Geppetto of the Busselton council, pulling the strings of councillors there. It might interest members to know whose strings he was pulling. Who moved the motion to revoke the state's offer? It was none other than Councillor Anne Ryan, whom the Corruption and Crime Commission found guilty of misconduct on four separate occasions and who is in a close personal relationship with someone representing a consortium that wants to carry out a private development of the land in question. The member for Vasse has been trying to knock out our proposals and manipulate the council at Busselton. Whom did he have doing his dirty work? It was Councillor Anne Ryan who has been found guilty of misconduct four times and who is in a relationship with a private developer who wants to develop the land. There is something rotten in the area of Busselton, and I think it is the member for Vasse.

TEACHER SHORTAGE

669. Dr E. CONSTABLE to the Minister for Education and Training:

Given the State School Teachers' Union estimate that government schools in Western Australia will be 600 teachers short at the beginning of the 2008 school year -

- (1) Can the minister confirm the accuracy of this estimate?
- (2) If not, what is the shortfall in teacher numbers currently being planned for by the Department of Education and Training and which subject areas are likely to have teacher shortage problems?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)-(2) I was unaware of any State School Teachers' Union prediction of teacher shortages, but what I can tell the member for Churchlands is that we are doing everything possible and more than any government in the history of the state to try to reward and keep our teachers in the public sector workforce.

Dr E. Constable: A simple number will do.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am unaware of any predictions by the State School Teachers' Union. What I can tell the member for Churchlands, and I would have thought she would have known this, is that it is often not until closer to the day that we know exactly where we stand vis-a-vis -

Dr E. Constable: You must be planning for something.

Mr M. McGOWAN: May I just finish my answer? We do not know until closer to the day how many teachers we will require or by how many we will be short. With a workforce of around 22 000 people in public school teaching, there is a range of people who have all sorts of reasons for leaving the workforce over the Christmas holidays. It is therefore difficult to predict exactly what shortage there will be. The sorts of things we have been doing to, as the member puts it, plan for the issue are to make the best ever offer of remuneration for the teaching workforce. We have made a \$630 million offer to the teaching workforce, which will make it the best paid teaching workforce in the country. That is the first thing we are doing and is a very significant offer. We are putting in place special allowances for teachers who work in remote and country schools, which I think will show those teachers out there in those often difficult-to-staff country schools that we will reward them. We are putting in place more permanency for teachers in the country; in fact, I think around 450 offers of permanency have gone to teachers in country Western Australia recently. A big complaint of teachers in those schools is that they are not made permanent. We are moving to fix that particular problem. We have the scholarships program and numerous policies in place to deal with this issue. I know the member for Churchlands will probably stand and ask a supplementary question. I cannot tell her exactly where we will be at the start of next year, and neither could the member for Cottesloe have told her when he was minister. However, I can tell her that we are doing everything within our power to deal with the situation. The workforce around the state is currently 60 teachers short. That must be measured in the context of there being 1 400 more teachers in the public sector workforce than when we came to office.

ROAD TOLL

670. Mr J.E. McGRATH to the Premier:

I refer to the member for Midland's comments in November 2003 when, as Minister for Police and Emergency Services, she said she would introduce legislation that would -

... pave the way for electronic roadside testing equipment that will allow the police to conduct tests similar to those currently being conducted for the presence of alcohol.

Given that it is now four years later, I ask -

- (1) What is the current road toll and how does it compare with previous years?
- (2) Why has the Premier failed to protect the people of Western Australia by taking four years to get this drug bus on the road; and will the Premier apologise to the people of Western Australia for his tardiness?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for South Perth for the question, and I reflect upon what I am told was a magnificent eulogy delivered by him at George Grljusich's funeral.

- (1) I find the preamble to the question somewhat strange, given the question itself. What is the current road toll? It is too high. We are heading towards 200 already, and we still have quite a long way to go for the year. Everyone in Western Australia recognises that the road toll is too high. We brought it down over five or six consecutive years from, I think, beyond 200 to about 160. It is now back to more than 200. A long-term analysis of the road toll for the past 40 or 50 years, taking into account the numbers of cars on the road and distances travelled, reveals the present road toll to be dramatically lower than it was in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. If one takes a long-term perspective, the road toll has improved. There are annual fluctuations that are almost inexplicable, given that so much information has been provided about drink-driving, driving under the influence of drugs, driving when tired, speeding and the wearing of seatbelts. However, some people seem to ignore all that information and kill themselves, or worse, other innocent people. The road toll is presently in the high 180s or 190s, and heading towards 200. It is terrible. Everyone in Western Australia is probably aware of someone who has been unnecessarily killed on the road. It is shocking. The government does everything it can to address this