In conclusion, the WAPC has recommended the amendment proceed in the modified form to reflect the new agreement between the State Government and the City of Melville. I table two copies of the documents and one map. I commend this amendment to the House.

[See papers Nos 878A-878D]

AUSTRALIAN ENCEPHALITIS - PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Statement by Minister for Health

MR DAY (Darling Range - Minister for Health) [12.08 pm]: I take this opportunity to inform the House of an important current public health alert concerning Australian Encephalitis. Eight cases of mosquito-borne Australian encephalitis have now been diagnosed this year, the second highest total in Western Australia since 1993.

Australian encephalitis is a rare but potentially fatal mosquito-borne disease that can affect all age groups, but children and infants and anyone living in areas where the virus is seldom active are most at risk during outbreaks. Only about 1 in 500 to 1,000 people infected by the bite of an infected mosquito will develop symptoms, which include severe headache, neck stiffness, fever and delirium. In severe cases, this can progress to coma and death. On average about a quarter of people who develop symptoms will die and many others will be left with permanent brain damage and paralysis.

High levels of activity of this virus are associated with heavy rains and flooding which enable overt breeding of the mosquitoes that transmit the virus, and also proliferation of water birds, which are the natural host of the virus. Record high rainfall between October last year and March this year has been reported from many areas in the north of the State, creating ideal conditions for transmission of this virus. This year one case has occurred in the Kimberley region, two in the Pilbara, one in the Murchison, and three in the mid west, including the Mullewa-Dongara and Kalbarri areas. Another case has a travel history throughout the affected regions and the place of exposure is therefore uncertain. The Health Department of WA is particularly concerned about activity of the virus south of the Murchison River catchment in the mid west region. This is unprecedented and means that the virus is active in a region where few people will have immunity to the virus.

The high level of activity this year was predicted in January because of heavy rains and widespread flooding forecast for the north of Western Australia. The Health Department has already issued three media warnings about the increased risk this year, with another warning issued today. Recent monitoring in the mid west region around Dongara has revealed continuing presence of the virus and the types of mosquito that transmit it. This means that people living in or travelling to this region as well as further north in the State must take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure to biting mosquitoes.

The Health Department has a sentinel chicken program in place to monitor and warn of continuing activity of the virus that causes Australian encephalitis. This has recently been expanded with the assistance of local government authorities and additional warnings will be issued if necessary. It is important for people to realise that mosquito eradication is not an option as breeding is occurring over vast areas throughout many parts of the north. People must therefore assume responsibility for protecting themselves from biting mosquitoes by avoiding being outside at times when mosquitoes are most active, from just before sunset until mid-evening; covering up as much as possible with loose, long clothing, preferably of a light colour; and, keeping a bottle of repellent handy to put on exposed areas of skin whenever biting mosquitoes are noticed. The most effective repellents for mosquitoes contain 5 per cent - 20 per cent diethyl toluamide, or DEET, and are most effective and long-lasting in lotion form. Infant-strength repellents should be used for young children. People should ensure that fly screens in houses or caravans are in good repair, and, if camping out, they should sleep either in a mosquito proof tent or under a mosquito net. It is important to appreciate that repellants protect against mosquito bites for only up to four hours, not all night. The Health Department will continue to closely monitor the situation and provide advice as appropriate.

STATE IMAGES COMMUNITY ART COMPETITION

Statement by Minister for the Arts

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for the Arts) [12.12 pm]: Last October I informed the House of the State Images Community Art Competition. It is my pleasure today to announce the 10 winners. Each winner has produced artwork which represents their region at the change of the millennium and will be interpreted into a tile mosaic to be laid at the Barrack Square redevelopment. These 10 artworks will become a spectacular part of the Perth landscape situated in what will be one of the most significant drawcards for tourism in Western Australia. Launched in October last year, State Images has provided people throughout Western Australia with the chance to create a visual image of their region's culture, community and lifestyle. As each region has its own judging panel, the resulting mosaic will be a true reflection of those communities. The support that was received for this project has been outstanding. Service organisations and regional development commissions throughout the State have worked hard to ensure that the competition was well publicised and organised. The fact that more than 400 entries were received, many of them from community groups, demonstrates the success of the competition.

I would like to acknowledge the Community Services Steering Committee which oversaw State Images. The organisations involved are Apex, the Country Women's Association of WA, Zonta, Lions, Rotary and Soroptimists International. Without the coordination of those groups State Images would not have come to fruition. The mosaics are scheduled to be installed at the Barrack Square site in September.

The 10 winners are: Markham Boston of Carnarvon for the Gascoyne region; Lauren Burke of Carnarvon for the goldfields...
region; Lyn Ailakis and students from Derby District High School and the Mowanjum Aboriginal Community for the Kimberley region; Julie Anne Kennedy of Subiaco for the metropolitan region; Julie Nunn of Dongara for the mid west region; Beryl Hart of Parklands for the Peel region; Nikita Dahiyra, formerly of Karratha, for the Pilbara region; Deana Carbone of Bunbury for the south west region; and Anne Sutherland of Merredin for the wheatbelt region.

State Images will complement the Sign In 2000 project. This project gave every Western Australian school student the opportunity to sign a tile to be laid at Barrack Square. These two initiatives are a demonstration of the value of community in Western Australia. Barrack Square will become one of the State's most prominent tourist destinations and will be home to a public exhibition of art depicting our varied and distinctive regions showing that Western Australia is all about the people who live here.

STATE SUPERANNUATION BILL 1999
Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from 9 May

MR KIERATH (Minister assisting the Treasurer) [12.15 pm]: I want to go through some matters that were raised yesterday by various members. The member for Nollamara in particular raised some issues that I want to discuss. I will not delve into it too much, but he raised the issue of a question I answered last week. Page 3 of the second reading speech states -

As a first step to stem the growth of the State's unfunded superannuation liability, this Government made a commitment to fund all future contributions to the open lump-sum scheme from 1 July 1998. A standing appropriation to support this decision will be incorporated into the Act to ensure that this commitment is maintained by successive Governments.

It clearly states that it will be funded from that point on; but it does not address the inherent unfunded liability that is still in that system.

Mr Kobelke: I congratulate you on that and point out that that is not what you said in question time.

Mr KIERATH: It is what I said in question time. I put it very clearly on the record that there was unfunded liability prior to that date; in fact, we are trying to work up some proposals to go back and fund that liability. We gave a commitment to fund it from that point on, and from that date it has been funded. An amount in excess of $131m was allocated for that purpose. We still must address the unfunded liability.

The member for Nollamara raised the issue of the funding of the West State Super. There appears to be some confusion about the level of unfunded liability, and I want to clarify the situation. The figure quoted by the member of $565m was presented in the context of the State's ongoing liability to meet future payments out of the scheme. In accounting terms, they are the present, or current, value of a future liability and are based on various assumptions by actuaries as to inflation, investment returns and retirement rates. These figures are useful when considering the management of the State's finances, but the important figures for members of the schemes are to be found at page 53 of the 1999 annual report of the board. Note 7 at the top of the page details the vested benefits in the three schemes administered by the board. For West State Super, as at 30 June 1999 the gross vested benefits, or in simple terms, the total dollar value of member account balances, was just over $868m. The proportion of those benefits that were funded was just over $257m, and the difference of $611m is the unfunded amount. Compare those figures to the previous year when total account balances were just under $757m, the funded proportion was about $131m, and the unfunded amount was $626m. That indicates that the Government's decision to fully fund the State's contributions from 1 July 1998 resulted in the funded West State Super benefits increasing by nearly double in only 12 months, and the unfunded amount falling by $15m during the same period.

That funding decision was continued in the current year, which will further increase the level of funded benefits. The Bill that is before the House provides for a permanent appropriation so that that funding will be locked in for successive Governments. I table a document indicating the change in unfunded liability over recent years based on the vested benefits.

[See paper No 880.]

Mr KIERATH: That document shows that the unfunded liability in West State Super was increasing at around 20 per cent a year until the decision to fully fund the State's contributions, which had the immediate effect of capping the amount of unfunded liability.

I think the member for Nollamara and some other members raised the issue of various regulations, so I will respond to it. The member for Nollamara said that the Government has a good story to tell regarding this legislation, and he highlighted the importance of this Bill to establish a new legislative framework for the Government Employees Superannuation Board. I agree with him; he is right. This is good news. During debate on this Bill, some members expressed concern about the uncertainty regarding what may be prescribed in the regulations because the exact nature of the changes is unknown.

I can provide an indication of the nature of the changes which are under consideration by the Government and which have the support of the board. They are as follows: The Government wants to address issues relating to Gold State members being paid at casual rates; remove restrictions on seconded employees accessing other schemes; remove anomalies regarding contribution rates for Gold State Super and pension scheme members on fixed-term appointments; remove gender