

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2009

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Mr B.S. WYATT: I understand that most questions on the Treasurer's advance bills tend to relate to the third clause, which details the amount of money that is being sought. I have a general question about the legislation. Certainly, the advice that I have received is that the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill is not a general supply bill. I refer to the Government Financial Responsibility Act 2000. Has the Treasurer sought any advice on whether an advance authorisation is a supplementary budget? If it is, various requirements for a government financial strategy statement would flow from that. It is probably a legal question, but can the Treasurer's advisers provide any information on that matter?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have sought advice from my advisers on this matter. I ask the member to ask the question again. My recollection of historical dealings with bills of this sort is that they are dealt with in the manner that I hope we will deal with this bill now. Two additional appropriation bills will follow in due course, in which the detail of the Treasurer's advance will be appropriated. Was your question —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is it a supplementary budget, effectively, as is set out in the Government Financial Responsibility Act?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I might have to get some further detailed advice on that matter. My initial advice is that this bill has been brought to the house under the authorisation of the Financial Management Act, as we are requested to do, given that we have breached, as the member pointed out in his contribution to the second reading stage, the requirements of that act.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I asked that question generally because I do not know the answer to it. I suspect that the answer is no, in light of my question about whether it is a supply bill. However, I will move on. My second question relates to a matter that was raised today during debate on the matter of public interest. Does the figure in the advance authorisation bill take into consideration the fact that the three per cent efficiency dividend has not been achieved, or does it presume that the cuts have been made?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Treasurer's advance has been made on the basis that the cuts have been made. The three per cent cuts were fully detailed in the midyear review when it was publicised on 18 December. This is for expenditure. Obviously, the three per cent cuts relate to the revenue aspects. They have already been incorporated into the state's accounts as per the timing of the midyear review.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Is the Treasurer confident that the amount that has been set aside for contingencies will be sufficient to cover the government's expenses between now and budget day?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Mr M. McGOWAN: Obviously, this is not a long bill. Despite its significance to the state's budget, it is quite extraordinary how short it is. I assume it mirrors past practice. Clause 2 refers to the day on which the bill will come into effect, which is the day upon which the authorisation of expenditure to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters or to make advances for certain purposes will take place. According to the bill, sections 1 and 2 of the act are due to come into effect on the day it receives royal assent. Clause 2 states that the remainder of the act—clause 3—will come into effect the day after the day on which the bill receives royal assent.

As I recall, the government made this an urgent bill. The government would like to see this legislation passed relatively expeditiously. I am interested to know when the government expects this bill to receive royal assent. What is the latest date upon which it could receive royal assent and still be operative? Is it necessary for it to receive royal assent and become law and therefore authorise those payments? For instance, is it possible for the bill to receive royal assent on 30 June? Is that too late or does it need to receive royal assent prior to the budget being handed down? Or is there a magical date upon which it needs to take place and any date beyond that will create some difficulty for making the payments prescribed under this legislation? That is my first question.

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My second question is a technical question. Why will clause 3 take effect on the day after clauses 1 and 2 receive royal assent? Clauses 1 and 2 come into operation on the day clause 3 receives royal assent. Why does clause 3 come into effect the day after clauses 1 and 2 come into effect?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The second part of the question relates to why the rest of the act comes into effect the day after it receives royal assent. The only advice I have is that it is a new standard that Parliamentary Counsel adopted at some stage last year. I am sorry that I do not have any additional information.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: All legislation, I assume?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It certainly applies to this legislation and most of the legislation that Treasury is dealing with. I can only assume there are reasons Parliamentary Counsel adopted that form.

In relation to the timing, it is a good question. When we were debating this bill in the house on 19 March or thereabouts, it was almost the same day to the year that the previous bill was in the house. Last year's bill went through the consideration in detail stage on 18 March, so it is not dissimilar time-wise. Last year the bill passed through the upper house on or near 3 April and received royal assent a week or two after.

There is no requirement for this bill to be dealt with by the house before the budget. However, there is a requirement for it to be dealt with as expeditiously as possible. As I think I indicated in the second reading speech, from a government point of view, cash flow issues will emerge if this approval is not in place. I expect the bill to go through this place this week. I am advised, not that I am one to pre-empt outcomes in the other place, that it will be dealt with in the other place as expeditiously as standing orders and protocols allow and then it will receive royal assent. We are certainly very keen to have the bill dealt with as soon as possible so that any potential cash flow related matters can be mitigated.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am interested in following this train of thought, as are other members. The Treasurer indicated that he could not really answer the second part of the question, which is a drafting question. Considering it is only a three clause bill, probably comprising roughly 80 words, the house should have advice on why this mechanism is being employed now and whether it is being employed with other legislation. I request that the Treasurer give us that advice at some point during consideration in detail.

The Treasurer said that there were cash flow difficulties. I ask him to answer this question once I sit down: is the Treasurer saying that cash flow difficulties will arise if the bill is not passed prior to the budget being introduced, or is he saying that cash flow difficulties will arise if it is not passed prior to the budget being passed by this house, which obviously comes into effect on 1 July? I am not exactly sure on what date the Treasurer is indicating there will be some difficulty in making payments to all of these excesses and new items as contained within his other advice. I am interested in knowing the exact date that this bill needs to be passed in order to ensure that the processes of government in Western Australia do not grind to a halt or that people's pays are unable to be provided, that buildings are unable to be built or that any of the other numerous things that the government will be spending this money on will not be undertaken.

I am looking for specific advice on what day it is necessary for this bill to be passed. While the Treasurer indicated that he would like the bill to be passed this week, the house has a mind of its own and sometimes it can take longer than a minister might expect for his or her legislation to get through the house. Sometimes issues arise during consideration in detail that mean that the best laid plans do not come to fruition. I would like specific advice on when the Treasurer needs the bill passed. The week before last the opposition attempted to ensure further scrutiny of this bill through the Public Accounts Committee. We requested that the Public Accounts Committee consider the legislation and report back today, which would not have hindered the process of passing this legislation. The government declined to allow us to do that. Indeed, it gagged debate, as I recall. Considering it gagged debate on a motion to suspend standing orders, the Public Accounts Committee had an opportunity to examine \$1.2 billion in expenditure on top of this process. I again seek the Treasurer's advice as to what day this legislation needs to pass through both houses of Parliament and receive royal assent in order not to unduly inhibit the activities of government.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Firstly, the Treasurer's advance is not related to this year's budget. Therefore, there is no link between the timing of the passage of this Treasurer's advance bill through this chamber, and this year's budget, which will be handed down on 14 May. This bill relates to approvals for expenditure that were not appropriated for at the time of last year's budget for this financial year. My advice is that within the \$1.2 billion the government is seeking, it has already, under the relevant provisions of the Financial Management Act, the capacity to spend \$437.7 million on the Treasurer's advance. This bill seeks, as members are aware, the authority to spend an additional \$762 million to bring the total to \$1.2 billion.

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In answer to the question about when the bill needs to be passed, it is my view that this house needs to deal with it this week and that it be dealt with in the upper house, subject to the rules and protocols, next week so that this facility is available to us. My advice is that the flows of expenditure out of Treasury are lumpy or are significant in the last two months of the financial year. If I were to put parameters around it, given that this week and next week are the two sitting weeks in April, I would anticipate that it will be dealt with by both houses of Parliament by the end of these two sitting weeks so that it can receive assent in due course.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: On the issue of the day that this legislation will come into effect, I understand that the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill does not go to the items that are in the document that the Treasurer circulated about excesses and new items in the Treasurer's advance for 2008-09. This bill is seeking authorisation for a lump sum. There must be a particular day on which Treasury believes that authorisation from the Parliament to the executive will run out. Instead of saying that the government will need this legislation in place by this or that particular week, Treasury must be able to estimate when it will be required. I expect that if Treasury is providing advice to the Treasurer that these matters must be dealt with, there must be a particular day on which Treasury knows it will need the money to spend on programs approved by government.

The Treasurer used the term "cash flow", and I understand that to mean lack of authorisation to make payments. If that is the case, it would be good if he would indicate that it does not mean there are cash flow problems but that the government lacks parliamentary authorisation to spend taxpayers' money. I imagine that Treasury can estimate the day on which the money for which approval is being sought in this bill, as well as the \$437.7 million that the government does not require authorisation for, needs to be spent by the executive on behalf of the Parliament. It must be the day on which the authorisation runs out and the Parliament's right to control the expenditure of the executive comes to an end. Therefore, the Treasurer should be able to say what day it will come to an end. The Parliament would then be able to determine by which day the bill must be passed.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member is right. Perhaps the use of the term "cash flow" is broad. I used that term to relate to the approved appropriation. It is my view that this bill needs to progress through both houses of Parliament by the end of next week. Treasury's advice is that it draws on substantive expenses in May and June compared with other months and there are no other sitting weeks scheduled between the end of next week and the start of May, which is when we will move into the budget process. If the member is asking me for a specific date, the advice from Treasury is that this approval needs to be in place by the start of May to ensure that we have adequate supplies of appropriated funds. I reiterate that the approval being sought by way of this Treasurer's advance is \$762 million to supplement the \$438 million that has been approved automatically under the Financial Management Act.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will go over this point again: the Treasurer said that the term "cash flow" is incorrect.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is too broad.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The term "cash flow" implies that spending is occurring on every day that it might be required throughout the remaining four months of the year. The Treasurer indicated that \$437.7 million is automatically available through the three per cent provision of the relevant legislation, but that \$762 million on top of that is required.

The Treasurer said that expenditure for the last two months of the year is lumpy; therefore, it is necessary for this legislation to be passed.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I said that spending is lumpy. Spending is always lumpy, but in the last two months of the financial year, spending is high relative to the other months of a financial year.

Mr M. McGOWAN: My understanding of the meaning of the word "lumpy" in that context is that it is for expenditure on items that are large and, generally, unexpected. I am asking the Treasurer what sort of lumpy expenditure he is referring to that occur in the final two months of the financial year and why it is different from any other two months of the financial year. For what will we need an additional \$762 million over and above \$437 million? Why do those two months differ from any other period?

My recollection is that the house will resume in the first week in May. Why cannot this legislation be passed in the first week of May to meet the expenditure requirements we are referring to? The legislation can be taken to Government House on the same day that it passes through both houses of Parliament, and clauses 1 and 2 can be given royal assent immediately. The remainder of the bill can be given royal assent the following day. In effect, if the bill were passed in the first week in May, the money could become available on the day after the day on which the bill is passed. I understand that the house will resume on 2 May or 3 May. If the bill does not pass

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through this Parliament in the next two weeks, the government could, conceivably, have the money in the first week of May. Why is that too late, as opposed to getting the legislation through this house this week and the other place next week?

The reason for my question is that in the second reading debate we said that it is an extraordinary amount of money for the Parliament of a state the size of Western Australia to be passing. It far surpasses any amount that has been asked for previously, in an environment in which revenues, according to the Treasurer, are declining. This bill requires more scrutiny than similar legislation might have received in past years. The Treasurer is, in effect, saying that this place needs to have consideration in detail completed this evening or at the latest tomorrow to allow for the third reading to be dealt with on Thursday. That is a very short time in which to examine what is an extraordinary amount of money.

Perhaps we should do a comparison with the overall state budget, for which we have the opportunity of asking questions of all ministers, even those ministers with the smallest of portfolios, in the estimates committees. The procedure continues for hours on end and generally the expenditure items in question are far less than the \$1.3 billion that is being asked for in this bill. The ministers are obliged to answer questions about the agencies for which they have responsibility.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am interested in hearing further from the member.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I thank the member for Mandurah. Their expenditure is often in the millions of dollars, or in the area of \$1 million or \$2 million, or in some cases, I think, even in the high hundreds of thousands. They are required to answer questions for hours on end; yet here we have expenditure across 25 portfolio areas, and we are expected to examine it and provide approval to the Treasurer in the course of a few hours that multiplies the expenditure of those small agencies many times. It strikes me as being not only an unnecessarily short period in which to examine the expenditure, but also an arrogant way of addressing the process to indicate that the legislation must go through with limited debate. I request again that the Treasurer advise us of why it is not possible for that first week of May to be the opportunity for this legislation to be passed, because I believe that that first week of May would not inhibit the Treasurer at all in what he said before about the big expenditure in May and June. If the legislation is passed in the first week of May, what is the difference if it is passed next week? There is absolutely none.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will respond briefly. There is a difference between this week and May, and that is about a month. As I have indicated, it is our desire to have this bill move through both houses this week and next week, so that royal assent can be given and so that we can continue to govern and correctly spend legally appropriated funds. The member makes an assertion that the legislation is being rushed through the house. I am looking at the debate in *Hansard* when this issue came before Parliament last year. The fact is that the then Treasurer's second reading speech occurred on 13 March. As I recollect—I am pretty sure this is right—on 18 March, which was a Tuesday, the opposition engaged in the second reading debate, and we went straight to consideration in detail on what was declared an urgent bill. We asked the same questions of the then Treasurer, and he gave the same types of answers that I am giving now; that is, we want to make sure that we have correctly appropriated funds to spend on the services and infrastructure that we provide for the taxpayers of Western Australia. We can and we will work through the detail of all the expenditure items. We have provided an overview, and we are here to answer questions about that. However, that is the government's position, and that is what we will be endeavouring to achieve.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This really goes to the heart of the matter. It is a pity that the Treasurer was not prepared to answer the question that I asked when I was last on my feet. The midyear review showed that expected expenses for the current year were \$18.85 billion. That means that a bit over \$1.5 billion a month is being spent. Therefore, the Treasurer is really seeking authorisation of money under this bill for only the last two weeks of June, so it would not seem that the situation is so desperate. That is why I was asking when Treasury estimates that its authorisation will run out. It appears that we are talking about only from the middle of June, particularly if the Treasurer says that the last two months of the year are lumpy. That means that it might be only the last week of June that the Treasurer is talking about, because if the expenditure in June is much higher than that for the balance of the year, that average that I have just worked out standing here on my feet is not as relevant. It is actually more in June and, therefore, the Treasurer already has authorisation to take him through a greater period, and it is perhaps only the last week of June for which he is seeking the \$762 million. In that way, the Parliament would have a better picture of when this extraordinary amount of money needs to be authorised and, therefore, the Parliament would have an understanding of how long it had to examine in detail the highest ever level of

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expenditure growth in the state's history that the Treasurer is putting before the Parliament and asking it to support.

If we had until the middle of June to deal with the legislation, that would put the ability of the Parliament to review the operation of the executive into a proper context. Therefore, rather than saying that in this place we have only one week to deal with the legislation and that the other place has only one week to deal with it, we would have a greater length of time to do so. As I said, I do not have advice from the Treasurer, and I accept that he may not be in a position to provide that advice. However, one way or the other, as I stand here asking questions, I do not know what the answer to that question is. The Treasurer has the authorisation of the budget, which he is supporting, and he has the authorisation of the additional expenditure of \$450 million in round figures under the Financial Management Act, and he is seeking authorisation for an additional \$762 million. However, that will be the last money he spends, so it appears that it is for only the last two weeks of June; and if, as the Treasurer says, June is a very lumpy month, it may be for only the last week of June that the executive needs that approval. If that is the case, the Parliament has longer. Indeed, it is not just the opposition that might want to hold the government to account for its extraordinary level of expenditure—the record growth that the Treasurer is bringing to us; it may well be that the backbenchers of the Treasurer's own government want to review his ability to control expenditure as he brings the largest ever growth in expenditure to the Parliament. If that is the case, we have a month or more to consider this bill. Therefore, although the Treasurer might assert that the government wants it on a certain date, which is his right—the executive is entitled to assert whatever it wants—of course it is the Parliament that makes the decision, and the Parliament has a right and can arguably not assert the right, but take the right to review it, particularly if, as I say in my back-of-an-envelope calculation, we are talking about not this week and next week but, rather, to the middle of June for us to deal with this authorisation.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am unsure whether the Treasurer wants to answer the member for Cannington's question. However, I have counted the number of different agencies that we are required to deal with as part of this consideration in detail stage today, and perhaps tomorrow, according to the time line of the government. There are 27 separate government agencies with all sorts of commitments in all sorts of areas to do with wage increases, some capital works, some cost escalations and some election commitments. In addition, two other separate items are not related to a specific government agency but are related to, firstly, something described as various small items, totalling \$6.6 million, and, secondly, cost pressures that may emerge by 30 June, totalling nearly \$150 million. As I said before, there is very limited opportunity for us to examine all these provisions. We want to get on to examining those. However, the point we are making is that if we have to deal with 27 separate agencies and two other lumps of money totalling \$155 million, there is limited time in which to do so if we have three hours this evening and, I presume, a bit of time tomorrow, particularly when we consider what I raised before about the normal process when we are dealing with the budget, when we have hours to deal with amounts of money that are much smaller than that.

The Treasurer raised the question of what happened last year and the fact that the legislation was dealt with in a shorter time. I am sure it was, and the reason it was dealt with in a shorter time is that the amount was \$450 million less than the amount being sought this year. When things are put into perspective, all we are asking is for the Parliament to deal with something properly, and when it involves additional expenditure of \$450 million compared with that of last year, I do not think that is an unreasonable ask. We are asking the Treasurer how much time we will be given to deal with this bill. We have said that we will vote for this bill. There is no doubt about that. However, in voting for this bill, we require an explanation. We are not asking for anything extraordinary. All we are asking for is an explanation. An explanation requires an appropriate amount of time. I submit that three hours this evening, and perhaps a couple of hours tomorrow afternoon, is not an appropriate amount of time to deal with this bill.

The member for Cannington referred to the final two weeks of June. I did not quite follow the argument, but I think he was saying that the final two weeks of June is the period in which the majority of this expenditure might take place. We support the argument that the Treasurer can have this bill passed in May. We have absolutely no difficulty with that. The question that we want the Treasurer to answer is: if this legislation is passed in May, and is given royal assent the following day, how will that inhibit the expenditure of this money in the final two weeks of June? I have no reason to doubt the argument put by member for Cannington. I am sure that his back-of-the-envelope calculations are very erudite and reasonable. However, the Treasurer has not responded to that question. I would hate to think that the Treasurer would sit here—during his first consideration in detail of a bill as Treasurer—and not answer reasonable questions that are posed by members on this side of the chamber.

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Mr B.S. WYATT: Before the Treasurer gets up to answer that question, I want to follow on from the points made by the members for Cannington and Rockingham during this debate, and also from the points made by the Leader of the House and Minister for Police during the second reading debate. The Treasurer indicated that the implications of not passing this bill now—I think he said this in some jest—would be that the lights would go out and wages would not be paid in the public sector. However, that raises the question that was asked by the members for Cannington and Rockingham: what will happen if this legislation is not passed? I am not suggesting that this legislation will be blocked. However, the Treasurer has indicated that this legislation needs to be passed by 30 June. As I understand the way things happen, government will tick on. I do not think the implications of a delay would be as dramatic as the Leader of the House indicated during the second reading debate.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I want to quote the following comment about scrutiny of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill —

To be quite frank, members should relax about this. There is plenty of accountability and transparency around this bill already, and there will be a thorough opportunity for Parliament to debate each item approved under the Treasurer's advance when the appropriation bills come before the house later in the year.

That is a quote from *Hansard* of Tuesday, 18 March 2008, when the member for Belmont was Treasurer. The process has not changed.

Mr P. Papalia: The amount has doubled.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The capacity for the opposition to examine the detail of the bill has not changed. I have given a clear indication that we will answer the questions that members ask about specific expenditure items—where we have the detail—for as long as it reasonably takes us to work through that detail. There will also be an opportunity—as the former Treasurer pointed out—for this matter to be examined further when the appropriation bills come before the house.

I also need to point out—I do not have the exact figures here—that from my recollection, the monthly financial statements that Treasury has dutifully produced for the past eight years show that general government sector expenditure in the months of May and June is significantly higher than in the other months of the year. In other words, there is a historic ramp-up in spending in May and June. I do not have a definitive reason as to why that is the case. I suspect that it has something to do with 30 June looming on the horizon and people having an incentive to expedite programs that have been funded. As I said, I do not have definitive advice, but I suspect that is one of the factors. To suggest that we could pass this legislation at the end of June and effectively dump this \$760 million into agency accounts in the last week of June is an absurdity that we will not contemplate. I reiterate my point: we will deal with this bill in this place this week, and I am assuming that this bill will then be dealt with in the other place next week. The appropriation will then be in place in time to ensure that we can continue to function as a government—that we can, for example, continue to fund the seniors' cost of living rebate, and that we can continue to fund a range of draw-downs that are detailed in this documentation, which we will, no doubt, go through in detail later. This is what the government intends to do. This is entirely consistent with historic precedent; it is entirely consistent with the process that we have adopted in the past. Yes, there is an argument about the quantum. However, we are in this place to work through those details. I can almost predict, from the *Hansard* of last year, the questions that members opposite will ask. I do not blame members for asking those questions and putting those arguments. However, those arguments have been put before in this place, and they have not been supported by the government. Without pre-empting what members on my side of the house will do on this bill, I can also suggest that they will engage themselves in debate on this bill to the extent that members of the former government did.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of course it is not accurate to say that I think the Treasurer does not need to pass this bill until the middle of June. What I am seeking is information which I do not have available to me but which I imagine a competent Treasurer would have available to him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Fremantle!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not making any comments on the quality of the Treasurer at this time. However, clearly Treasury advice would say: "This is the expenditure pattern of the government. This is what the executive has asked us to do. These are the things that we are spending our money on. We have, in addition to that, \$450 million, in round figures, through the Financial Management Act, and we are spending that authorisation that Parliament has given to us, and we think this is the date on which we are going to run out of money." There is historic precedent for this. Of course, those members who are older than I would remember what happened in the commonwealth Parliament on 26 October 1975, when the Senate refused to pass the

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appropriation bill. That had great consequences, because the executive did not have the money to spend on its activities. The Treasurer may well be in that position. I do not know, because the Treasurer has not told me. I am sure that the Treasurer knows when that is going to occur. That would give us some indication of the date by which the Parliament must pass this authorisation. We are talking about \$1.2 billion. That is the largest ever expenditure growth in the history of Western Australia—a 13-plus per cent increase in expenditure. This bill is authorising only \$762 million of that expenditure growth, because the Parliament has previously approved, through the Financial Management Act, an automatic increase each financial year of \$450 million. That is a decision of the Parliament to provide additional resources to the executive for the ordinary functions of government. That is the way the process works.

The Treasurer does not have to share that information with us. He can make any decision he wishes on it. However, a competent Treasurer would know when the authorisation is expected to run out. That would be a pretty simple issue for the Department of Treasury and Finance to track. I cannot imagine that it does not track it. If the Treasurer apprised the Parliament of that information, it could consider this matter in detail. As the Treasurer has said, it is an extraordinary amount of expenditure. I have read the comments that current ministers made on last year's debate and the view that they took about what they call the uncontrolled expenditure of the previous government when there was a smaller level of growth in expenditure.

As I have already commented to the Parliament twice, I am happy, as the member for Cannington representing the people of my community, to hold the Treasurer to account for his own standards—that is, the standards that he set for himself when in opposition. It is arguable that he is already breaching one of those standards, because he has come into this place asking for an unbelievable amount of additional expenditure—a 13 per cent expenditure growth and a \$150 million blank cheque. I do not know what the government intends to spend that money on. The government is entitled to do it, but it is extraordinary. I do not understand why the Treasurer does not want to share the information with us, given his comments during the debate last year. We need to examine not my standards but the standards of the now Treasurer. I do not understand why we cannot be provided with the information so that the Parliament can decide how long we have to deal with this matter, rather than the Treasurer simply asserting something and we being expected to accept his assertion. I have read the comments that the now Treasurer made on the performance of the previous Treasurer. They were bitter and personal. I have not done anything like that, and nor do I intend to. They are the standards that we would expect from the now Treasurer.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That was a very well-constructed argument by the member for Cannington. I have sat in the chair that the Treasurer is now sitting in and answered questions about legislation. This is the opportunity for the house to get an understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it. Most legislation comprises dozens, if not hundreds, of clauses. A minister is required to answer questions on literally hundreds of clauses and often sit in that chair for hour upon hour until all the questions that are put are answered. This legislation has three clauses and is the shortest bill I have ever seen. We are dealing with the commencement clause and the question we are asking is: why is it so urgent? The Treasurer's answer is in effect that former Treasurers did it and, therefore, it is okay, and they include the last Treasurer. Our rejoinder to that is that there is a material difference of \$450 million this year compared with last year. I do not mean to be too repetitive but I think that an additional \$450 million is a material difference.

We will further investigate all the issues surrounding each of the portfolio areas when we come to the final clause of the legislation, clause 3. We need to know why it is so urgent that it must be passed in this house this week and in the other place next week. I said before how it could be passed in May. I do not think the Treasurer has given an answer on what day is the final day when the legislation can be passed by the house. I do not think it is accurate to simply assert that we need to do this because expenditure will start to run out—I think the Treasurer's words were that the ordinary expenditure of government will run out. Clause 3 of the bill refers to the authorisation of expenditure to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters; that is, not the ordinary business of government but extraordinary or unforeseen matters. The Treasurer needs to spend money on those extraordinary or unforeseen matters and there is a time frame surrounding those extraordinary or unforeseen matters, yet the Treasurer will not advise us of the time frame. I suppose that in due course he might explain to us some of the extraordinary or unforeseen matters, but we are asking the Treasurer to give us a time frame so that we can work out what questions we should ask and whether we should take any further action, as we did the week before last, to refer the bill for further examination by a parliamentary committee. Our action then was designed to get the Public Accounts Committee to provide further scrutiny of this legislation and to bring forward, not Treasury officials, as competent as they are, but perhaps the heads of the major agencies who are seeking this money so that they could be questioned about what the money will be spent on. The government

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gagged debate on that and did not allow the matter to be brought to a vote, but our view is that we need to know the urgency of this legislation so that we can decide whether we proceed with a course of action similar to that which we engaged in the week before last. That is a fair question.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is a waste of time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is arrogant for the Premier to say it is a waste of time.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You have repeated the same thing over 20 times.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Are you talking to the bill?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Of course I am.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are wasting time. That is fine. We will sit here and you can waste a few hours if you want, but there is no advancement for anyone, is there?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am not wasting time at all.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Of course you are. You have repeated the same thing 20 times over.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is \$1.2 billion.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order! We are talking about wasting time on one side. Other members want to get their point across. If members keep quiet, we will hear what the member has to say.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is arrogant to say to us that we cannot be advised when the legislation needs to be passed in order to continue the expenditure of government on these matters. We think we should be able to have that advice so that we can structure what we do in this house on that and decide whether we should take any further steps. That is not an unreasonable ask. If the Treasurer gave us that advice, it might save him a whole lot of trouble.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I have listened to this debate and I am concerned with the undue haste with which the Treasurer seems to be pushing this record expenditure through the Parliament. His defence of the process seems to be the fact that in previous years the former Treasurer had the sort of timing he is seeking today. I suggest there are two significant differences, one of which has been highlighted by colleagues, and that is the sheer magnitude of the ask. This is the first time in the history of this Parliament that the ask has been in the order of billions of dollars. This is the first time we have had the word "billion" in a Treasurer's advance. We are talking about \$450 million more than was expended last year. That has been canvassed by my colleagues at length, so I will not go over it. However, the second reason that we need to slow down this process and have a good look at what is going on is that it involves significant new expenditure. We have had a change of government. We have seen significant commitments to new expenditures. We as a Parliament have not had a chance to go through the expenditure review processes that we usually have to look at new expenditure. This government has undertaken significant discretionary expenditures that have seen a record \$1.2 billion—the first time it has been measured in the billions—blow-out in the budget.

The Treasurer's performance on seeking to stop proper scrutiny of this extraordinary expenditure has been disturbing, to say the least. It was he who moved the gag motion last week when we sought a suspension of standing orders. The suspension of standing orders, I might point out, was negotiated between the Speaker and the member for Rockingham. The Speaker recognised that he had erred in putting the vote on the motion that was being moved by the member for Rockingham. He erred by putting it too early. The member for Rockingham then took the extraordinary step of moving a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker negotiated with the member for Rockingham, tacitly acknowledged that he had acted too hastily and said that there was a way through the process and that if the member for Rockingham withdrew the dissent motion, he could allow the motion to be put that the expenditure be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for a week—a week in which to scrutinise \$1.2 billion in expenditure. The Speaker actually negotiated that outcome with the member for Rockingham, but members opposite took the extraordinary step of undermining their own Speaker, and putting him in an untenable position. The government moved a gag motion that not only undermined the Speaker but also curtailed debate when we were actually building the case for a suspension of standing orders, which could have been agreed to by the Leader of the House.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Are you canvassing the Speaker's ruling today?

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Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I am saying that the government has undermined the authority of the Speaker. The Speaker took a commonsense approach that he had negotiated with the member for Rockingham, and the Leader of the House undermined the authority of the Speaker and denied him the opportunity for a commonsense outcome.

Mr R.F. Johnson: How?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The Leader of the House heard the exchange between the member for Rockingham and the Speaker. The Speaker asked the member for Rockingham to withdraw his motion of dissent on the proviso that the member would be allowed to speak to the motion.

Mr R.F. Johnson: That is not what happened.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The member should look at the *Hansard*. That is exactly what happened.

Mr R.F. Johnson: He was allowed to speak on the motion.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: He was not; he actually got up and spoke to a suspension of standing orders. The Leader of the House refused to allow him to speak on the motion. He refused to allow scrutiny of this \$1.2 billion expenditure—this extraordinary record amount of expenditure. The man who moved the gag motion was none other than the Treasurer. He cannot help himself. He sees himself as the headkicker. Despite the reputation he has not only nationally but also internationally as something of a joke, this man cannot help himself. He has to be the headkicker. He did not even have the wisdom to get one of his backbenchers to move the gag motion; he did it himself. He undermined the Speaker and the processes of this Parliament. He does not want to undergo scrutiny of this extraordinary \$1.2 billion expenditure. He does not want the Parliament to have the opportunity to look at where he intends to spend this money.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am very keen to make a contribution to this debate. The member for Bassendean has really hit the nail on the head, and exposed a very raw nerve in the government. It makes me wonder, during this debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill, about what other things the government has to hide about its intentions. We come to this place for an opportunity to fully debate matters and get answers to questions. It seems very clear, as the member for Bassendean has highlighted, that the government is very keen to see this legislation simply slide through as quickly as possible without the appropriate consideration and analysis. The Premier made a comment earlier on; he breezed in, made a few comments and then breezed back out, as he tends to do. Unfortunately, one of the clear things that have been exposed here is this government's nine-to-five policy. It believes that everything can be done between the hours of nine and five. Members opposite do not want to be here in Parliament and they do not want proper scrutiny. Already we have seen this government reduce the number of days that this Parliament will sit this year. We will have a record low number of sitting weeks in the year. This demonstrates that the government not only is not interested in accountability but is also afraid of scrutiny. I think I know the reason for this. It is because the government is a bit concerned about some of the members on its own side. The government is a bit worried about the capacity of some of its own members to make a contribution to this place. I do not like to attack members on the other side; I do not like to attack anybody. I do not like to be personal. I will not do what I remember the Premier doing a couple of years ago when he went through and nailed every single person on the other side, when we were in government —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Relevance, member for Mandurah, relevance.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am glad to see that the Premier has slid back into the room, because he will recall that day when he went through and tried to ping every single member of the government, as it was then. He went through in a most attacking manner.

Point of Order

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am quite happy to sit here and listen, but I would like to see some attempt on the part of the member to be relevant to the clause of the bill that we are considering.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Further to that point of order, it is extraordinary for the Treasurer to call a point of order in relation to relevance, considering his normal performance in the house. I would have thought —

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There must be some standing order that has some bearing on hypocrisy.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, if I say it is not a point of order, you should not continue with your theatrics. The member for Mandurah will get back to the point.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We need to ensure that appropriate and adequate time is provided to clearly and effectively analyse what the Treasurer is proposing here, and to make sure that the people of Western Australia are confident that the request for appropriation is properly and effectively scrutinised. For that to happen, we need to ensure that we have adequate time to question the Treasurer and to ensure that the answers that the Treasurer provides are appropriate and are detailed enough to allow the Parliament to make its decision. When the Premier talks about time wasting and other things and then scoots out of the chamber past me or other members, that demonstrates a complete mockery of the processes of this place. It demonstrates once again the arrogant attitude of the Premier and the government in their treatment of the very important analysis of this bill. I am very keen to hear the views of other members on this clause, because we are talking about the commencement aspect of the bill. The leader of opposition business in this place has already highlighted some concerns about that time frame, and I think those questions are very valid. I would expect the Treasurer to answer them appropriately so that the house can make the appropriate decision.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I thank the member for Mandurah for that erudite contribution. As I was saying before, the sheer magnitude of this bill means that we need to be taking extra time. If we had seen some cooperation from the other side, and members opposite had not undermined their own Speaker, we could have had an opportunity to debate the idea of the Public Accounts Committee carrying out a very short, sharp inquiry into this extraordinary level of expenditure. However, we received no cooperation from the other side. Members opposite were prepared to undermine their own Speaker. We saw the Treasurer, true to form, decide that he was going to be the heavy hitter and move a gag motion on the suspension of standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, please speak to the clause. You are getting away from it. I gave you some leniency in your last contribution, but you are once again getting away from the point.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Acting Speaker. This clause relates to commencement. I am seeking to argue that we should not be forced with undue haste towards the early commencement of this bill because we as a Parliament have a duty to scrutinise this extraordinary level of expenditure. I believe that the comments I am making are relevant. It is obvious that this Treasurer is struggling. Despite all his bluff and bravado, he is in a job that is beyond him. He is not able to achieve the three per cent efficiency dividend on which the government based its financial projections and election promises.

Obviously, the task is beyond him and he needs the assistance of this Parliament to allow him to bury down into expenditures to find out where there are possible savings. For instance, one of the items he has identified in his second reading speech is "\$149.3 million for new decisions or cost pressures that may emerge before 30 June". That is an extraordinarily large amount of money with absolutely no detail and we are supposed approve it on the basis of cost pressures that may emerge. One of the reasons the Treasurer has given for needing this money is the "lumpiness of expenditure" that occurs at the end of the financial year. His argument is, in other words, that May and, particularly June, have historically been months in which there have been large levels of expenditure. He said, "I don't have any definitive advice about what that is; I've got some sort of half-baked notion for why it may occur, but I am not really that interested in burying down into it; but it happens, so we need to base our expenditure projections on the fact that it has happened in the past". I suggest to the Treasurer that this is exactly the opportunity he should be looking at. He is trying to find efficiency dividends, yet there is lumpiness of expenditure which I suggest is because agencies and departments adopt the philosophy that if they do not spend it, they lose it. Their view is that they might as well spend it before 30 June, because if they do not spend it, they will lose it. That is why the lumpiness—this disproportionate expenditure—occurs in the late part of the year. That is exactly why we should scrutinise expenditures for May and June. This is an opportunity to cut out the fat the Treasurer seems to think exists; here is an opportunity to bury down into the detail of this expenditure and find out why departments and agencies are projecting high levels of expenditure in May and June, and identify where there may be some waste. However, the Treasurer seems to want to rush this through. Why? What possible reasons does he have for wanting to rush it through? We are just nine months into the financial year and, despite being Treasurer for only six months, he has blown the budget by more than \$1 billion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): This is not an opportunity for a general debate; this is about when the bill will come into operation. On the relevance of the debate, standing order 179 reads —

Debate will be confined to the clause or amendment before the Assembly and no general debate will take place on any clause.

The member has the opportunity during debate on the next clause to talk about the issues he is raising at the moment. I feel that his discussion is getting away from clause 2.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: With respect, Mr Acting Speaker, this is all about commencement of the bill. The case I am making is that we do not need to proceed with undue haste towards the commencement of this bill. It is the duty of this Parliament to take its time debating it and for the date of commencement to be at an appropriate juncture due to the extraordinary level of expenditure involved. I am making the case that there are a couple of possible explanations for why the bill has been brought on for debate so quickly.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You are canvassing the Acting Speaker's ruling.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member is canvassing my ruling. If the member continues, I will sit him down.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. I am concerned about the reasons the Treasurer wants to see the early commencement of this legislation. There are a number of possible reasons that the Treasurer wants this early commencement. The reason might be that we are nine months into the financial year and he has blown the budget so badly that if we do not get some money urgently, we will run out of money. That is a possible explanation given that the Treasurer has been unwilling to answer the very reasonable questions asked by the member for Cannington about the projections for when we will run out of money. I suggest it is due to something perhaps less ominous than that; namely, this Treasurer does not have the ability to stand the scrutiny this extraordinary level of expenditure requires. I think we should not be forced into passing this bill with undue haste.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I am a new member. I have not been in Parliament when financial bills have been debated. I have certainly never dealt with a sum of money anywhere near this amount. In the few months I have been a member, many people have asked me what I do in this place. I try to explain that we are here for good government; we are here to debate and examine how we best use the finances that are available to the state for the betterment of everyone in Western Australia. I feel that, in light of the commencement date in the bill, we are being robbed of the opportunity to look at what would be in the best interests of the state to spend an extraordinary amount of money.

The Treasurer indicated that he did not quite understand where the "lumpiness" comes from. Perhaps I can shed some light on the lumpiness; I am an expert on lumpiness. In the early 1990s when I first graduated from university, I was employed at the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations as a lowly level 1 public servant. I was surprised, come the last two weeks of June, to be asked for my wish list: "What would you like to buy because we've got all this money in our budget and we need to get rid of it quickly?" Then away we went and started spending. I was surprised how quickly the approvals could be processed in the last week of June when suddenly the use-it-or-lose-it view of budgeting came to the fore. That was a long time ago. Unfortunately, I have also spent the past 10 years in the public service at far more senior levels and I have to say that that is still a predominant view: "We have a budget; we must expend that budget."

I find it remarkable that an awful lot of agencies cannot find where to cut three per cent from their budgets, yet at the same time we are anticipating a "lumpy" June. A lumpy June tells me that we are still in the use-it-or-lose-it mentality. Computers will be in the elevators in June; boxes will be stacked up everywhere as people seek to dispose of their excess budgets. Why will that happen? Because the good people in this chamber have not had the opportunity to properly examine how we are expending our money. The people in this chamber will not have had the chance to say that they would prefer to be spending their money at their local school rather than buying some bureaucrat an additional PEA. I think we owe it to the people who elected us —

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member can talk about all those issues during debate on the next clause, but he is getting away from the subject of this clause. We are debating a clause on the commencement, which members from both sides can talk to, and that is what we must talk about. It is not appropriate to enter into general debate under this clause.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I bring it back to the point that we need time to properly examine the bill, but the commencement date does not provide this house the opportunity for proper scrutiny. I, not as a member of the government nor of the former government, feel that I owe it to my electorate to do the best job I possibly can and to examine it in as much detail as possible to get to the very crux of why we are spending this money and not funding the kind of programs I would like to talk about later in the debate.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am still very interested to know what Treasury advice is on this topic. I thank the Treasurer for drawing my attention to the debate in the chamber on 18 March 2008 when he apparently—a division was not taken so his name is not recorded as voting against it—agreed to send the Treasurer's authorisation to the Public Accounts Committee. It is interesting to read the debate on that resolution. The former member, Mr Barron-Sullivan, commented —

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

We want to go through some of these specific items or dot points. As I have previously said, most of the dot points are not more than two lines long, but they deal with very large sums of money. I am not on the committee, but if I were, I would want to drill into a lot of the detail of this Treasurer's advance authorisation. I do not want to know just the generalities of how it works and so forth. Here we have a Treasurer trying to fudge the matter away and fob us off with a look at the generalities of the bill. He wants to keep us away from the guts of this bill.

Mr Barron-Sullivan went on to say —

The financial figures are there, but to use the Leader of the Opposition's term —

That is the now Treasurer —

where is the business plan, or some such thing? What is the fiscal strategy behind this bill? Is there one?

He then goes on about the specifics of the bill. As I say, we will judge the performance of the Treasurer and the government against their own standards. We know the standards they set for themselves at that time. I am indebted to the Treasurer for bringing to my attention the debate in March when he and his colleagues argued against proceeding with the bill. Members can see that this is a clear precedent. When the government was in opposition, it believed that it was inappropriate to pass the advance authorisation bill and allow it to have an early commencement.

Mr T.R. Buswell: What was the opposition's view when it was in government?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I keep saying to the Treasurer, if he wants to be judged by the standards of Eric Ripper, he should admit that he was wrong last year. That is very simple to do. I know that he has apologised to me once tonight, and I was very impressed by that. I have made no personal comments about the Treasurer; I make no personal attack on him. I am asking the Treasurer very reasonable questions in a calm and appropriate manner. We have noted the way that the Treasurer responds to comments about any sort of accountability to this Parliament, and we will continue to hold him to account. That is our job. The Treasurer chooses not to provide information to us. He can make that choice, but that is a choice he should not be making. The standards that the Treasurer applied in this house on 18 March 2008 are the standards that I am judging him by today. We do not know why the bill must be passed this week, other than that some vague assertion that is not backed by facts or information has been made. There has been no explanation for why that needs to occur. As I say, the back-of-the-envelope calculations indicate that this bill does not have to be passed until the middle of June. I am not suggesting that that is an appropriate time for the bill to be passed; all I am saying is that, in the absence of the Treasurer providing any information to the chamber and, through the chamber, to the people of Western Australia, how do we know that the argument that he is making is accurate? That is a nonsensical argument for the Treasurer to assert in this chamber. I know that there must be Treasury advice; there is no way that Treasury would not have that information ready, because it is important information. When would the Treasurer's authorisation run out? He must have that information. No competent Treasury department would not have that information. Clearly, the Treasurer must be getting that advice. I do not understand why that advice is so secret that it cannot be shared with the chamber and, through the chamber, with the people of Western Australia so that we can make a decision about when this bill needs to commence.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will speak only for a couple of minutes because I want to finish at five minutes to six so that the Treasurer has five minutes to answer the questions. He needs to answer the questions we have asked.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You haven't asked any.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We have asked two questions. One question was procedural: why, under clause 2(b), will the rest of the bill come into operation after the first two clauses? The Attorney General is in the chamber; the Treasurer could ask him. The second question, which we have raised consistently during debate on this clause, is: what is the final date upon which this legislation must be passed to allow the efficient operation of government to continue and why is that the date? We are seeking an exact answer. The Treasurer can explain to us on which date in May it is necessary for the bill to get royal assent so that the additional \$762 million can be spent. That is one piece of information we are seeking. That information will enable us to structure how we proceed with this debate and how long we take on the final clause to examine the 27 agencies. It will enable us to determine whether we want to refer the bill to a committee for further examination. That information will enable this house to further consider the bill this week and/or next week. I note that the Treasurer is shaking his head. He is probably stirring himself up to gag the debate, but I would not do that if I were him as the bill has only three clauses. It is a simple question. I would have thought that the Treasurer could answer those two questions easily as he has been in the job for six months now. We have spoken about this matter at length. It seems to us to

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be pretty straightforward. There are five minutes until the dinner break. It would be great if the Treasurer could give us a reasonable explanation for the date by which the bill needs to be passed so that we can structure our activities in accordance with the advice he gives us.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will make two points. Firstly, the question about the structure of clause 2(a) and (b) is essentially: why will the rest of the legislation come into operation “on the day after that day”? If the opposition is that keen for that advice, I will attempt to gather it during the dinner break. I do not have that advice at hand, other than to say that it is standard practice and is, line for line, a replica of the clause in last year’s bill. I have no idea why it is in this form. I am assured that it is for a very good reason. I can assume only that there was a very good reason for it last year when the advance authorisation bill came into the house. I am not sure that there have been any other changes to circumstances that would have meant that a good reason last year is not a good reason this year.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That was last year. On the second point, let me reiterate: it is our desire to have the bill passed through both houses of Parliament by the end of next week. My advice from Treasury is that the lawful appropriations that this bill will provide to spend the extra \$762 million are best put in place within that time frame—that is, within the April time frame. I acknowledge that there are issues with the quantum. I do not hide from that. We have plenty of time to talk about that, notwithstanding that we have a bit less time to talk about it now because members have spent quite a bit of time talking about this particular clause. We can talk through those issues. My advice from Treasury, as has been the case in previous years, is that it is prudent for the government to have these appropriations locked away within a time frame that the passage of this legislation through Parliament by the end of next week will allow. That is the intent of the government.

Mr B.S. WYATT: If the Treasurer can get that information about the commencement days, it would be much appreciated.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will endeavour to do that.

Mr B.S. WYATT: If the Treasurer cannot get it during the meal break, it would be useful if he could provide it at some time over the next day or two.

Certainly, the point has been made by members on this side that the quantum, as the Treasurer has just identified, is an issue for the opposition. The position that the then opposition took on the size of the quantum last year is the same as the position the opposition is taking on the size of the quantum this year. The government is seeking an extra \$762 million. Questions have been asked about the timing and the urgency of the bill. The Leader of the House made some points about the urgency of the bill and what would happen to the government and to the operation of government if the legislation is not passed. The Treasurer has indicated that there needs to be a sense of urgency for the bill to pass through both houses by the end of next week. The opposition sought to refer the legislation to the Public Accounts Committee, and it would have reported back to the house today. That would have allowed the legislation to progress a fair bit quicker —

Mr R.F. Johnson: I doubt it.

Mr B.S. WYATT: — in light of the fact that the committee would have reported back to the house today, Leader of the House.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: We had been talking for a little while on the commencement clause, and clearly it indicates how the bill will come into effect as an act. The Treasurer, in speaking to the clause, has obviously indicated that for him the commencement is also an issue of timeliness, as he wants it through the Parliament in the next two weeks. I can certainly understand that. However, the reason a number of members on this side have been perhaps a little exasperated with the Treasurer is that he has not given members any understanding as to that. I seek his assistance by interjection and/or an answer after I sit down because I do not want to take the full time. I want to be quick and get a better understanding of this timeliness issue.

The current budget for the year 2008-09 is \$17 billion to \$18 billion, depending on whether we take the figure when the budget was brought down or when it was adjusted. On that basis, if we spread it across the whole 12 months, it is about \$1.5 billion each month. This relates, of course, to what this bill will do; that is, it will authorise the additional spending of \$1.2 billion. The point I am trying to get at, if I could have the Treasurer’s attention, please —

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, I am listening.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Clearly the Treasurer is seeking an allocation of less than a month's expenditure, if it were to be spread evenly across the year, but he has made it quite clear that the expenditure is lumpy. I think the Treasurer also said in his contribution that the expenditure tends to be a bit heavier in May and June. It is therefore a reasonable estimation that in the authorisation for extra expenditure, the Treasurer is seeking less than a month's expenditure. In June it may be only two to three weeks' expenditure if there is a lot of expenditure then. It would appear that if this bill does not get through the Parliament, it will quite likely be June before the Treasurer needs it. I would like the Treasurer to comment now, if he can, on whether that is a reasonable way of looking at it. That then leads to the following question that the reason for the Treasurer's speed in getting the bill through Parliament may be simply one of giving himself certainty. There may be administrative issues in flowing the bill through, but I would not expect that would delay the bill by more than a couple of days. If the Treasurer cannot give us a cut-off date when the authorisation will be fully spent—which a number of members have asked for—and the Treasurer foresees a legal issue in meeting the commitments of government, can the Treasurer give us some understanding of those other issues, such as giving himself a cushion of comfort for administrative purposes and why he gave that figure to the house for passing this legislation through both chambers by next week?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I thank the member for the comments. This is an issue that arises every time the Treasurer's advance bill is considered in the house. I accept the comment that the opposition is raising the same argument we raised when we were in opposition last year and that we are raising the same argument that the opposition raised when it was in government last year. The advice I have received from Treasury is that we need to have this bill dealt with by both houses of Parliament by the end of next week so that assent can be given and properly appropriated funds are available to meet a variety of expenditure items that the opposition can see outlined in the bill. It is no different from the arguments put in this place last year by the then Treasurer when he argued against the referral of the Treasurer's advance bill to a committee. He used lines such as the government needed the funding to respond to emerging community needs, for wage settlements and so on. We need the bill to be dealt with in a relatively quick period so that the government can keep on governing. Those issues have not changed. Essentially the issues are those outlined in the detail that sits behind the Treasurer's advance bill, on which I am sure at some stage in the not too distant future we will have an opportunity to reflect. I accept the argument about the quantum—I have said that many times. However, this is a process that is entirely consistent with previous events that have occurred in this place. I understand the points the member is making; they are exactly the points we made when we sat in his position. However, the government's view, on advice from Treasury, is that this is the time frame we need to have the bill put in place so that Treasury can deal with the contingencies and expenditure profiles that sit around the issues described in detail in the notes accompanying the Treasurer's advance bill. That is why we wanted to deal with this bill this week—so that it can go to the other place.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I accept what the Treasurer has said as perhaps addressing the contributions from other speakers earlier. I did not enter into the debate on comparing this bill with last year's, although that may be relevant. The way this bill was handled last year is obviously different from the way it is being handled this year. This year members of the opposition are not making personal attacks on the Treasurer. There is a range of issues, but that was not the point of my question.

Mr P. Papalia: The point, member?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The point I am trying to get the Treasurer to address is to give members some understanding of why the time line he has outlined must be adhered to. The time line we know about is that the budget was due to run until 30 June. The quantum the Treasurer is seeking, as I put to him in my earlier contribution, is less than one month's requirement for expenditure. The Treasurer is seeking authorisation of that expenditure by early April; therefore, he is one and a half months ahead of when he is likely to need that money. That is not to say that the Treasurer does not have very good justification for setting the time line for the passage of the bill at within the next two weeks. I am asking the Treasurer to put on the record some of the reasons for that justification. As I indicated in my contribution, it might be that the Treasurer wants the comfort of knowing that the legislation is through the Parliament and he can get on with finalising the budget, and that it is for those sorts of personal reasons. It may come down to some administrative reasons, such as complexities in getting the bill proclaimed and getting messages out to the departments and authorising them to make that expenditure. I am just fishing for some justification for the time line that the Treasurer has given; that is, that he needs to have this bill through both houses early in April when it appears that the expenditure we are authorising will not be needed

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until some time in June. I am therefore asking the Treasurer to give some of the reasons that he requires that passage within the next two weeks.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is not for personal reasons; it is for administrative reasons. I will share with the member some more information that Treasury has provided me with. Thus far \$240 million of the existing Treasurer's advance of \$437 million has been consumed. That leaves a balance of \$197 million.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Automatically given consent?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

However, that balance has been impacted on at a significant rate.

The advice I have is that the Treasurer's advance was drawn down by an additional \$20 million today. The point I am trying to make is that the Treasurer's advance is being drawn down at an increasingly rapid rate, as is often the case as we head towards the end of a financial year. We have a balance of \$197 million of appropriated funds. There is no indication that the Treasurer's advance will continue to be drawn down at a rate of \$20 million. There is no indication that the draw-down might be at a more rapid rate. We do not have a lot of time left. If we assume that the Treasurer's advance is drawn down at \$20 million a day, it will be approximately 10 days before it is exhausted. It may well run higher than \$20 million; it may run at less than \$20 million. This is simply the point of view of good solid governments.

Without having been in this position last year—let us set the quantum aside for one instant—I would suggest that the reason surrounding the timely passage of the bill through the house this year is the same reason for the timely passage of the bill through the house last year. I hope that gives the opposition an indication of where we are at and the rate at which the advance can potentially be drawn down. I am not saying that it runs at that rate every day. I do not have that advice. It may well run at more than that rate some days; it may run at less.

Mr P. Papalia: What was the \$20 million spent on?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I can get some more advice on that. I only have this advice at the moment. The officials went back to Treasury to try to —

Mr M.P. Whitely: You mean you didn't ask them?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We can get the information. I am not saying that we do not have the information; I am saying that that is how much was drawn down today. From the point of view of good governance, we need to have these approvals in place so that when we move out of the \$437 million of the Treasurer's advance, we can continue to fund a range of programs. These are not programs that we can suddenly provide money for in the last week of June. I accept that the member for Cannington was using an extreme example. These programs are often ongoing in nature. Members will notice when they read through the documentation that a lot of money relates to public service general agreement 4, PSGA4. That is money that is being moved out of a fund in Treasury and appropriated to the agencies. We cannot do that without the correct authorisations under the Treasurer's advance. That happens every single pay cycle. That was a point that the former Treasurer highlighted last year. The government has a desire to have this matter dealt with from an administrative point of view. In my view, it is important that it is dealt with so that we can fulfil the undertakings we gave through our election commitments, which are clearly represented in some aspects of the Treasurer's advance, and also deliver the services of government.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am very pleased with the answer that the Treasurer has now given. The information that has been provided to the house means that we can make a decision on the arguments that he puts rather than just make a bland assertion. It begs the question why the Parliament was not resumed in February if the authorisation is being burnt at such a rapid rate—let us call it \$450 million, which is the Treasurer's advance. He has \$197 million of that left, so after six months of the year, he has used, in round figures, \$250 million and now he fears that in 10 days he might use \$200 million. These are the sorts of issues that we are raising all the time that go to the heart of the actions of the Treasurer and the criticisms and critique of the new government. This extraordinary growth in expenditure is not being properly accounted back to the Parliament. For the first time now, at 7.13 pm, we finally get the information that should have been provided in February because the government chose not to resume the Parliament until March. The government is now demanding that we act in this way because it chose for Parliament not to sit.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You're not being demanded of anything. This is government legislation that we're putting through Parliament.

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Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: With respect, the government is declaring this an urgent bill. It is telling us that it has only \$197 million to fund these additional expenditures. I read the comments made by the Leader of the House. The Minister for Health attempted to participate in the debate but he was cut off because he had written the wrong speech. I am not reflecting on the behaviour of others; I am just talking about the matter before the house. The government arranged its business in the way that it chose. It chose for Parliament not to sit and then says that this bill is urgent. It is only urgent because the government has made it urgent. That does not make it urgent.

Mr R.F. Johnson: We're not debating whether it's an urgent bill; we're discussing clause 2.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That has the effect of denying the opposition the opportunity to properly examine the bill because the government chooses not to come to us with the proper mini-budget. The critique of the opposition in March last year was that the then Labor government was so terrible that it was not properly managing the affairs of the state. Yet not one line of the budget has been changed. The Treasurer says he has changed the priorities of public works expenditure but is expending 13 per cent more than the person he believes to be incompetent. This is an extraordinary situation. We are not being provided with the time and opportunity to properly examine the bill because of the way the government chooses to bring this matter forward. We have a right to be disappointed and to draw the attention of the community to the poor management practices that the government has because this is not proper management. There is no business case, to use the words of the Treasurer, and no plan for how we are going to proceed. That is the position the house is left in. There should be a proper opportunity for us to examine these matters because they are very important. We only got a clear picture three minutes ago. That is an extraordinary circumstance that we find ourselves in.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am seeking clarification from the Treasurer regarding the time line he has given for the commencement of the bill. I appreciate that there are lots of arguments around this clause and the bill but I am being very specific. I am seeking some justification for the time line that the Treasurer gave. I do not feel that his response gave any explanation for the time line. We know that he needs this bill to be passed to meet the extra expenditure. We want it to go through. We do not want public servants not getting paid. We know that the pre-election financial projections had a total expenditure of \$17.972 billion. Then the government's midyear projection came out as \$18.853 billion. Clearly, the government is seeking to meet that plus whatever cost pressures have come through. We know that it needs the money.

The Treasurer has not explained in any way that I can understand—I am sure other people feel the same—why he needs the bill through in early April. He has said that it is not for personal convenience. I accept that. He has said it is because of administrative issues. I ask the Treasurer to elaborate on those. It was my understanding that those administrative issues might take a week or two. It is no good saying that an extra \$20 million was found this week. Does that mean he will have to amend the bill and go back and find more money? We accept that the extra \$1.2 billion, which has a contingency in it, will be adequate to get his approved expenditure through until 30 June. Clearly, the way the numbers stack up, the extra money he is asking for will still only be enough for one month; that is, June at the most. I accept that the Treasurer wants it earlier, and I am open to being convinced that he has very good reasons for wanting it earlier, but I have not heard him explain any of those reasons. I would appreciate it if the Treasurer could give some explanation of why he wants that extra time. If it is not for personal reasons or for comfort and certainty so he can get on with other things, what administrative reasons does he have for wanting the bill through in the next two weeks?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will provide one last answer to this question. As of today, of the existing approval of \$437 million there is a balance of \$197 million left. We are seeking approval tonight to add another \$762 million to that balance of \$197 million. The Treasurer's advance has a historical propensity to be difficult to predict, and the draw-downs on any day can vary quite dramatically. I shared with members previously that today the draw-down on the Treasurer's advance was \$20 million. I have just been informed that on another day—a single-day event—the Treasurer's advance suffered a \$70 million draw-down.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: What were they for?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That amount was for a refund of stamp duty payment. I am not sure if it was the result of a negotiated settlement or a court case, but irrespective there was a refund of a stamp duty assessment of \$70 million. The point I make is that the draw-downs on the Treasurer's advance are difficult to predict on a day-to-day basis because they often relate to discrete events. They can be, and have been this financial year, up to \$70 million in one day. They were today, and today alone, \$20 million —

Mr M.P. Whitely: What for?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: — and that \$197 million does not give us comfort and security in the available funding for the Treasurer's advance we need to effectively govern and expend the moneys on the Treasurer's advance. I cannot be any clearer than that. We will not wait until May to have this issue resolved because there are too many uncertainties around a draw-down on the Treasurer's advance. I am very happy to discuss all these issues about the Treasurer's advance. I cannot provide a clearer explanation to members. I will be on my feet for another two and a half minutes, and if members require other information, please ask. I think I have attempted to explain the often unplanned volatility we are dealing with in relation to the Treasurer's advance. The very firm advice from Treasury is that this matter needs to be dealt with so that the aggregate amount can be increased by \$762 million so that we can govern effectively.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Will the Treasurer tell us what will be the quantum of total expenditure once this legislation has gone through? What will be the total amount of expenditure approved for the whole of the year after the amount contained in this bill is approved? It will obviously be about \$18.8 billion to \$19 billion. Will the Treasurer provide a figure to the nearest \$100 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Is that for current, or recurrent and capital? I will provide that information to the member, but notwithstanding —

Mr M.P. Whitely: You don't know then? You don't know that baseline figure?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not even know what the question is yet—whether it is about recurrent and capital. We will get that information for the member; I am happy to provide that information. They are the facts. I have a sneaking suspicion that they were the same facts pertaining to the Treasurer's advance last year, which led the then Treasurer to make the observation that the government needed to deal with this matter and he needed the approval for the money to deal with, as I have said before, emerging community needs, wage settlements and so on. It is a fact of doing business.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I thought that answer was quite illuminating. The key word used by the Treasurer in that response was that he wanted "comfort". He wanted a comfort factor about his expenditure so that there would be no unexpected little surprises that had not been allocated for. I suggest that that is exactly what is wrong with the Treasurer's approach. We are in a situation whereby the government has failed to deliver a three per cent efficiency dividend. We are also in a situation whereby it would not take too much imagination to envisage the state's AAA credit rating coming under pressure because of the government's out-of-control spending. The Treasurer has acknowledged that the expenditure in the budget is likely to be lumpy in May and June. Perhaps he has not realised, but others on this side have pointed out that part of the reason for that is the nature of budget expenditure—that is, agencies realise that if they do not spend it, they will lose it. This results in a likely rush of expenditure towards the end of the year. Agencies do not want to lose their allocation so they go ahead and spend on sometimes rushed decisions. It might seem as though they have had a whole year to plan it, but the reality is that there is a bucket of money at the end of the year and they have to find a way to spend it. There is inherent fat in the system and this Parliament should take the time to find it, not put additional fat into the system.

The Treasurer used the word "comfort". I would have felt far more reassured if the Treasurer had said he was not going to sign off on this \$1.2 billion extra, but he was going to take the time to bury down into the process and find out if this expenditure was absolutely necessary. Instead, the Treasurer has said he needs to have comfort in this process. Rather than trying to trim down the fat that is inherent in the end-of-year rush spending by taking the time to bury down into agencies and find out where this expenditure will be made —

The SPEAKER: I urge the member to direct his comments to the clause at hand.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: We are talking about commencement. I suggest that the commencement of this legislation should be after the Treasurer has had an opportunity to bury down into the process to see if he can find any fat.

We are in unusual circumstances, and the Treasurer keeps on making reference to last year. Of course there are several differences between what is happening this year and what happened last year. The size of the advance is one difference, as we are now talking about billions of dollars. The facts also are that cost pressures are actually coming off government, not going onto it. We were in a boom with inflationary pressures in the economy, now some of the heat has come out of the economy, nonetheless there has been an explosion in expenditure. Let us take this opportunity to bury down into some of that fat that exists in the end-of-year expenditure, rather than actually building some more comfort. It is a waste, and we will end up seeing even further pressure on our state's financial position.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will provide some follow-up information to the member for Balcatta.

The advice I have is that in the midyear review there was \$18.9 billion of recurrent expenditure and \$7.7 billion of capital expenditure, which, according to my estimates, yields \$26.6 billion of total expenditure. The midyear review brought to account \$1 billion of Treasurer's advance authorisations—it was already in the midyear review. We are seeking \$1.2 billion in total. Effectively, the midyear review figure, published on 18 December, has increased by \$200 million to approximately \$26.8 billion in total. The increase between 18 December and what we are asking for now is \$200 million of additional Treasurer's advance funding.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer for that. The Treasurer earlier indicated that he wanted to do it early so he had some certainty. That certainty goes to the parliamentary process, which relates directly to the commencement clause. But that certainty also goes to the best estimates that Treasury can make of the potential expenditure. Is the Treasurer saying that he is quite confident that, with this extra \$1.2 billion, a situation will not arise just prior to 30 June in which expenditure cannot be met, and he will not have to resort to some means of putting off that expenditure until 1 July? Will the Treasurer give us some idea of how confident he is that he will be able to meet that, given, as he has indicated, the pressures and problems he has with the increased growth in expenditure?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I thank the member for the question. Members may have noticed that there is a contingency amount of \$149.3 million contained within the Treasurer's advance request. As I understand it, that contingency equates to 12 per cent of the total Treasurer's advance sought. It is through that contingency that we are hoping to be able to fund any unexpected expense items that arise between now and the end of the financial year. I am happy to take further questions on that when we deal with the appropriate clause.

As I understand it, last year the contingency was 10 per cent of the Treasurer's advance, which was \$70 million. Whilst I am happy to have a conversation around the contingency—and no doubt we will—it is something that has appeared previously.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I have one last question to try to get further clarification. This is on a slightly different tack. I am working on the assumption that the Treasurer can easily swap money within the allocations and there is not a constriction there. The Treasurer simply needs the total aggregate amount approved. If there was an underspend in one agency, then the money allocated could actually be allocated somewhere else. I would like the Treasurer to confirm that there are not internal constraints that also require him to have this bill through fairly quickly, because it might be just in one particular agency that there is an issue of over-expenditure and we need to get it through quickly. That is not my understanding—correct me if I am wrong—but he really only has to deal with the aggregate expenditure and there is, within the various statutes, room to move money around if he should need to do so.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have taken some advice from Treasury and they advise me that in the case that one agency delivers an underspend and another agency delivers an overspend, that it is not simply a matter of transferring the underspend to cover the overspend. Indeed, the overspend, being moneys that were not appropriated as part of the budget process, would have to inevitably be brought to account through the Treasurer's advance process and the appropriation bills that sit behind the Treasurer's advance process. As an example, in the not-too-distant future we will bring two appropriation bills into this house—I think they are still called number five and number six—which will sit on the back of last year's Treasurer's advance. I have a sneaking suspicion there will be less questions about that because, of course, they relate to a former era.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Treasurer did prompt me to take that one further, if I may. He corrected me in that there is a constraint. Let us say education has an allocation of about \$3 billion. If they go over, that cannot be met by another agency even though another agency might have underspent—in cash flows he might, but in terms of authorisation to spend, the Treasurer cannot, so he needs the authorisation to spend.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Member, that is my advice.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I accept that. The question that I asked was whether the Treasurer would nominate the one, two or three agencies that he believes will be overspending and really pushing up that total aggregate expenditure that he requires authorisation for. Are there one, two or three key agencies with large expenditures that are well over and are going to require him to have this through in order to be able to meet that expenditure limit, to allow the expenditure limit to be extended for those one, two or three agencies?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: All I will say is that the Treasurer's advance details by agency areas where moneys that were not appropriated in the May budget are being spent. Those over-expenditures no doubt we will go through in detail —

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr J.C. Kobelke: The issue we are dealing with here is commencement and timeliness. As I indicated, overall the Treasurer has to wait until June —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am reluctant to. As the member is no doubt aware, two of our larger agencies, health and education, have indicated some issues around their performance to budget this year. They are serious issues. We are still working with them in an attempt to resolve that. I am not going to speculate any further other than to acknowledge that there has been public comment in relation to those two agencies but that is far from a closed book and there is a lot of work —

Mr J.C. Kobelke: That then leaves open to conjecture that if we do not have this bill through in the next two weeks, there might be an issue paying our teachers or nurses well before 30 June.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I can say this—that within the context of paying public sector employees, a significant number of the line items in this detail deal with payments as they relate to public service general agreement 4, and the Treasurer's advance is required to meet those payments. There was, as I understand it, provision made in last year's budget, in a Treasury-controlled fund, which is now being appropriated across the agencies. The technical advice I have received is that that appropriation requires a Treasurer's advance. If we draw down the entire approved Treasurer's advance of \$437 million and we do not have this bill through Parliament, there, quite simply, is no approval for government to spend that money. I could only assume that expenditure would have to cease.

Mr M. McGowan: That \$437 million is already approved.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Four hundred and thirty-seven million is approved. If we exceed \$437 million, any expenditure that the intended \$762 million is to pay for will not be met.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am the penultimate speaker on this clause. The shadow Treasurer is going to be the ultimate speaker from the opposition's point of view in relation to this clause. I cannot guarantee members of the government will not want to speak on this clause. I cannot guarantee that we have not been holding them back! I cannot be responsible for what members do. There have been some incredibly good points raised by members of the opposition in relation to this. What we have seen is a pretty arrogant display in relation to the dismissal—an arrogant, arrogant, arrogant display by the Treasurer in relation to the points raised. There has also been a very arrogant display by the Leader of the House in relation to points raised.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: He is not serious!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I will read that criticism with honour!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Members of government have been incredibly arrogant in what they have been saying. The Premier himself intervened in the debate earlier to insinuate that we were wasting the Parliament's time. I found that incredibly arrogant as well, particularly in light of the fact I heard the Treasurer say a few moments ago the exact same arguments were raised last year and the former government rejected them. Then he said, however, that he accepts the argument regarding quantum. That is the entire point that we have been raising—he accepts the argument regarding quantum. That is why we have been seeking clarification because the quantum is so much more enormous than it was last year. He accepts the point, but he does not accept the argument we have been raising. That is arrogant.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Indeed, what makes it worse, my scarred friend—did you do that operation on yourself? It sort of looks like it! I hate to think what is going to be revealed when he takes that off. What makes it even more arrogant is the fact he said they have drawn down \$20 million today but he cannot tell us what it is. It is only \$20 million that has been drawn down today but he cannot tell us what it is! I hope as the night goes on he might be able to tell us what the draw-down of \$20 million was today. I thought one of the best points made was by the member for Cannington, who raised the point that if the government actually sat the Parliament longer than 17 weeks a year, we would have time to do it. I hear the Minister for Mental Health, in his arrogant way, poo-pooing the point I was making. I find that incredibly arrogant that he would do that. The point remains that when we were in office we sat between 20 and 25 weeks a year. As I recall, in 2006-07 it was up to nearly 25 weeks of the year because we had a real legislative agenda.

The fact the government will not let Parliament sit longer is an arrogant indictment of its governance, which means —

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr R.F. Johnson: “Arrogant” again!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will conclude on this point. It means we do not have enough time to scrutinise this legislation in the way it should be. It should be scrutinised for far more than a few hours, Minister for Mental Health. I realise the minister does not see the Parliament as important, but it is. These opportunities should be taken by Parliament and we should sit longer in order to examine this sort of legislation more than we do, and I think that is reflected.

We are now two clauses in; two-thirds of the way through the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill. I think the opposition has been more than helpful to the government in that we have got through two-thirds of the bill in little more than two hours, and it is arrogant of members opposite to say otherwise!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I thank the member for Rockingham for his contribution. I will not labour the point he has just made —

Dr G.G. Jacobs: He was time filling until you got here!

Mr B.S. WYATT: However, I want to make the point that the opposition has raised a number of issues of concern, but having respect to the quantum, they have been discussed at length. The Treasurer was going to find some information over the dinner break about the commencement date, the day of royal assent—I do not need you to get to your feet —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I do not have any additional advice, other than it is standard wording for a standard clause, which Parliamentary Counsel now requests be inserted into this legislation. I can get more information, but I must say, as I said earlier, it is exactly the same wording that was in last year’s Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill, so there has been no change. We have asked for written advice from Parliamentary Counsel, which we will provide to the member.

Mr B.S. WYATT: When the Treasurer gets that advice, can he pass that along? It will be very useful.

As indicated, the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill always creates these problems, and we can see this going back through not only last year but also a number of years. The out-of-budget expenditure issues that the opposition raises are often very similar. I daresay it may be time—I do not know whether it could be done and still keep the flexibility the government needs for this sort of spending—to have some more formalised process through which the bill is introduced to Parliament with scheduled events taking place, so that we do not have a situation whereby the opposition is concerned about the timing and the impact of that timing on the operations of government. Perhaps it could eliminate some of the questions that the opposition has raised tonight. I think the opposition has made that point and I do not think there are any other speakers for clause 2 of the bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3: Authorisation of expenditure to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters or to make advances for certain purposes —

Mr B.S. WYATT: Clause 3 is obviously the substantive part of the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill, so it might just be worth clarifying with the Treasurer some items in the document he provided to the opposition in the briefing. We will start with the Department of Agriculture and Food and work our way through it. There may be the odd member who comes in a bit after we have dealt with some things and who may want to go back, but I am sure there will be no trouble with that throughout the course of the evening.

As I mentioned, this is the substantive part of the bill that authorises expenditure to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters or to make advances for certain purposes. The first item I raise deals with the Department of Agriculture and Food. The Treasurer has already made some commentary about the GA4 wage increase. I hope that the Treasurer might at least make some comments about the impact of likely expenditure in respect of the public sector staffing cap that he has also announced. Is that likely to have an impact on this figure?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Members will see referrals to the public service GA4 wage increase a number of times throughout the document. My understanding is that total amount of \$33.4 million was allocated in the pre-election financial projection statements—Department of Treasury and Finance administration—for the whole-of-government impact of the agreement, which was disbursed to agencies for the purposes of the midyear review. It is the case that not all of that \$33.4 million will be required by agencies and will not require, therefore, access to the Treasurer’s advance due to offsets, such as the three per cent efficiency dividend. However, basically where

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members see a line item in this documentation that refers to that general agreement, it is effectively bringing to the account the transfer of that funding out of the DTF-administered account across to the agency account.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I want to clarify whether that \$33.4 million was allocated at the time of the 2008-09 budget, or was that something that was added in around the election? I cannot see how that would impact on the global amount if it was allocated at the time of the 2008-09 budget and how it would contribute to the \$1.2 billion figure if it was already allocated.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am just getting a little more information on the technicalities around that. It would appear that there was a sum of \$323 million that was allocated, as I take it from reading the *2008-09 Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, for the purposes of the public service general agreement. However, there were some parameter changes or some changes in the final outcome, which had an impact on the total amount required. My advice is that it is in the vicinity of the \$33.4 million that was brought to account in the pre-election financial projections statement. Therefore, the member is right in that the vast majority of that money was brought to account within the budget process. This is a sum of money that is over and above that, which was brought to account in the pre-election financial projection statements.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Just to clarify, \$323 million was budgeted. The GA4 agreement obviously was about \$33.4 million above that expectation, and this bill basically seeks to apportion that according to the departments where it is relevant.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That is right; yes.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Can I just clarify the Treasurer's answer about the apportioning to various departments. The first item of the note that he distributed is agriculture and food, and the line item for the GA4 wage increase for that department is \$3.1 million. Does that cover the entire wage increase for the Department of Agriculture and Food or is it only a proportion of the total wage increase?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My understanding is that it is a portion of the total wage increase and that the vast majority of the impacts of the wage increases were allocated in the budget process. Therefore, this is incremental over and above that as it relates to public workers within the Department of Agriculture and Food who are covered by the public service general agreement.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Could the Treasurer give us an idea of the total wage increase for that department of which this is over and above that wage increase?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will have to take that on notice.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If I understood correctly, the Treasurer's answer to the original question is that there is \$33.4 million across the whole of government. Is there any particular reason that nearly 10 per cent of that goes to a relatively small agency in agriculture at \$3.1 million, whereas a larger department would appear to have more impact from a wage increase of a much smaller quantum allocated to the GA4 wage increase in the document that the Treasurer has provided to the opposition?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have is that the original apportionment of the increase across agencies is based on some assumptions, and that on an agency-by-agency basis, those assumptions were of a varying degree of accuracy. I suppose that is the most accurate way to put it. I accept the point that the Department of Agriculture and Food is not the biggest agency around, but the catch-up, the readjustment or the adjustment containing the pre-election financial projections statement is not therefore proportionately spread across all agencies based on their FTE employment nor, indeed, their coverage of people under this award; it depends on the difference between the actual versus the original allocation. Again, my understanding is that it was based on assumptions that Treasury made in good faith at the time.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is there any issue in this GA4 wage increase that relates to an increase in the number of employees in the Department of Agriculture and Food above what was originally expected at the time of the budget? Is the increase in FTEs being impacted here, thereby necessitating the request for the additional \$3.1 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have received is that this is purely a wage effect.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I also refer to the Department of Agriculture and Food component of the Treasurer's list. I observe that the Minister for Agriculture and Food has made, in my opinion, a hasty, intemperate and rash decision to expand genetically modified crop trials, exposing the state's farmers to sacrifice of their clean, green

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

image and the potential market leverage that comes with it. The minister has consistently argued in this place that there will be suitable safeguards enforced and that there will be adequate supervision. My concern is that if this allocation does not represent an increase in employee numbers in the Department of Agriculture and Food to facilitate the expansion of GM crops, what does it represent?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The situation in the Department of Agriculture and Food is that, to support the fantastic initiative of the government in enabling Western Australian farmers to remain globally competitive —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This is not the point of the debate. If the agency decides that it can reallocate resources within the agency to deliver on the policy outcomes of government—that is, unders and overs within one agency, not reflected in an increase in aggregate agency—that is a decision for the agency, no doubt under the direction of the minister. That is not a matter that we are here to discuss.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am concerned that the Treasurer does not appear to be concerned that the expansion in the role of the department for which this allocation is being made does not seem to have been considered.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Which allocation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The allocation for the Department of Agriculture and Food for monitoring GM crop testing throughout the state does not appear to have been taken into account in the budget process.

Mr T.R. Buswell: How do you know that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not know, because the Treasurer does not know! I am concerned that the Treasurer cannot tell members whether an impact as significant as this has been taken into consideration.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Let us be clear: there is every likelihood that the Minister for Agriculture and Food, in consultation with his department, has directed people to become involved in that activity. That is not the purpose of the Treasurer's advance debate. The Treasurer's advance debate is to examine items that draw down on the Treasurer's advance, and it is perfectly legitimate, as I understand it, for agencies, within their global allocation, to reallocate resources within agency. They do that from time to time, and they most certainly do that following the election of a new government. I cannot confirm for the member whether that has happened; I suspect that it has. I cannot confirm it because I am dealing with specific items that draw down on the Treasurer's advance. I am not here to engage in general debate about every single element of government expenditure, because that is not the purpose of this bill.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can we confirm that this is \$3.1 million of additional funding, and that, over and above that amount, there will be \$2.7 million cut from it this year through the three per cent efficiency dividend? It will impact on the amount of draw-down needed from the Treasurer's advance. That is, if the \$2.7 million target was not met, I suspect it would impact on the draw-down needed from the Treasurer's advance for that department.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that the member is right. The efficiency dividend is offset against overs in agencies, and I can confirm that the efficiency dividend for the Department of Agriculture and Food that was incorporated at the time of the midyear review was \$2.7 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is there any information on what that will include? Is it staff, activities, funding or grants?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: On an agency-by-agency basis, the elements that comprise the three per cent efficiency dividend will be reported in the budget and will be subject to full scrutiny by Parliament during the estimates process, which will follow two weeks after the budget.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Although I accept that the Treasurer may not be in a position to go into every detail associated with the budget allocation for the agriculture portfolio, I think it needs to be said that the midyear review went into a fair degree of detail and included things such as \$100 000 going towards investigation of the technical and economic feasibility of a state biosecurity barrier, which indicates that the government believes that rabbit-proof fences and other such things actually work. With regard to the amount of \$3.1 million and the question asked by the member for Warnbro, the issue of a reallocation of funds within the department needs further analysis. We need to know which services and programs within the Department of Agriculture and Food will be cut, given that the department has many very important programs, including those that help our farmers deal with issues of climate change, land degradation and access to markets. If the Treasurer is saying that the allocation of the funds required to effectively monitor the implementation of GM crops will take place at the cost

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of other programs, members need to know about it. I do not think the issue of the budgetary implications of the commercial trial of GM canola crops should be dismissed. The question must be asked: can we afford to go ahead with these trials at this stage?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member to the clause at hand.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Indeed, \$3.1 million is money that could well be spent on this GM trial; if that is the case, we need to know about it. There are all sorts of things associated with it. We need analysis of market acceptance, the loss of GM-free markets, issues with contamination, impacts on farm profitability and buffer zones; all sorts of things —

Point of Order

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Mr Speaker, standing orders indicate that we are here to discuss items that are presented as part of the Treasurer's advance, and I am very happy to discuss those items and work through them. This is not relevant to the point at hand.

The SPEAKER: Please continue, member for Gosnells, but I will ask you to sit down if you do not direct your comments to clause 3, which is in front of you.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Has additional expenditure been allocated for the implementation of commercial GM crops in Western Australia?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I might write to the people in the Department of Agriculture and Food who received this pay rise and say that the member for Gosnells's view—I can source what the member just said from *Hansard*—is that their pay rise should go to GM research. I am sure they will be tickled pink by the member's unilateral decision.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warnbro!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I outlined earlier, I will attempt to address issues raised about the Treasurer's advance but I will not comment on broader portfolio issues. I indicated very clearly that for the purpose of the Treasurer's advance, this draw-down on agriculture is for the purpose of the wage agreement. If the member believes it is the case that the minister has asked the department to allocate resources internally to GM foods, I suggest he ask the minister a question on notice.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I want to clarify my understanding of the three per cent cut and its effect on the general provision of agriculture department services, including the process of monitoring GM trials. I understand there has been a three per cent cut and I think the figure mentioned by the member for West Swan was \$2.7 million. There is a \$2.7 million cut in the Department of Agriculture and Food's operating budget, but the allocation we are discussing today is \$3.1 million exclusively for an unbudgeted wage increase. Is that correct? In other words, has there been an effective cut of \$2.7 million in the Department of Agriculture and Food's operating budget that is completely independent of this \$3.1 million increase in wages?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This is the Department of Agriculture and Food's net ask—that is, net draw-down—on the Treasurer's advance.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I seek the Treasurer's assistance to explain or clarify a technical aspect about clause 3. Clause 3 has two subclauses. Subclause (1) relates to expenditure specified in section 29(1) of the Financial Management Act and, as indicated in the explanatory memorandum, is based on the total expenditure in the previous year, which was—when rounded—something like \$14.59 billion. According to the explanatory memorandum, the three per cent results in an automatic Treasurer's advance limit of \$437.7 million in rounded figures. I am seeking clarification about section 29(1) of the act, which makes it clear that the money is available. What is the effect of clause 3(1) of the bill? Subclause (1) seems to simply validate, or duplicate, what is already available through section 29(1). What is the technical effect of clause 3(1) of this bill?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am having some difficulty understanding the line of questioning. My advice is that section 29(1) of the Financial Management Act, using the three per cent figure, delivers an amount that we can spend up to on the Treasurer's advance.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: I accept that; that is not the point of the question.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am trying to outline my understanding and then I will be happy to take another question. Under section 29(3), we need to come back to Parliament for any expenditure that exceeds that limit. Subsection (3) states —

Expenditure that exceeds the limit specified in subsection (1) may be authorised by a Treasurer's Advance ... to make payments in respect of ...

I ask the member to rephrase the question because I am having some trouble understanding the gist of his question and where he is coming from.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am trying to get the Treasurer to put on the record what is the effect of clause 3(1) of this bill. Section 29(1) of the act states —

Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the total expenditure that may be authorised under sections 27(1) and (2) and 28(1) in a financial year cannot exceed an amount equal to 3% of the total amount appropriated for the previous financial year by the Appropriation Acts.

That is the \$437.7 million, about which we have spoken. It seems that in the Treasurer's earlier contribution, he had taken for granted that he already has that \$437.7 million to spend. My question is: what is the legal effect of subclause (1) given that the Treasurer already has that money to spend? I think there is an effect and I want to try to get the Treasurer to clarify what exactly is that effect for the record.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that clause 3(1) gives us the authority to expend funds that exceed the limits determined under section 29(1). Essentially, clause 3(1) is saying that we are seeking authority to exceed that limit, which is exactly what we have been talking about.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: But aren't you given that under section 29(1)? You already said in your earlier contribution that —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My understanding is that section 29(1) sets the limit and that we are now seeking authority to exceed the limit.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I do not think the last statement is true because clause 3(2) of the bill gives authority for funds not exceeding \$700-odd million. Clause 3(1) gives the \$437.7 million that is authorised under section 29(1) of the Financial Management Act. Section 29(3) of the Financial Management Act states —

... may be authorised by a Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act ...

However, during the Treasurer's earlier contribution to the debate, I shared the understanding that that \$437 million could be spent without the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill being approved.

Mr F.M. Logan: You can; it's automatic.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the member for Cockburn for his interjection. It seems to be automatic. Obviously the clause is there for effect. What is the effect?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The FMA gives us the ability to spend, in this case, up to \$437 million without having to come back to Parliament. That is a given. Subclause (1) of this bill seeks authority for expenditure that exceeds that limit—that is, to take expenditure to \$1.2 billion—and subclause (2) determines the increased amount. My understanding of this bill, which is entirely consistent with the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2008 in form, is that we are acknowledging that the Financial Management Act gives us approval to spend up to a certain amount of money using the formula dictated—this year it is \$437 million. Clause 3(1) of this Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill seeks authorisation to spend more than that and clause 3(2) indicates the amount of that increased spend, which is \$762 million.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am not a lawyer and perhaps the Treasurer does not have a lawyer at the table advising him. Perhaps I can lead the Treasurer, recognising that I do not have legal expertise. It would appear from section 29(1) of the Financial Management Act that the Treasurer has the power to spend the three per cent—the \$437 million; however, that relates to section 27(1) and (2) of the act, which is conditioned by section 27(3), which allows that expenditure to be authorised only “to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters”. Clearly, this money is being spent on election promises, which are not extraordinary or unforeseen matters; therefore, the Treasurer needs the power in section 29(3) which then, through the act, authorises expenditure not only for extraordinary or unforeseen matters but also allows the Treasurer “to make advances for the purposes referred to in section 28(1).”

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

I wonder whether part of the reason that it is needed is because it is not only extraordinary and unforeseen expenditure but expenditure on matters of policy, which the government quite rightly has the ability to make.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The expenditure that the member for Balcatta relates to election commitments was entirely unforeseen at the time of last year's budget in May 2008. Very few people who sat in this house during last year's budget deliberations would have foreseen these sorts of expenditure. Notwithstanding the rollercoaster ride of modern politics, things change. We often debate whether certain expenditure in the Treasurer's advance qualifies as being extraordinary or unforeseen; it is the government's view that these matters are.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Treasurer is on advice that "unforeseen" can be interpreted with a very wide scope, and it is not a matter of policy. Although the word "unforeseen" can be used appropriately in terms of election outcomes, the expenditure was a policy change, it was not unforeseen. The government could have made that policy change at that time or in the budget for the next financial year. Clearly, it is a policy change and I ask the Treasurer to confirm that he has been advised that the meaning that can be applied to the Financial Management Act 2006 for unforeseen circumstances can be extended to cover a change of policy by the government.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I would like the Treasurer to clarify his answer to the question that I asked. Is the \$3.1 million figure for the general agreement 4 wage increase for the Department of Agriculture and Food a \$3.1 million increase from the 2008-09 budgeted figure? Is this \$3.1 million greater than the original budgeted figure or is it \$0.4 million higher than the original budget?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is a net \$3.1 million increase in Agriculture's 2008-09 budget appropriation.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Treasurer indicated earlier that the figure of \$3.1 million was a proportion of the total wage increase for Agriculture and Food from the GA4 wage increase. What percentage is that \$3.1 million of the total increase that will be paid, because that is what we are talking about in this line item?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I can get back to the member for Cockburn with that information, but I do not have detailed information at this time.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Would it not be an increase of \$5.8 million? If we add \$2.7 million, which is the three per cent budget cut, and the increase in the total budget of \$3.1 million, the total is \$5.8 million. I did not hear an answer.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I am obviously very simple, but if the Treasury gets \$2.7 million off the department for the three per cent cut and then it finds a mistake has been made in working out the pay rise and it needs \$3.1 million, in effect the three per cent cut has delivered a \$400 000 increase in its budget.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Department of Agriculture and Food has yielded a \$2.7 million efficiency dividend. It has sought from government a net increase in its appropriation of \$3.1 million. It is seeking the net increase of \$3.1 million because of the impact on salaries of public service general agreement 4. The advice from Treasury is that the calculations of the member for Bassendean are loosely correct. The net increase of \$3.1 million would be grossed up, effectively, by \$2.7 million to \$5.8 million. Notwithstanding that, from the point of view of the Treasurer's advance, which is what I am here to talk about, that agency is seeking a net increase in its appropriation for the 2008-09 financial year of \$3.1 million.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Was the figure of \$3.1 million arrived at before or after the latest announcement about the downsizing of the Department of Agriculture and Food and the anticipated huge loss of jobs?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This relates to the rolling in to the agencies of budget negotiations that I understand occurred in February-March 2008. The short answer is that I suspect it is above any recent policy announcements by the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I was going to answer the member for Cockburn's question, because the Treasurer is unable to answer: it is about 53 per cent.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Does the figure of \$2.2 million for the Department for Child Protection relate only to wage increases or is it a numbers increase as well?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Again, the advice I have is that it is the wage effect.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Could the Treasurer clarify whether the number of FTEs envisaged in the budget and passed by the Parliament last year has been implemented through this appropriation and that this is just an under-over situation and not a change to the FTEs from the 2008-09 budget?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is the advice I have.

Mr P. PAPALIA: My question relates to that same matter. I understand from recent responses to upper house committee questions, that the number of FTEs that were budgeted for previously in this department has been reduced from 2 063 to 1 822 as a result of the global cap. Again, I ask whether this allocation has resulted in a cut in the number of child protection workers.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have from Treasury is that the public sector general agreement items that appear throughout the Treasurer's advance are wage rate related. The changes in FTEs within agencies are not, as I understand it, reflected here; they are purely wage rate related figures.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am trying to nail this. This year there is an increase in the Treasurer's advance of \$2.2 million for the Department for Child Protection, and the efficiency dividend of \$4.4 million is a negative. Basically, the total increase was about \$6.6 million but we are taking into account the efficiency dividend; therefore, the net increase asked for, as part of the Treasurer's advance, is \$2.2 million. That leads us to think that the wage increase component is more than \$2.2 million; it is around \$6 million, minus the efficiency dividend.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I understand. The advice from Treasury is that it cannot be absolutely definitive about that figure because it is a net increase. However, my understanding is that a sum would have been transferred from the Treasury holding account across to the agency, which would have at least comprised the \$2.2 million. I cannot provide a greater level of information than that at this stage.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is about a \$6.6 million increase from the appropriation for the 2008-09 budget. That was the demand. The department has been asked to provide efficiencies of around \$4.4 million and the net impact of the Treasurer's advance is \$2.2 million. If that \$4.4 million is not found, it will impact on the Treasurer's advance request. Would it eat into the contingencies of the \$149 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Now that we have established that the \$5.8 million is for the wage increase for the Department of Agriculture and Food, can the Treasurer tell me what the original budgeted figure was?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We will provide that detail for the member after we have gone through the budget papers.

The member for West Swan picked up on the point that there is a net increase in appropriations of \$3.1 million for the Department of Agriculture and Food, which reflects the \$5.7 million offset by the \$2.6 million. There is no guarantee that that wage component was the total amount of that gross amount. It would have to be at least \$3.1 million. There may have been an additional component, but an amount certainly was transferred across, and I expect that that is the amount.

For the information of the member for Bassendean, the employee benefits expenses for the Department of Agriculture and Food for 2008-09 was anticipated to be \$93.292 million.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: An unexpected increase of \$5.8 million out of a total of \$93.292 million is an increase of more than six per cent. I am doing the maths roughly in my head. What wage increase did the employees get and what wage increase was forecast? That is not a six per cent wage increase; it is six per cent more than was budgeted. What wage increase was achieved?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is no guarantee that the total \$5.8 million was made up of wages. The member's arithmetic is not quite accurate. Under the general agreement, the wage increases were something in the vicinity of 4.5 to five per cent.

Mr M.P. Whitely: How much was budgeted for and how much was the amount?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The employee benefits expenses from the Department of Agriculture and Food was \$93.292 million.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Yes, but there must have been a projected wage increase in that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Unfortunately, member, I was not necessarily involved in all of the budget deliberations last year. I do not have that information.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr M.P. Whitely: What was the projected figure for the general government wage increase, and what was the result?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The figure for the general —

Mr M.P. Whitely: You are making Julie Bishop look pretty good.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am working through the budget that the previous government brought down.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Can I redirect my question to the member for West Swan?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member can redirect it to someone.

Mr M. McGowan: Are you losing your cool?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Never.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the increase for Main Roads of \$20.7 million in the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. Can the Treasurer confirm that that is all for recurrent expenditure and not capital expenditure? Does this not relate to new projects being brought forward? Is the \$20.7 million for recurrent funding? In the midyear review, the revised oil price adjustments do not come up under the section on the Commissioner of Main Roads. The parameter adjustments on page 7 of the midyear review show a reduction in expenses because of the oil price impacts. The parameter change shows an oil price impact of negative \$7.9 million and the item in the TAA shows an increase in expenditure of \$20.7 million because of the revised oil price adjustments. I want some clarification about the disparity.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Network road maintenance is recurrent maintenance. The member asked a good question about the oil price. As I understand it, the assumption in the budget was that a barrel of oil would cost \$US96 and the assumption as at the time of the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* was \$US134. I understand that that shift is fed across into that particular figure for the large increase in the price of oil. Since then the price of oil in the midyear review has dropped to \$US62. This morning the cost of a barrel of oil was just under \$US50. I am sure that is what Koshie told me, and he is never wrong! On the balance of probabilities, the allocation in the Treasurer's advance for oil increases will not be drawn down in full. My advice from Treasury is that it is not unusual for a line item to be approved but not subsequently be drawn down.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For clarification, the \$20 million is not likely to be drawn down and the oil price at the time of the midyear review was \$US62 a barrel and this morning it was around \$US50. There appears to be the possibility of a saving rather than a demand for extra funding. If the budget was predicated on the price of a barrel of oil being about \$US97 and it is now around \$US50 but was about \$US60 as of early December, we would expect the government to pick up excess cash rather than pay more in the TAA.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is a fair point. Often the full Treasurer's advance is not drawn down. I have received advice that last year the Treasurer's advance asked for \$750 million and some \$611 million was drawn down. The member is right; some of the price impacts have pushed up some things and some have moved the other way. That is a fair point.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Picking up on the point the Treasurer made about the movement in oil price, I have a two-part question. Given the Treasurer's response to the previous questions, why would he not delete this provision from the request for additional money sought? Given that the Treasurer said that with the price of oil dropping to approximately \$50 this morning there would be probably no need for this to be included in this authorisation request, why does the Treasurer not reduce this authorisation request by that amount rather than indicate to Parliament that sometimes Treasury does not spend all of it? I acknowledge that Treasury does not spend all of it but in this case, for the purposes of ensuring that taxpayers get true effectiveness for this money sought, why does the Treasurer not delete this from the authorisation request to this Parliament? Secondly, could the Treasurer explain to us what the last part of the statement means by "revised or price adjustments offset by minor adjustments"?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is that I do not have the detail on those specific minor adjustments. The member raised a fair point around the oil price in particular. My understanding is that, ultimately, as a result of the Treasurer's advance, which is really a global approval limit, an appropriation bill will come back to the house in which all of those matters will be brought to account. The member raised a fair point and it is something I will certainly take up. My understanding is that this practice has been employed in the past for accommodating these movements, and no doubt it will be the practice that is employed in the future. However, the member raised a fair point and I can stress that, ultimately, these line items will be brought back to the house

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

for consideration in the appropriation process. There will be other overs and unders during the course of the run between now and the end of the year; that is just the nature of the financial environment.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I assume from that comment by the Treasurer that when he does bring these matters back to the house during the budget process, they may be identified as line items in the budget. I doubt it very much because the budget does not really get down to this detail.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am sorry for interrupting the member, but two separate appropriation bills will come into the house outside of the budget process, and not as part of the main budget appropriation, that will deal with this.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes, the Treasurer did say that earlier. That will be fair enough if they get down to this detail in a line item. However, from what the Treasurer has just informed me, I assume that this line item will not exist when he brings the appropriation back to the house.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is still the term network maintenance contract issue, but the member is right about the oil price maintenance issue.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Can the Treasurer just clarify a matter? If \$10 million of that \$20.7 million is not spent, will that just be regarded as an underspend of the department or will it become part of the authorised contingency fund?

Mr T.R. Buswell: It will effectively become part of the contingency fund.

Mr B.S. WYATT: So, will the amount that is not spent out of everything that is authorised under this bill flow into the contingency fund and can be spent?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Can that be effectively anywhere?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I do need to make the point that this bill approves a global limit. These line-by-line items are best estimates at a certain time and there is a probability that some of these line-by-line items will shift. The constraining factor for the government is the global limit.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Therefore, assuming across the 27 different departments and agencies that there is effectively an underspend of \$50 million, will that \$50 million be added to the contingency fund?

Mr T.R. Buswell: In theory, yes, although there is the probability that \$50 million will not be spent. As I said last year, \$750 million was approved through this process and \$611 million was actually spent, so this is a best estimate.

Mr B.S. WYATT: In respect of those sorts of parameter changes, such as oil price, does that impact on any other aspect of money that has been authorised under this bill?

Mr T.R. Buswell: In the PTA?

Mr B.S. WYATT: In the PTA.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will come to that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Obviously, some of this money may have already been spent. I am wondering, for example, with the Commissioner of Main Roads, what level of the \$20.7 million has actually already been spent and what level of that \$20.7 million is a future item. Clearly there might be items in the budget that have already been spent. This might be one of those. I might ask that question at other points, but we are dealing with it now.

Mr T.R. Buswell: My advice is that thus far there has been no draw-down in the Treasurer's advance by the Commissioner of Main Roads.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Perhaps at some time the Treasurer might give an indication—his advisers might like to work this out while other things are going on—of where there has already been expenditure that needs to be authorised and where there has not been any expenditure. The Treasurer has \$450 million anyway and he would naturally have been making commitments for the future, so that the discussion, when we get to it, of how much will end up in the contingency fund and how much will not be there because he has already spent it, will give us a picture of exactly how much fat is on the bacon—to use a term that was used in the debate last year. Clearly, this is an example of \$20 million that the department might be allocating to the executive but, in fact, that the

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

executive does not need. That then gives the Treasurer \$170 million in round figures to spend on anything he wants; whereas some of the money may have already been spent and therefore cannot be sat in the fat part of the bacon. That is a matter I would be interested in, not in any specific line but in the total the Treasurer has presented to us.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is a fair issue raised by the member. I will just give the member again a historical perspective. Last year the Treasurer's advance was \$750 million with a \$70 million or \$78 million contingency fund and an underspend of around \$139 million. I do not know the breakdown of the amount of the underspend that was contingency and the amount that was not. I will bring the bills soon to Parliament to get Parliament to retrospectively authorise. I do not have that information, but clearly it will make an impact. I understand the point the member is trying to make, but from an accountability point of view, those appropriation bills will come through the house ultimately for proper scrutiny.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I also want to raise a question that is a bit more global. In answer to a question from the member for West Swan, the Treasurer indicated that none of the money requested in this bill is for capital expenditure. In fact, page 15 of the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* under "Capital Investment" states —

General government infrastructure spending is expected to be around \$23 million (or 1.0%) higher in 2008-09 than forecast in the PFPS.

I am seeking, in the global expenditure that we are being asked to approve, the variation to that capital investment line that was in the midyear financial projections.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will get some more information. On the advice I am receiving in relation to Main Roads specifically, a lot of that money was commonwealth funding. The TAA really refers to appropriation-based funding, but we will get some more information on that as we work through the evening.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Treasurer, in the notes, under "Agriculture and Food", "Child Protection" et cetera, an amount is listed and attributed to the GA4, so that was obviously unforeseen. Under the heading of "Commissioner of Main Roads" the amount is for network contracts and there is nothing about the GA4. Did the staff of Main Roads Western Australia not get a pay rise under the GA4 or had it already been properly accounted for in its budget?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that the award structures and coverage across Main Roads are such that it did not require any additional funding from the Treasury account to cover anything. I am not sure of the coverage of Main Roads under the GA4; all I know is that no request for expenditure under the Treasurer's advance has come from Main Roads for this specific component of the GA4 funding. As I advised earlier, the impacts are varied. They do not necessarily reflect the size of headcount, and there are a variety of other factors. My advice is that the extent to which Main Roads people are covered by the GA4 may also include the extent to which, under the original allocation, Main Roads was able to cover the increase. There has been no call on the Treasurer's advance to fund that from Main Roads.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Returning to the member for Bassendean's earlier point, I believe there was an underspend on the construction of the Mitchell Freeway extension of \$10 million. Does the \$10 million go back into Main Roads, plus the \$20.7 million —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Which \$10 million is that, member?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: In my understanding, the Mitchell Freeway project came in about \$10 million under budget. That is \$10 million in Main Roads' budget that it did not expect to have. Now the Treasurer is asking for \$20.7 million extra for network contracts.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As discussed previously, within agencies there will be overs and unders. I do not have the detail of that specific underspend, if indeed it was an underspend, within Main Roads—I suspect there may well have been some overspends. I know that at the time this data was put together there was a \$20.7 million potential draw on the Treasurer's advance, which we now know will not be \$20.7 million because of oil price. It largely, but not exclusively, relates to the term "network road maintenance" and also oil price. I do not have information about those other matters. My suggestion would be to ask the Minister for Transport that question on notice.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: The GA4 wage increase appears repeatedly throughout the document we have been provided with. I will concentrate on the example of the Department of Agriculture and Food because I am struggling to understand it. We identified that the increase was \$5.8 million, and that is the only information we

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have been provided with. The only item of expenditure identified is the GA4 wage increases, so if there is a \$2.7 million saving and a \$3.1 million global increase, that is a \$5.8 million increase in wages, against a backdrop of a \$93.29 million budgeted wage outcome. How can there be a blow-out of about six per cent above the budgeted figure, which presumably has a wage increase factored into it, if, as the Treasurer said, there were no increases in the number of staff? If we buried down into the detail of every agency identified with the GA4 wage increase, we might find the same story elsewhere. It is incumbent upon the Treasurer to provide us with the detail, perhaps first thing tomorrow morning, on each of the wage increases: what proportion of the total wage expenditure it represents; what, if any, percentage over and above the anticipated wage increase that wage jump represents; and, whether it is caused by an increase in staff numbers. I am struggling to understand how there can be a six per cent unexpected wage increase in the Department of Agriculture and Food over and above the budgeted wage increase if it has not put on any extra staff. That sort of detail must be provided for every item in GA4. We understand the Treasurer's urgency to get this bill to the upper house, so I suggest that he and his bean counters work through the night to provide us with a chart that outlines the detailed information.

In the meantime, will the Treasurer explain the six per cent increase over and above the anticipated wage increases that occurred in the Department of Agriculture and Food if there has not been an increase in the level of staffing? Is the explanation that the \$5.8 million is not a wage increase figure, and there is a line item that the Treasurer has not accounted for? If that is the case, will the Treasurer give an undertaking to provide that information bright and early tomorrow morning so that these issues can be pursued in the necessary detail?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is no, I will not provide the member with that information, but I will give an answer. I think the member actually provided the answer himself in his last statement. We know that the agriculture department is seeking \$3.1 million from the Treasurer's advance for the purposes of PSGA4. We know that there has been a \$2.7 million efficiency cut, which is a gross of \$5.8 million. It should not be assumed that the \$2.7 million consists of salaries. The only information I have is that the agriculture department is seeking \$3.1 million of additional funding to cover wages for that component. I can get further advice on the broader issue of whether that \$3.1 million represents the totality of the funding that has shifted out of the Treasury account across to the agriculture budget. When money shifts from one account to the other, as I explained before, it must go through the Treasurer's advance. It is my suspicion, and also my advice, that that is the case, but I have to get that confirmed.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Where has that \$2.7 million come from?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is the efficiency dividend —

Mr M.P. Whitely: Where has that been spent?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am detailing items that appear on the Treasurer's advance that were not appropriated in last year's budget. That is what we are dealing with.

Mr M.P. Whitely: There is \$2.7 million worth of expenditure, but you said there is an efficiency dividend of —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: A range of expenditure has been reallocated within the context of budgets as a result of the efficiency dividend. It is not the purpose of this bill to discuss those. The purpose of this bill is to discuss moneys that were not appropriated in last year's budget.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: It is the Treasurer's job to account for the \$5.8 million in expenditure over and above the net figure of the three per cent efficiency dividend. The Treasurer cannot just wipe away \$2.7 million, claim it as an efficiency dividend and then spend it and not expect to be accountable for it. If it has not been spent on the wage increase—the only line item identified—where has that \$2.7 million gone? A \$2.7 million efficiency dividend was claimed, and now the Treasurer has said that the global figure over and above that projected at the time of last year's budget is \$3.1 million higher and that \$5.8 million needs to be accounted for. We have been given one line item that talks about a GA4 wage increase of \$3.1 million. Even that represents an increase of probably about 3.5 per cent of the —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, it was a five per cent wage increase. Can I just say —

Mr M.P. WHITELY: It represents an unbudgeted-for increase of about 3.5 per cent over the \$93.29 million budget, which had a wage increase projection of presumably about 3.5 per cent. How does that extra 1.5 per cent suddenly blow out to 3.5 per cent, and then where does that \$2.7 million disappear to? This is why this is an inadequate process for the amount of money that the Treasurer is asking to expend. We are expending \$1.2 billion and we are given a four-page flimsy document with apparently missing line items, massive increases, unbudgeted and unaccounted for increases in wages, and big holes in it. I have just found the \$2.7 million hole buried down in the Agriculture and Food budget. Who knows what is in Child Protection and

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

all the other agencies that have GA4 wage increases. The Treasurer says, "It is not my job to come in here and be accountable." It is the Treasurer's job. On every line item in this budget, he should be able to provide the detail. There are only about 40 line items. The Treasurer is a senior man in the Parliament. We have a three-clause bill before us and he cannot explain it. It is an extraordinary performance. I would ask again: can the Treasurer provide detail of that \$5.8 million increase—that is, the \$2.7 million saving, where that has gone; the \$3.1 million global increase, where that has gone; and what the wage increase actually represents? Why is it so far above the projections, even if it is just the \$3.1 million figure; and where has the other \$2.7 million gone? My original request was all of these GA4 wage increases—we need the detail of it so we can actually be responsible in the expenditure of public funds in Western Australia. It is the Treasurer's job to provide the detail.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I thought the Treasurer was going to get up. Are we finished with the Commissioner of Main Roads? My question is in respect of communities, the \$29.8 million election commitments, and I note in respect of the election commitments in the Liberal Party's financial statement it had \$84.5 billion categorised under seniors, disability and community. I note that the seniors' cost of living is the major cost in that at \$19.5 million, as budgeted in the Liberal Party document. What election commitments are included in that \$29.8 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will run through those for members. They are as follows: seniors' cost-of-living rebate—\$25.6 million. This is the provision to Seniors Card holders of the cost-of-living rebate of \$100 a year for singles and \$150 a year for couples. Seniors' security, which is the provision to state Seniors Card holders of a \$200 rebate for the purchase or installation of home security devices—\$2.5 million. Lions community respite centre, which is a \$200 000 allocation towards improving the Lions community respite centre —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: That is in the capital.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: These are capital and recurrent. I was referring to the community respite centre in Albany. I am just looking through our election commitments—\$200 000 for that. In Collie, there is a "childcare centre repair/upgrade", which obviously is for repairs and upgrades of the Collie childcare centre, to which there is a \$200 000 allocation. There is another \$1.3 million out of that \$29.8 million, which comprises a small allotment of \$500 000 for PSGA4 and \$800 million for an integrated services centre. The vast majority of those are the Liberal Party election commitments.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Where is the integrated centre?

Mrs C.A. Martin: Please explain.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It provides community care.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Where is that?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will get some more information in a second. That is \$800 000.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can I confirm that the Treasurer's advance authorisation contains \$25.6 million for the seniors' cost-of-living rebate?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think the Liberal Party costing booklet had it at \$19.5 million. That is about a \$5 million blow-out in that cost. Can I also seek some information about what the likely draw-down from that \$25.6 million is likely to be by 30 June, given that there have been some problems in implementing the program? I think this costing would have been based on getting that amount of money to every senior in Western Australia, but now they have gone through an application process that always reduces the demand. I suspect that total draw-down will not happen by 30 June. I seek confirmation on that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member is right—there is a difference between the amount here and the amount that was in the Liberal Party's election commitment. The amount that is presented here of \$25.6 million is consistent with the amount presented in the midyear review. In other words, there was a slight underestimation of the cost in the election commitment. One of the reasons that came to light is that there was considerable debate about the number of people who would apply. As I understand it, there was an attempt to base the election commitment on the number of Seniors Cards that were in existence, with an acknowledgement, as we worked through the processes, that there were more seniors than there were Seniors Cards, for a range of reasons. My understanding is we did not fund the amount in the estimation to the full number of seniors per se. I think I could say it was a mid-point between the number of Seniors Cards and the number of seniors. The member is right, because not every senior will apply. We, of course, committed to fund everyone who applied, and we thought that was an appropriate level of funding. In relation to the second issue, the member is right. There have been some delays,

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

as I understand it, largely due to IT and other systems issues. It is the government's understanding that they will be resolved prior to year's end.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can the Treasurer confirm, therefore, for that figure of \$25.6 million—I think this is a legitimate question, because it directly relates to the amounts under the TAA—what take-up rate that is based on? Surely there is a take-up rate that that number is based on—60, 70 or 80 per cent.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My understanding is that the Liberal Party's election commitment of \$19.5 million was based on the number of Seniors Card holders that appeared on the Department for Communities' website. It subsequently emerged that there were more Seniors Card holders than was reported on the website. The revised number of \$25.6 million reflects that number of Seniors Card holders. There has been an assumption, for the purposes of this, that 100 per cent of people holding Seniors Cards will take up the offer. That is acknowledging, as the member said, that that is probably not going to happen, but it is also acknowledging that in some areas of Western Australia, particularly regional Western Australia, not all seniors hold a Seniors Card. It was felt by the government that that was a fair measure, accepting there would be some unders and overs based around non-take-up from people with Seniors Cards, and take-up from people who currently did not have Seniors Cards but who realised the incentive to obtain such a card by the payment of \$100 a year for singles and \$150 a year for couples.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Another commitment that, again, is part of this Treasurer's advance authorisation request is the seniors' security of \$2.5 million that has been allocated for 2008-09. Can we get some information as to where that is at? I am not aware of that program being rolled out yet; I am not sure whether anybody else on this side of the house is aware either. However, this does not seem to be \$2.5 million that will be spent in 2008-09.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member is right. My advice is that it has not been rolled out yet, but that is not to say it will not be. Again, I make the point that there will be unders and overs in the context of the aggregate of the Treasurer's advance.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: My question reflects upon an answer the Treasurer gave to the member for West Swan. There was a blow-out from \$19.5 million to \$25.6 million, which constitutes a \$6.1 million blow-out. I think the Treasurer described that blow-out as "slight". That constitutes about a 31 or 32 per cent blow-out. If that is a slight blow-out, what would constitute a moderate or a large blow-out? While the Treasurer ponders his answer to that question, perhaps he could answer this question: is the \$29.8 million global figure allocated against any particular department? Do we have to factor in that same problem of the three per cent budget cuts, or is that a figure that is exclusively for new expenditure that was previously unbudgeted? In other words, is the \$29.8 million figure the only figure we need to be concerned about? Just to rehash, those two questions are: if 31 per cent constitutes a slight increase, what is a moderate increase and what is a massive increase in expenditure; and is that \$29.8 million exclusively for new election commitments, or do we need to net that off against some three per cent saving as well?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I assure the member that the three per cent efficiency dividend components will be dutifully reported in the budget on a line-by-line basis. Members will have the full time in estimates to ask the relevant ministers about those specific issues.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You are either missing or avoiding the point.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This relates to the Department for Communities. The increase in the Liberal election commitment from \$19 million to the \$25.6 million that we have been discussing is due to the fact that, as I understand it, the Liberal election commitment was based on the number of Seniors Card holders reported on the Department for Communities' website. Upon attaining government, we discovered that the number of Seniors Card holders was actually significantly larger.

Mr M.P. Whitely: So, "slight" has now gone to "significant", has it?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We make our estimates based on the information available to us. We had our estimates independently checked as part of the election campaign, and we used publicly available information. We are not going to use the fact that the Department for Communities' website does not have an accurate number to deprive the seniors of Western Australia, when they eventually receive it, of this payment.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Just to follow up, this relates to the Department for Communities and the department was subject to a three per cent budget cut?

Mr T.R. Buswell: It was.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Okay, so what is the department's total budget? What does that three per cent represent? What is the figure for the Department for Communities?

Mr T.R. Buswell: The three per cent for the Department for Communities is \$500 000 in 2008-09; \$1.3 million in 2009-10; \$1.1 million in 2010-11 —

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: It is only \$500 000—is that what the Treasurer is saying?

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is \$500 000.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The three per cent is \$500 000; so that is the department's saving for this year. The Treasurer has identified \$25.6 million of the \$29.8 million as being for the seniors' cost-of-living rebate increases. What makes up the other \$4.2 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: With all due respect, member, I just went through that with the member for Victoria Park; I listed each item. I am happy to do it again. Just to give members some comfort, the three per cent savings will be detailed in the budget papers when they are handed down and members will be able to look at them line-by-line in all their glory. The ministers will be in this place to answer attentively members' requests in relation to that. Of the \$29.8 million for communities, \$25.6 million is for the seniors' cost-of-living rebate; \$2.5 million is seniors' security; \$0.2 million—that is \$200 000—is the Lions community respite centre in Albany; \$0.2 million is the Collie childcare centre repair and upgrade; and an additional \$1.3 million is to cover the public sector general agreement, the public service general agreement and the integrated services centre. The vast majority of that funding is for the seniors' cost-of-living rebate.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The Treasurer has just mentioned \$2.5 million for security for seniors. Could the Treasurer give us an idea of exactly what that is going to, because if that is going to individual pensioners as well, I suggest they are probably getting a couple of cents each, if out of the \$25.6 million they are getting \$100 or \$150 each or per couple. Can the Treasurer give us some detail about the \$2.5 million and what it will go for?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice, and I am reading from the Liberal election documentation, is that there is a \$200 rebate for the purchase or installation of home security devices for state Seniors Card holders. It is a \$10 million contribution funded over four years.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Further to my previous question, can the Treasurer tell us how much of that \$25.6 million has gone out of the state for consultants in the eastern states to actually do the administration of that program for the Seniors Card holders and their cost-of-living rebates?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, I cannot. As I said, the information I had is that \$25.6 million is requested from the Treasurer's advance. I have no further details and, again, I encourage members to ask questions of the relevant ministers; I am sure they will provide that data.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: But there will be a portion of that \$25.6 million.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The member will have to ask the minister.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: So, the Treasurer does not know.

Mr R.H. COOK: I refer to the \$200 000 for the Lions community respite centre. Is that construction costs and, therefore, capital expenditure, or is it for the provision of programs?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We have dealt with that as a recurrent spending item as a grant—I am assuming it is a grant. Is the member asking about the centre in Albany?

Mr R.H. Cook: Yes.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am assuming it is a grant to the Lions Club of Albany, in which I have every confidence, like Lions clubs around the state, and/or the body that the Lions club is involved with as it relates to the respite centre. It will appear as a grant and a recurrent item. However, I can say that some of these items are capital expenditure—not necessarily this item, but some of the others are.

Mr R.H. COOK: I want to go back to the cost-of-living rebate. The Treasurer observed that the \$25.6 million was based upon the midyear review. That was obviously drawn up or published in December 2008. With the passing of another three months, has the Treasurer had any updates from the department as to the take-up rate and, therefore, the projected cost of the program?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have not, although I acknowledge that there have been some challenges in processing the applications. However, I do not have any additional information, only that my advice is that the revised

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

number that appeared in the midyear review reflected a revised number of the actual number of Seniors Card holders versus the number that had originally appeared on the department's website.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What was that number?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That was \$25.6 million.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not have that detail.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Given the computer glitch that has held up the cost-of-living rebate to the seniors, and the fact that that has now been delayed by a least a month, does the Treasurer know what impact that might have on the department's budget in terms of additional information technology costs et cetera to correct the problem?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is I do not.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I have a quick but relevant question, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): That's a change.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I think the Treasurer identified that the three per cent saving for the Department for Communities was \$500 000.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That is correct.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: What is the total budget of the Department for Communities for 2008-09?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Unfortunately we do not have that paper here.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I refer to budget paper No 3. The total budget estimate for 2008-09 for the Department for Communities is \$41 million. Three per cent of \$41 million is a bit more than \$1.2 million. How does \$500 000 become \$1.2 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The 2008-09 figure is a six-month figure. It is also important to understand that the full appropriation is not necessarily the full sum to which the efficiency dividend is applied. The efficiency dividend is, as I understand it, total expenses less depreciation and grants. Point five is the six month target for the Department for Communities.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: Does the Treasurer have any information about the Liberal Party's costings for the three per cent savings? Were they in fact not costed at 1.5 per cent over six months, or were they costed in the Liberal Party's election commitments as three per cent savings?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This is not an item for discussion here, but to provide some comfort for the member—I would hate to think he could not get any sleep tonight—the Liberal Party's costings and the assumed efficiency dividend were taken from a document produced by Treasury called the "Pre-election Financial Projections Statement". Somewhere down the back of that document—I eventually found it when I looked for it during the heady excitement of the election campaign—the three per cent efficiency dividend is noted. That is what we used. It includes a six-month allocation for 2008-09. I regret to inform the member for Bassendean —

Mr M.P. Whitely: Was that the costing in the Liberal Party's —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We are not here to talk about that, but of course it was.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The \$25.6 million allocated for cost-of-living increases for seniors has been again delayed because of a computer glitch. Does that mean that increases in charges for government utilities will also be delayed so that seniors will not be disadvantaged because of delays in introducing funding to meet cost-of-living increases?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is a good question, the answer to which is no.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the Department of Corrective Services. At the risk of making the Treasurer a little prickly in response to my searching for a little detail on a line item, I note that for the line item there is justification given of an increased prison population and the GA4 wage increase. I am seeking a little clarification about the breakdown of those two factors, noting that I have figures from November 2008 for projections on the anticipated growth of the department as a result of the government's changes to legislation. I am trying to ascertain whether the figures are a little rubbery. How accurate are they, and what impact may they have on projected increases as a result of the GA4 for prison officers?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will provide the member with the advice I have on the note in front of me. The \$9.1 million that the member referred to was really demand related. There was an increase in prisoner population to a daily average prisoner number of 3 900. It goes on to mention that there has been a significant rise in prisoner numbers over the past five years of 33.7 per cent. I assume from that advice that the \$9.1 million sought at this time by the Department of Corrective Services under the Treasurer's advance is to deal with an increase in that 3 900 daily average prisoner number, which is a number that I am sure means more to the member than it does to me. Another \$7.5 million reflects election commitments. There is a \$5 million allocation to assist in the development of the young male prison facility for prisoners aged 18 to 22 years of age, and a \$2.5 million allocation to begin planning for a 350-bed metropolitan medium to maximum security prison for men.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The last I heard, the adult prison population had reached 4 086.

Mr C.C. Porter: It is 4 088.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Two more just came in! Clearly, my concern relates to the likelihood of the Treasurer having to ask for more money, or having inadequate money as a result of the projection that was utilised for these figures. Does the Treasurer have any confidence in the projections that were utilised in ascertaining the amount required?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is a good question. The advice I have from Treasury officials is that the underlying prison muster that was supported within this budget was 3 700. I think this acknowledges some demand pressures. Clearly, the member has identified additional demand pressures; with a prison population of 4 088, there are additional demand pressures, and that is something that the government will have to deal with. It may be—I am not saying that it will be—the case that other funding will be required under the Treasurer's advance to accommodate that. That is a matter the government will work through, but there are clearly pressures between muster versus funding that will have to be managed. I suspect that, to a large extent, those pressures are managed within the department, but that there is occasionally the need to seek additional funding to deal with those pressures.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is fair enough with regard to fluctuations in the total muster, but the Minister for Corrective Services is aware, as am I, that the total emergency capacity for the prison system is indicated to be 4 100 prisoners. We are very close to that number at the moment. It is pretty important for this figure to be accurate, and it could have serious implications for the Treasurer. However, I will leave that matter, because I do not think the Treasurer can respond to it.

The Treasurer provided figures for the new medium to maximum security prison and the new juvenile prison that were part of the Liberal Party election commitment. I am aware that those were election commitments, but I am also sensing that perhaps a medium to maximum security facility within the metropolitan area may not be the next capital expenditure priority for the Department of Corrective Services. Perhaps the Treasurer might take advantage of the fact that the previous government spent \$1.2 million on planning a prison extension in the eastern goldfields. It might be a more appropriate area in which to spend the money. I wonder whether the Treasurer can give me an indication as to whether I am close to the mark on that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Absolutely not, in the sense that I am not going to give the member an indication of his proximity to any mark in relation to speculation over the government's plans for prisons.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I overlooked the young persons prison allocation. Is the Treasurer aware of a location for this facility, noting that should the government anticipate using an established facility or another piece of infrastructure that can be utilised as a young persons prison, it may have an impact on the overall anticipated cost of this project, if this is an accurate assessment of costs in planning? Is the Treasurer able to give me an indication of where that facility is likely to be located?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Absolutely not; that is a policy matter that the government is working through. I can confirm that there is a \$5 million election commitment, which will require an allocation under the Treasurer's advance to initiate planning for the new juvenile prison facility.

I can only expect that in the fullness of time the spending of that \$5 million and the conducting of that planning process will deliver a more than adequate answer to the important question the member has raised this evening. I understand the importance of the answer but, unfortunately, in the context of the debate around the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2009, I am not in a position to provide that answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I ask the Treasurer to return to the new medium to maximum security prison. I assume the Treasurer will not be able to tell me, nor give me an indication about the accuracy of my prediction about eastern goldfields prison. Were I even a little accurate, and were that to be the site, it would have implications for

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

planning expenditures, because money has already been expended—I think I recall something in the order of \$1.2 million expenditure by the previous government—to the extent that detailed plans for the expansion of eastern goldfields prison have been drawn up and the availability of the site and its status subject to native title claims and other environmental issues determined. There may be a potential savings to be had. I know that money has been allocated as a result of the Liberal Party election promise and in anticipation of building a new prison, perhaps in the member for Hillarys' electorate or somewhere like that. Now that the government no longer has to do that because of the available option, is the Treasurer able to advise whether the money allocated will be utilised for the planning purposes as indicated?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Treasurer's advance is required to provide this funding to deliver on the Liberal election commitment and will, in the first instance, provide \$2.5 million for planning. I will not pre-empt or speculate on the outcomes of that planning process. Although, I again acknowledge the member's interest in this very important public policy issue.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Following on from the comments made by the member for Warnbro, I think it is a legitimate question. We are being asked to approve \$7.5 million, which is quite significant in the context of planning for two prisons. The question is how much of that \$7.5 million will be drawn down by 30 June; that is, what is the amount required to be funded at this time? I do not believe that \$7.5 million will be required by 30 June.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is the member for West Swan's view and it may even be the view of the member for Warnbro. I cannot give an answer as to how much of that money will be drawn down. All I can say is that, historically, we have had an aggregate approval and, as I have mentioned, last year that approval was not drawn down in full—that is one of those things that happen. Information about how that money is spent will, ultimately, be reported to Parliament through the appropriate appropriation mechanism; although I suspect —

Mr P. Papalia: It is not very fiscally responsible.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Treasurer's advance will be spent as required. There is no guarantee that all the money sought in the Treasurer's advance will be spent. It is, as I have said, a point-in-time estimate and for the purposes of the election commitments it is prudent to fund those commitments this year through the Treasurer's advance. I suspect that, across the full gamut of the election commitments, not all that money will be drawn down. Notwithstanding, it is our view that it is prudent to provide an allocation for those commitments, and that is what we intend to do.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I would like to continue to try to get a clearer picture about the young male prison facility and the male medium to maximum security prison facility. Members would be well aware that, through the Treasurer's advance authorisation, \$5 million is being allocated towards some of the planning costs for the young male prison facility. Does the Treasurer have a figure for the cost of the young male prison facility?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not going to speculate on matters outside the matters contained in the bill before us. The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2009 seeks a \$5 million allocation for the purposes of the young male prison facility and \$2.5 million for the medium to maximum security prison facility. I am not going to speculate on any expenditure over and above that contained in the Treasurer's advance. I understand the member's interest in the area. The member can ask, but I say, with all respect, that the information I have given and the information contained in the Liberal election commitments is the only information that I will provide in relation to these matters.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It is a form of prudent management or lack of prudent management that I do not think this house has seen in all my 20 years in this place. We are being asked to allocate \$7.5 million—I repeat, \$7.5 million—not knowing how much the facility is going to cost. We have no indicative figure at all. We are simply going to splash up against the wall \$7.5 million of taxpayers' money because the Treasurer and the government, some time in the future, might decide that they have a project that might cost some amount—but they do not know! It is absolutely ludicrous for a Treasurer and a government to commit to major projects without even an indicative cost.

Mr D.T. Redman: Have you forgotten about the Office of Shared Services?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: We had an indicative cost, which we made public, and therefore the government has a benchmark by which it can do better! However, we have a government that will not even give an indicative cost. It will launch on the never-never, with taxpayers' money, an intention to do something—but it does not know what! This debate is getting to the stage whereby support for the Treasurer's legislation will be sorely tested. The

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Treasurer is asking the taxpayers of this state to put up \$7.5 million for a planning exercise but he does not know where that money will go! Either the Treasurer knows and does not want to share his knowledge on the basis that it might limit his ability for a media grab at a time of his choosing —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Shame on you; what a disgrace!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Is that it, Treasurer? I take it from the Treasurer's interjection that his media performance—or that of the appropriate minister—is more important than accountability to this house, which is being asked to approve \$1.2 billion of additional expenditure at a time when we face economic uncertainty. The Treasurer is seeking to pull in expenditure, to tighten the belt in a whole lot of other areas, but when it comes to these pet media projects and making an announcement, the information cannot be shared with the public of Western Australia. That seems to be what the Treasurer is saying, unless he can provide some guidance as to the nature of this young male prison facility; when it is likely to be completed; what are the goals to be achieved; and, finally, the likely cost of such a project.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am—my apologies, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): It should have been Deputy Speaker!

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: You nearly were, Mr Acting Speaker!

The detail about these programs to which I refer was provided in the Liberal election commitments and is now embedded in the midyear review. As I understand it, the new juvenile prison facility has an allocation across the four years of some \$40 million.

Mr R.H. Cook: Forty-five million dollars.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Sorry—\$40 million. That money will be used to design and build a new juvenile prison facility. It will be spent on the construction of a new 80-person facility that we have committed to build in the government's first term—a facility that will house 18 to 22-year-old, non-violent male offenders. We are seeking approval for the first \$5 million of that project. Some of it will be spent on planning; some of it will be spent on delivering the outcome. In relation to the second item —

Mr J.C. Kobelke: When is the expected completion date, Treasurer?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We have given a commitment to have it completed in our first term. Currently, the appropriations cease in 2011-12. In relation to the new medium to maximum security prison —

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Can I interject, Treasurer?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: You said the allocations cease then and it is to be built then. Do we take it this \$40 million is the indicative cost?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Thank you; that is what I was asking about.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is that \$5 million to \$10 million in the forward estimates still an accurate reflection?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is the most recent costing on which the government is operating. An amount of \$2.5 million has been allocated to the new medium to maximum security prison for planning processes. That money will be spent as part of that process and will then flow into the development of that project. I have to stress that the government will hand down its first budget in a little over a month. These and the other components of our capital works program will be open to full scrutiny by the Parliament and the people of Western Australia at that time. In relation to this bill—I accept the point raised by the member for Balcatta—I have some advice on those two items: the young offenders facility will be part of a \$40 million building program over four years; and there will be a \$2.5 million contribution to planning and other processes associated with the development of that new medium to maximum security prison.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer for generally answering the question on the young male prison facility, albeit in a roundabout way by indicating forward projections totalling \$40 million, with the facility being completed during this term of government. Clearly the indicative cost is \$40 million. However, when we come to the medium to maximum security facility, that is not the case. The government has already indicated

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

that the young male prison facility is potentially for 80 inmates at a cost of \$40 million, which is half a million dollars for each inmate. Spread over a period of three to four years, that seems like a viable project that the government could deliver at around that cost and around that time. With the medium to maximum security prison facility the government has not indicated how many inmates it is likely to hold and what will be the total cost. Can we take it that the government has not done any costings on it and the Treasurer is including those numbers to fill up some space and he will not move on this quickly? If the government is spending only \$2.5 million, and \$5 million in subsequent years, that sort of money does not suggest any real construction occurring. What does the Treasurer envisage will be the completion date for that facility? The midyear estimates contain a little detail on that, but the issues are: what is the current estimate for the number of inmates, the completion date and the total cost?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Planning will commence for an anticipated 350-bed metropolitan medium to maximum security prison facility for men. As that planning process unwinds the detail will be provided. The member may also note that there were other allocations by way of broader capital allocation to a custodial infrastructure program that were bedded into the midyear review.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Was that extra money over and above the money allocated now for these two projects? That is the wording.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, but the money that is being allocated at the moment for this specific project, by definition, was not money for which we had an appropriation. It is \$2.5 million for which we did not have a specific appropriation.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: I accept that, and you have given a partial answer to my question. I want to know the projected completion date and full cost of this project.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I would expect one of the outcomes of the \$2.5 million is to deliver that sort of information. That information will be provided for full public scrutiny in a very short period.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Focusing on that medium to maximum security prison, I am very aware of the Treasurer's reluctance to divulge the anticipated location of the prison, noting that it might undermine the triumphant announcement by the member for Kalgoorlie and the ability of the Attorney General and Minister for Corrective Services to exploit the announcement to the absolute maximum. Nevertheless, if this prison is not going to be located on a greenfield site that has had no planning work put into it, no finance or effort applied, and no plans or architectural drawings or projected construction time frame, then the Treasurer would be justified in saying that \$2.5 million was for planning purposes for a 350-bed facility within the metropolitan area. However, in the event that this facility will be built on a site that has had taxpayer dollars spent on identifying the site, planning the facility, and projecting costs and the completion date, then the Treasurer should come clean because that could represent a saving in the order of \$1.3 million based on what has been spent already on a proposal for a prison in the eastern goldfields.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will not speculate or provide information that may lead to speculation on the site of this prison. It is suffice to say that we are seeking this money via the Treasurer's advance to facilitate a planning process. That process will yield outcomes and those outcomes will be communicated through an appropriate mechanism at the appropriate time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In that case, I would like to put on record that I call on the government to build the prison in the eastern goldfields as a matter of priority.

In the meantime, I return to the projected increase in numbers that I referred to earlier and the potential negative impact it will have on the budget process. Is the Treasurer aware that we have already exceeded the department's projections, which were provided in November and which we presume are accurate? The department projected that the prison population would grow over the next five years by about 604 prisoners. At that time we had 3 800 prisoners. Between the time those figures were provided to us and the time the government requested this Treasurer's advance the prison population has exceeded the first year's growth figures. I wonder how much of a concern that is to the Treasurer and whether he has demanded more robust work be done by the department on projected prisoner growth. Exceeding the projections for the year in the first three months of the year will have a significant impact on the budget outcomes.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am reluctant to get into a substantive question and answer session around this issue. Ultimately, they are questions for the minister to answer. A sum of \$9.1 million has been sought via the Treasurer's advance to deal with an increased prisoner population, of which the daily average is estimated to be

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

3 900. I acknowledge that the daily average that was embedded in the budget figures we are dealing with was 3 700 and we are now seeking an increment over that. I acknowledge that demand management pressures within the department are a serious ongoing issue. It links to capacity building through capital investment. I am not going to stand here and talk about other governments' performance in relation to capacity building through investment. It is not the time for that sort of debate.

We are aware of the pressures. The member will note from the two previous issues that we discussed—the juvenile prison and the 350-bed medium-risk prison—that we are aware of that matter. I cannot say any more than that. The minister has been doing a lot of work with the agency on the demand and growth issues and on the models that are used to accommodate the different types of prisoners in our system.

Mr P. Papalia: Prison overcrowding is a serious issue that each government must face. I assume that the department is assessing the real impact of the changes to the sentencing legislation, which was a serious change of the environment that occurred at about the time that all of this calculation was taking place. My concern is that perhaps that impact has not been taken into account in the Treasurer's advance and that perhaps he should expand it, if anything, to accommodate the increased number of prisoners that is likely to occur.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Ultimately, the Treasurer's advance deals with two specific items. The budget is due to be handed down soon and, as I said, the member will see elements of the government's capital works program outlined in the budget. I also highlight the fact that when the midyear review was handed down, there was a \$281 million allocation to fund a custodial infrastructure program. That reflects some of the pressures that the member has identified. Funding has been provided for in the midyear review. We are here to talk not about that but about the specifics.

Mr P. Papalia: The fastest time in which a prison can be built is two and a half years but you have an accommodation problem now.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will not speculate on that. We are aware of it. Funding has been provided for in the midyear review to facilitate the increased number of prisoners. We are seeking \$9.1 million in funding this financial year to accommodate the demand pressures, \$5 million for a young male prison facility, and \$2.5 million for a medium to maximum male security prison.

Mr B.S. WYATT: How is the \$9.1 million split between the amount provided for the increase in the prison population and the wage increase? I do not think the Treasurer gave that figure earlier. The member for Warmbro has discussed this issue. Is the amount allocated for the increased prison population based on the natural increase in the prison population or is it due to a change of government policy on the truth in sentencing and mandatory sentencing legislation?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not have a detailed breakdown of the \$9.1 million. The advice from Treasury is that the vast majority of that amount is due to the demand pressures on the muster. The second part of the member's question related to the impact of government policy on the population of the prison muster. We are working on that matter with the department. Yes, it will require additional capacity to incarcerate prisoners and, yes, funding has been provided in the midyear review to progress that and, yes, more details will be provided of the form, location and infrastructure at the appropriate time.

Mr R.H. COOK: In the midyear review, the Treasurer identified the custodial infrastructure program as being the key to managing the increase in the demand for corrective services. Therefore, is it safe to assume that the \$9.1 million sought under that first line item is primarily for wages?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, although I understand why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has formed that view. The custodial infrastructure program that is budgeted for over the next few years is for the provision of existing infrastructure and additional infrastructure to provide extra prison capacity. The \$9.1 million is primarily associated with the muster, or the demand pressures on our existing infrastructure programs. As I understand it, the majority of that amount relates to the cost of housing prisoners within the existing infrastructure.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer the Treasurer to the figure of \$9.1 million and the GA4 wage increase. Will the GA4 wage increase component increase the number of full-time equivalents for the Department of Corrective Services above the budget allocation? This is the same question I have asked each time. The Treasurer might think that I will ask the question again later on, so as we come up to each clause I will be referring to it. Also I have noted that the Treasurer, in answer to other members' questions on this clause, has referred to a point in time. In the midyear review in December there was a particular cut-off date, whatever date that was that Tim

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Marney spoke about in that document, and that was for \$996 million. Now we are talking about \$1.2 billion. Effectively what is the point in time that the authorisation relates to for this \$1.2 billion; and for the additional \$204 million of expenditure, what specifically is included in this request that is not included in the midyear review? Those are the two issues.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will start with the last question and the member can remind me of the others as we go. Since the finalisation of the midyear review—I am referring to the second reading speech here—it is basically \$200 million. That \$200 million relates to higher than expected tax refunds of \$21 million, \$34 million for the PTA enterprise bargaining agreement and the provision of \$149 million for contingencies, all of which add up to the \$200 million of additional funding that we have sought. The advice I have had and continue to receive is that any reference to GA4 is a reference to a wage effect.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Is that in respect of every GA4?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr W.J. Johnston: So we are not talking about adjustments to the FTE.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No. My advice is that it is a wage effect. In relation to the \$9.1 million, again my advice is that the majority is for demand pressures related to an increased prison muster, as opposed to the wage effect.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I think we can move on to the Disability Services Commission now. My first question relates almost exactly to the question I asked about the Department for Communities. I am looking for the breakdown of the \$14.2 million for various election commitments and the GA4 wage increase.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will provide that for the member now. The Disability Services Commission total of \$14.2 million comprises the following: \$0.5 million under the heading of accommodation support, which is reflective of an election commitment for a total of \$34 million to be spent over four years to provide 50 new supported accommodation places each year.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Am I to find it in the Treasurer's document—the Liberal Party document? Is it called something else or am I unable to see it?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is a Disability Services package —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Yes, I see it; \$10 million in the first year.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: — of which this is a part. I will give the member now a breakdown of the detail, which by and large appears in the election commitments under Disability Services. However, I draw the member's attention to the midyear review. The member will see the breakdown I am providing on page 87.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Yes.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My apologies; we probably should have provided that detail in that briefing note. I can take the member through the detail. There is accommodation support, and I will read out the text that sits around it; it is all there anyway. There is a total of \$34 million to be spent over four years to provide 50 new supported accommodation places each year. There is a school holiday respite fund, for which half a million dollars has been sought this year. There is \$3.8 million over four years to be spent to establish holiday camps providing activities and outings for young people with disabilities. A total of \$43 million will be spent over the forward estimates to provide four days of alternatives to employment program support per week to an additional 140 school leavers each year. In addition, current program recipients aged between 18 and 25 will receive an additional two days of support per week. The total number of young people supported by 2012 will be 1 144. A total of \$5.4 million is sought for 2008-09. The amount sought for early childhood intervention in 2008-09 is \$1 million. A total of \$3.9 million will be spent over four years to provide 100 places in recognition that access to early intervention services improves developmental opportunities for children. This initiative is also expected to provide information for the future needs of people with disabilities. An amount of \$1.5 million is sought this year for school aged and adult professional support, which is part of a four-year \$6 million package to provide professional support services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology to school aged and adult recipients. Funding of \$1.2 million is being sought this year under indexation of the non-government sector. Increased indexation of the non-government sector will be provided by the state government in recognition of the shortfall in commonwealth funding. In addition, there is an amount for the Public Service General Agreement Act of \$4.1 million. That amount draws us to the total.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Attorney General, do you know it is against the standing orders to read newspapers in the house?

Mr C.C. Porter: I didn't, but thank you.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Especially not in your own seat.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: My question is similar to the one I asked about the GA4 wage increase in the Department of Agriculture and Food. I did not get to ask it in relation to the Department for Child Protection but I will ask it now. In answer to the member for Victoria Park, the Treasurer just identified \$4.1 million in wages. Is that the total amount of the GA4 wage increase for employees in that department or is it a proportion of the total increase; and, if so, what percentage is it of the total increase?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I cannot give a detailed percentage. I will attempt to get that for the member in due course. My advice is that it is a top-up or an addition to an amount that had previously been provided. It is a top-up that has been provided to the department from a centrally allocated fund held by Treasury. The movement of those funds from Treasury across to the department can only be done under the mechanism of the Treasurer's advance. I will endeavour to get some more detailed information surrounding the full flow-on impacts of the GA4. I do not offer this as an excuse but I was not necessarily as involved in the building of this year's budget as I will be of next year's so we need to get a little more background information on that issue.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: That \$33.4 million for the extra—the total amount for the GA4 impact—effectively came about because when the budget was prepared, when the negotiations finished, there was an extra spend.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that the amount that was built into the original budget was not the total amount that eventuated but I will undertake to get some more information. That is my advice. That \$33.4 million was allocated in the PFPS to the Department of Treasury and Finance in an administered fund. These components reflect the movement of that money out of that administered fund to agencies by way of top-up where those movements are not necessarily consistent with the FTE size of the agency because there are other factors that complicate the amount of money required for a top-up in each agency. That is the advice I have. We will get clarification of that and provide that in detail tomorrow.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I ask that the Treasurer provide the information he has offered to provide. It will save me asking for information on each line item that refers to the GA4 wage increase. It would also be helpful if the information he provides reflects the percentage of the GA4 wage increase. I seek this information because I am trying to correlate those increases with the likely reduction in the number of FTEs in each department. I can understand that the Treasurer is asking for the money because Treasury has advised him that we should have that money available in case it is required. However, at the same time, the government and the Treasurer are looking for cost savings and a reduction in FTEs. The money that is being sought as part of this authorisation may not necessarily be spent, given that fewer people might be employed.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to the additional expenses for the efficiency dividend for Disability Services on page 87 of the midyear review, which comes in at \$7.9 million. However, the document the Treasurer provided to members shows this figure at \$14.2 million. I note that the GA4 wage increase is included. Are any other items, apart from the GA4 wage increase and the items that are detailed at page 87 of the midyear review, included in the \$14.2 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, there are not. I again stress that I understand members' interest in the efficiency dividend, but the budget will detail it and I look forward to discussing that in a full and frank way.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I refer to the capital improvements program for Education and Training, for which \$57.5 million is provided in the midyear review. That figure has decreased to \$48.4 million in the government's document. The Liberal Party's financial document provides for \$42.2 million. I am more interested in the reason for the difference in the allocation to the capital improvements program between the midyear review figure and the figure in the government's document.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that the difference is largely driven by the fact that the detail in the Treasurer's advance is a more realistic indication of the total amount to be spent, based on time and related issues. In other words, the full amounts that were originally contained in the midyear review for the purchase of non-financial assets of \$57.5 million, investing in schools of \$45 million and the schools improvement program of \$12.5 million involve timing issues, which means that that total amount of money will not be required this year. That is the reason for the decrease from \$57.5 million to \$48.4 million. There may well be other time and related matters, and these will be presented in the budget. It happens with the delivery of infrastructure.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I ask the Treasurer to provide the opposition with a breakdown of the \$48.4 million. It is a large amount of money to be seeking through the Treasurer's advance account process. Will the Treasurer provide a list of the projects on which that \$48.4 million will be expended? This information is not contained in the midyear review or any other published document.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not have that detail with me. The member has two options: firstly, now that she knows what the amount is, she could ask the minister for that information; and, secondly, I have been assured that the information will be detailed on a line-by-line basis in the budget documentation.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Will the Treasurer ask the Minister for Education for that information; and if this debate is ongoing tomorrow, would the Treasurer table it as part of these discussions? Again, \$48.4 million is quite an extensive amount, and we are debating this out of the budget process as a Treasurer's advance authorisation, and it is legitimate to ask what those figures are.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member is more than welcome to ask the minister for that information via the parliamentary question mechanisms available. I will not give a commitment to provide that information; either the member can ask the minister to provide it or it will be detailed in the budget papers. I have the documentation in front of me relating to that particular item, and if the member wants a further breakdown, then—I hate to say this—I would encourage the member, as I was encouraged last year by the former Treasurer, to seek that detailed information from the minister. The member has the aggregates now and I am sure she can work through those.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As the Treasurer has come to this house seeking funding for that item, it is the Treasurer's responsibility to table that information.

More generally, I want to ask about the efficiency dividend as it relates to education and training. Page 88 of the midyear review details the magnitude of the efficiency dividend requested for 2008-09, which includes \$45.6 million from education and training, and other amounts from the TAFE colleges. Given the way the Treasurer's advance authorisation is presented, the efficiency dividend will not be met by the Department of Education and Training, as confirmed by the minister and the Director General of Education and Training, and that the item under education and training will increase by about another \$45 million.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The publicly discussed issues around education in particular and its achievement of the three per cent efficiency dividend are still items of discussion between the agency, Treasury, and the relevant cabinet subcommittee. That is quite literally a work in progress. I assure the member that those details of the three per cent efficiency dividend will be documented in the budget.

Whilst I cannot provide any additional detail on the schools issue that the member raised with me as to the destination of the \$48.4 million and the split between investing in schools and the school capital improvements program, the Liberal Party election commitments, which I am sure she has a copy of, or I can provide her with a copy of—

Ms R. Saffioti: Yes, but it doesn't break it down by year.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I understand that, but it may help the member to frame the questions she wishes to ask to obtain that information.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Returning to the efficiency dividend, I understand that the Treasurer is in constant negotiations with education and training, but it is the last day of March, and as of last week the director general was saying that the Department of Education and Training was not going to deliver the savings for this financial year. Even if the Treasurer has negotiations over the budget process, they will relate to the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11, not 2008-09. If that efficiency dividend has not been met and is unlikely to be met, and given the Department of Education and Training is not making any savings at this point in time with only three months of this financial year left, then does that mean the Treasurer's advance for education and training will increase to more than \$48.4 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I would not jump to the assumption that education is not delivering savings. Education is delivering savings, and a variety of options are still being discussed between education, Treasury, and the cabinet subcommittee responsible for the budget. But, in essence, the thrust of the member's argument is correct: if there is, subsequent to that, a shortfall, then that shortfall will have to be funded through the use of the Treasurer's advance.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, it would, but, on top of that, I stress that that detail will become self-evident when the budget is handed down. Obviously, the handing down of the budget will occur some six to seven weeks before the end of the financial year, so there will be a fairly clear indication of the extent to which that efficiency dividend has been met and of the extent to which any shortfall will have to be funded, and a source of that funding will be the Treasurer's advance. Obviously, that may well involve a drawdown on the contingency fund.

Mr R.H. COOK: I note in the documents provided that the \$48.4 million is solely for the school capital improvements program and is part of election commitments. I wonder whether there has been any allocation under the Better Behaviour in Public Schools program and the Sports Leadership Program.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I draw the member's attention to page 88 of the midyear review. My advice is that the amounts of \$6.3 million for the Better Behaviour in Public Schools program and \$100 000 for the Sports Leadership Program have been funded in the midyear review. My advice from Treasury is that because of offsets against the efficiency dividend, no drawdown is required on the Treasurer's advance to fund those.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I note that in the document that has been provided there is no additional recurrent funding for Education and Training. I wonder whether the Treasurer is aware that there has been an allocation for the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement, and also whether the Treasurer can confirm that the money he is seeking tonight includes an increase in the number of teachers provided for in the 2008-09 budget, because the only item under the "Education and Training" heading is the \$48.4 million capital program, which does not indicate any recurrent expenditure. Indeed, at page 88 of the midyear review, there does not appear to be any particular allocation for additional teachers or for the schoolteachers' EBA. I am just not clear where any of this recurrent expenditure is, when the Treasurer is not asking us to authorise it and it does not appear in the midyear review under the "Education and Training" page.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is a good question, and I thank the member for it. I can provide the following advice. First, I draw the member's attention to page 7 of the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*. Under the parameter changes, the member will notice a \$35 million allocation in 2008-09 for the teachers' EBA—an election commitment. My advice from Treasury officials is that the reason it is not listed as requiring a drawdown on the Treasurer's advance account is that it was offset against efficiency dividend savings. But, clearly, to link back to the point raised by the member for West Swan, that may not be the case if the efficiency dividends are not realised.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I am sorry; the second part of that question was whether there is any change to the teacher numbers that have been allocated in the 2008-09 budget that was approved last year by Parliament.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Not to our knowledge, other than the numbers that would have been incorporated in the budget.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I go back to Education and Training. The information that was provided to an upper house estimates committee hearing by the Director General of the Department of Education and Training was not only that the efficiency dividend was not going to be met—so not only was the \$50 million not going to be found—but also that Education and Training would exceed its budget allocation for this year. I want to know whether Treasury or the Treasurer has been informed of that fact separately? If that is the case—and the estimate was \$40 million to \$50 million, as I recall—then that eats into the contingency once again. We have already taken about \$50 million because the efficiency dividend has not been met. On top of that, we have got the blow-out which also has to come through the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. I seek further confirmation whether Treasury and the Treasurer, through his processes, has been advised of that blow-out?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, I have. The potential overshoot of the budget in education, along with the issues around the three per cent efficiency dividend, are still basically under consideration by government. There are processes in place to work through those issues. As I indicated earlier, there is no definitive answer as to where we will end up come year end. We will deliver on a portion—I would like to think it will be a significant portion—of the efficiency dividend targets in Education and Training, but there is work to be done. Clearly there is work to be done in relation to budget-related issues in Education and Training. I cannot give an undertaking that that will be a certain amount of money come 30 June. All I can say, as I indicated earlier, is that the budget will reflect the three per cent efficiency dividend and any shortfall. That will clearly have to be reflected through an item in the Treasurer's advance which will come back to this house in due course. I suspect that between now and the end of the financial year matters around the ultimate financial performance of education against this budget will be well-known.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Treasurer's advice to this place is that it will not be a blow-out, there will not be expenditure above the budget, and that in fact a portion of the efficiency dividend—although we are not sure exactly how much—will be delivered?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes. I will clarify. Clearly the Director General of the Department of Education and Training has identified budget pressures. Treasury, the Minister for Education and I are currently working with the department—I, with Treasury and the department—to examine ways to deal with that issue within the constraints and budget controls this financial year. In terms of the three per cent, there are still challenges around achieving the three per cent efficiency dividend in education. I do not think it is fair to say that we will fall \$40 million short because we clearly are going to achieve a significant portion of the efficiency dividend in education. I cannot, tonight, give a firm figure around that because, quite literally, that is a very live issue at the moment in terms of, firstly, our budget deliberations and, secondly, our ongoing financial management in relation to that agency. Ultimately, as the member rightly pointed out, shortfalls from either one of those two areas will be reflected through a draw on the Treasurer's advance, as I am advised.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Can I clarify that the “school capital improvements program” line item as part of the election commitments is capital improvement; it is not maintenance or upgrades? I do not know whether the Treasurer has informed the house of that. It is actually capital investment, it is not maintenance.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is my understanding. It is grouped, for the purposes of the election campaign, in two payment streams—investing in schools, \$300 million, and I think it was \$50 million for the school improvements program. That was capital works of a minor nature—that is, a lunch shed, a library or a toilet. It would not include repairs and maintenance, but capital of a minor nature within the school.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I raise it because, as we all know, the Minister for Education has highlighted the maintenance improvement program that she hopes to run out this year. I am wondering whether this extra amount that the Treasurer is asking for is part of meeting that expenditure on maintenance, as opposed to capital investment in schools.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I think we will need to get more clarification. I am not going to speak on behalf of the Minister for Education. I am aware that significant funds from the COAG package are now running through education for maintenance projects. I would need to get further clarification. That is one of the slight flaws of this process. I am speaking on behalf of the government. I would need to get more information from the minister in relation to what the member is talking about, and related comments.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I have been listening to the exchange between the Treasurer and the members for West Swan and Cannington. I want to have a clear understanding of this. Am I correct in understanding that the wage increase that was given to teachers—the \$120 million Liberal Party election commitment over four years, from memory—does not form any part of this Treasurer's advance but will be funded from the three per cent efficiency dividend, which the Treasurer has been unable to deliver?

Mr T.R. Buswell: That is right, but that is a work in progress.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: So, in effect, there is \$35 million in unfunded expenditure at this stage.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I have indicated, that is currently the case. As I also indicated to the member for West Swan, if it is the case that that does become unfunded, it will be subject to an appropriation under the Treasurer's advance. This is the additional moneys required for the teachers' wage increase—\$35 million this year. That is acknowledging that we are comfortable that those types of eventualities will be met within the aggregate \$1.2 billion parameter that we are seeking, and also acknowledging that the full details of that will be disclosed when the relevant appropriation bills are brought before the house in due course.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: We are talking about \$35 million in expenditure. The Treasurer does not have a line item to actually cover that. Would it not have been prudent to identify that as a separate line item, or are we just to understand that that is part of the \$149.3 million figure for contingencies? My training as an accountant would indicate to me that it would have been prudent to identify that as a separate line item. Why was that step not taken?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Just to follow on from that, I understood the Treasurer to say that in respect of the three per cent efficiency dividend, education is a moving feast at the moment. Assuming that a portion of that three per cent efficiency dividend is not made, that will put substantial stress on the \$150 million contingency fund. We still need to get to the health aspect in terms of the Treasurer's confidence about whether that \$150 contingency fund is adequate to cover what the member for Bassendean has just indicated, and any implications for health going forward. We may need to deal with that later when we get to the contingency fund aspect of this bill.

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Mr R.H. COOK: I want to clarify one point. The Treasurer has said that \$35 million has been set aside for teachers' pay. The Treasurer has also said that \$6.3 million has been set aside for the Better Behaviour in Public Schools program and the Sports Leadership Program, both of which will come out of the three per cent. So that is \$40.4 million at this stage in identified costs against the three per cent efficiency dividend.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: What is the quantum of the efficiency dividend for the Department of Education and Training, so that we can have a measure against this \$40.4 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am trying to exercise some flexibility around these issues but the three per cent efficiency dividend will be fully reported in the budget, which is due in six weeks. I am quite simply not going to entertain having to work through that detail; it is fully represented in the midyear review. In education, for the member's information, the three per cent efficiency dividend yields \$45.6 million. As I have clearly pointed out, if it is the case that we are unable to realise the full quantum of that, ultimately, it may well flow through into an additional drawdown on the Treasurer's advance. The issue is that these are still live issues being discussed by government at officer level and through the relevant subcommittees of cabinet, and the member is right; ultimately, there will be outcomes that will be reported to the Parliament for full and proper scrutiny through the budget process.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The department has a liability that in all likelihood will not be funded by the three per cent efficiency dividend, so why is it not reported as a separate line item? We are talking about a substantial amount of money. I think the Treasurer has identified a \$45.6 million saving target for education. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition identified as the total—what was it?

Mr R.H. Cook: \$40.4 million.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: It was \$40.4 million already, \$35 million of that being the teachers' salaries and the other being —

Mr R.H. Cook: Better behaviour in public schools.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Better behaviour in public schools—\$6.3 million. The department has almost gobbled up the whole lot already, yet nowhere in this Treasurer's advance is that contingency identified. It is a substantial amount of money. It was a substantial Liberal Party commitment, which I suggest had a fair degree of influence on the election outcome, yet the Treasurer cannot identify where in the Treasurer's advance it should appear. It is not a piddling amount of money; why is it not listed as a separate line item?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is not reported as a separate line item because at this stage there is no —

Mr M.P. Whitely: It might not happen.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is a whole range of things that may or may not happen in life, my friend.

On the advice we have at the moment, at the time this document was put together and this bill was developed, there was no requirement and no call on the Treasurer's advance to fund those two particular items. Treasury put the document together based on the information it had been provided, and the only call from the Department of Education and Training on the Treasurer's advance was the \$48.4 million to fund the commitments to investing in schools and to the, I think it was called, better schools initiative—\$50 million.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will follow through on that same set of issues. We are dealing with a bill to allocate an extra \$1 200 million in round figures of extra expenditure, which needs to be authorised. We know that additional expenditure has been made and the Treasurer is telling us that it does not need authorisation. I think it is beholden on the Treasurer to explain where this money has come from and through what existing authorised allocation, so that the Treasurer has not needed to place it in the Treasurer's advance. The Treasurer drew our attention to page seven of the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*, which indicated that the teachers' election commitment was \$35 million in the current year. Can the Treasurer confirm that the full additional cost in the current year of settling the teachers' salary or pay negotiations—the enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations for teachers—was \$35 million? Can the Treasurer confirm that or was it another figure and that is simply what is entered in the midyear statement?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The latest estimate that we have is the amount of \$35 million. Within the context of the Treasurer's advance, we are tonight seeking an additional \$762 million to take the total amount available to \$1.2 billion. Treasury and I are confident that we can manage our budgetary requirements within that global limit, and that is what we intend to do. Within education, for example, there are unders and overs that are dealt with within the appropriations that the agency had made available to it in the budget that was adopted last year.

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The presentation of that data in the midyear review, and subsequently in the Treasurer's advance authorisation, is entirely consistent with that position.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer for seeking to try to give some explanation, but he is really putting the icing on the cake and I am trying to get to a bit of the substance of the cake. I take it from what the Treasurer said at the start of his answer that his current estimate for the additional cost of settling the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement for the current financial year is \$35 million, but in the way he explained it he suggested that perhaps he has not fully quantified it as yet.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The advice we have is that that is the amount of money required to fund the commitment to the teachers.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I did sit on the expenditure review committee for eight budgets, so I have a little understanding of how it works. The Treasurer's words are causing me concern, because they are carefully crafted and appear to give an answer but do not. We know from his budget statements that he put \$35 million against that item. I am seeking to find the additional cost of settling the teachers' EBA above the amount already in the budget that was brought down.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will deal with items surrounding the \$48.4 million that is sought in the Treasurer's advance. There is no reference in the Treasurer's advance to the negotiations around the teachers' wages outcome. I have attempted to provide that answer based on the information made available in the midyear review. If the member wants specific detail, which I am sure will be consistent with the information available in the midyear review, he should put a question on notice to the Minister for Education. No separate line item in the Treasurer's advance at this stage relates to teachers' salaries.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It looks as though the Treasurer is trying to run from the truth. The fact is that we are going through a schedule that he provided, which does not include anything on the teachers' EBA. However, this house is being asked to confirm and pass a Treasurer's advance authorisation with an amount of \$1.2 billion. It would be open to the Treasurer to cover any holes in the education budget, which may or may not relate to the teachers' EBA payments, from this money. He cannot therefore duck out of this issue by saying that the schedule he provided has a capital amount of only \$48.4 million against education and training. We are authorising an expenditure of \$1.2 billion, which would enable the Treasurer to use some part of it to meet the recurrent expenditure for the Department of Education and Training. The fact that the Treasurer is unwilling to answer indicates that either he does not know or he is simply trying to hide something. I therefore ask him a slightly different question on the same point. How much additional money is required in the current year to settle the teachers' EBA? I draw the Treasurer's attention to the fact, which he should know but if he has not been doing his homework perhaps he does not, that the Treasury sets aside money in a different account to cover all the EBAs that might arise. It may be that the Treasurer does not have to enter the amount on this schedule because he has taken it out of a different bucket of money that was in reserve for EBA payments and used it to cover the teachers' EBA. If the Treasurer has done that, I would like to know how much of that money came out of that special bucket to help meet the teachers' EBA and how much additional money we need to find.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not going to enter into a debate around teachers' wages, details of which were contained in the midyear review. This is not an estimates process where I will be answering every question that relates to portfolio spending, but I will draw the member's attention to page 7 of the midyear review where there is a line item that includes a parameter adjustment for the teachers' EBA. I have been advised that that is the amount that has been allocated to cover that outcome by Treasury. I have also been advised by Treasury that there have been no movements of funds from other provisional accounts to cover that. That information was provided in the midyear review. The information is still current. I again say that it is not an item that is before the chamber for consideration as part of the Treasurer's advance.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Will the Treasurer give an undertaking to the chamber that not a single dollar from the approximately \$1.2 billion being authorised through this bill will go to the Department of Education and Training, which is not clearly designated, given that he is saying that he will deal only with the amount of \$48.4 million and that he has another eye open for contingencies? If he is really being open and honest, will he give a clear undertaking to the chamber that not another dollar will go to the Department of Education and Training from the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill when it is passed through the Parliament?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill is for unforeseen expenditure items. I cannot stand here today—is it 1 April?

Several members interjected.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Tomorrow? Members opposite nearly qualified!

I cannot give an undertaking that there will be no further demands on the Treasurer's advance over the subsequent two months of the year. I have already outlined other factors at play that may require a drawdown on the Treasurer's advance. I am simply not going to give that sort of ridiculous undertaking.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The answer that the Treasurer just gave the member for Balcatta flies in the face of previous commitments he made to this chamber during the second reading debate. When questions such as the member for Balcatta's question about the three per cent efficiency dividend were asked of the Treasurer by way of interjection during that debate, he pointed the interjectors to the midyear review and told them to look for an answer there. Of course, members have done so and have today raised issues about line items from the midyear review with the Treasurer because this is our only opportunity to do so. The Treasurer made a commitment to this chamber that he would be open and answerable to all questions about the midyear review and the line items before the chamber, during consideration in detail.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Where is that? Show me.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Treasurer said that he would answer all our questions; I will take the Treasurer back to it, if he likes. We will go through *Hansard*. He said that he would answer all our questions during the consideration in detail stage. I ask the Treasurer to answer the questions. These are basic questions about a critical ask of Parliament to approve a \$1.2 billion authorisation advance. Never before has the Parliament of Western Australia been asked to approve such a large amount of money. The Treasurer has just indicated to the chamber that the \$40.4 million that is set out in the midyear review, part of which goes to the teachers' wage increase, may not be achievable as a saving from the three per cent efficiency dividend that the government seeks, which is an amount of \$45.6 million. This question will come up whether we deal with it as a Department of Education and Training line item in consideration in detail, or as a line item under contingency. If the three per cent efficiency dividend is not achieved—the Treasurer indicated that there are problems with achieving it—will the Treasurer draw down on the \$40.4 million that he is bound to pay from the contingency?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes—I have had this conversation previously with the member for West Swan.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is how the Treasurer could have answered. We have put a number of questions to the Treasurer today that he has deferred to other ministers, or for which he did not have the information in front of him to answer. We indicated to him in the second reading debate that we would go through this in detail, and the Treasurer indicated that he would answer all the questions we wanted to ask. A number of the questions I have asked, as the Treasurer knows already, have had to be put on notice because the Treasurer did not have the answers.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Treasurer challenged the member for Cockburn to say when he said that he would answer all of our questions.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I said I would answer questions in relation to the specific issues in the midyear review.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the Treasurer reads his own transcript, at page 2231, on 19 March, he would see that he said —

I look forward to consideration in detail. I reiterate the point I made earlier and I say this in good faith: the government —

I will stop the quote there to make the point that it is the government, not the Treasurer —

the government will provide as much information as it can through the consideration in detail process, and looks forward to it.

The Treasurer now says, "Don't ask me; I'm only the Treasurer. How can you expect me to know anything about the bill I'm bringing before the house. Go and ask somebody else."

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am happy to answer questions in relation to the bill. I am not going to troll through the details of the midyear review.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: With respect, the Treasurer is asking for two and a quarter times more money than was asked for last year through the same process. Last year, \$313.5 million was being asked for; this year, \$762 273 480—a 224 per cent increase in the amount that the Treasurer is seeking. It is an unprecedented amount, two and a quarter times more than asked for by the former Treasurer, whom the present Treasurer personally abused on a daily basis in this house. He stood up in the house and used personal abuse against that Treasurer, calling him every name that has ever been invented.

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The SPEAKER: Member, direct your comments to clause 3.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am directing my comments towards the \$762 273 480 that the Treasurer is seeking. I remind the Parliament of the commitment by the Treasurer that the government would be full and frank in answering questions, not telling us not to ask him because he does not know, and to ask somebody who cares. We all care here. We are interested in finding out the details. It would come as a real surprise to everyone in this state that the Liberal Party allocated not one dollar to the additional enterprise bargaining agreement settlement. That is an extraordinary position for the Treasurer to present in this chamber. He says he is not asking for one dollar to pay for the EBA. The only piece of paper I have is this flimsy four pages. I have already asked whether any additional money has been allocated to education in respect of recurrent expenditure. The answer he gave us was that there is no recurrent expenditure. If there is no additional recurrent expenditure in the authorisation bill, that means that the Treasurer is not asking us to approve one dollar for the EBA settlement. There is no request by the Treasurer to this house to approve one dollar for teachers' pay. The Treasurer has asked, in respect of education and training, for \$48.4 million of capital expenditure for the school capital improvement program as part of its election commitments. Not one dollar of recurrent expenditure is being sought. If the Treasurer's previous answer to my question was wrong, the Treasurer should stand up and correct the record. If his answer was incorrect, he should let us know. Is the Treasurer saying that his four flimsy pages do not contain all the information that the Parliament requires to consider the \$1.2 billion overall expenditure that is being sought here, and the \$762 273 480 that clause 3(2) seeks? If there is some information that the Treasurer has not shared with us, now would be a great time to share that information with us. Until now, in answer to my specific question and to the questions of other members, he has indicated that there is not one dollar in this bill for payment to teachers. The Treasurer has asked for \$762 273 480, but none of that will go to teachers. Can the Treasurer please explain why that is? It is not clear that he understands the answer that he has given to this Parliament.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The Treasurer indicated in his previous answer that if the \$41.3 million, which is made up of \$35 million for the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement and \$6.3 million for behaviour management, was not funded out of the three per cent efficiency dividend, which seems very unlikely, it would make up part of that contingency figure of \$149.3 million. Unless the Treasurer has made up that figure on the spot and has used that contingency as a convenient way of digging himself out of a hole because he has not provided adequate costings, he should presumably have a breakdown of the \$149.3 million. I think it is extraordinary that two items of unfunded expenditure—one for \$6.3 million and one for \$35 million—are not identified as separate line items. As the Treasurer said in answer to the question of the member for West Swan, that makes up part of the contingency of \$149.3 million. Before we get any further along in the process, why does the Treasurer not give us some indication of what makes up that contingency, unless of course he is just making it up as he goes along? My great concern is that the Treasurer seems reluctant to answer questions. This is about the Treasurer's advance of \$1.2 billion. The Treasurer has asked for an extraordinarily large amount of money to be advanced. He does not seem to like answering questions about the \$41.3 million of unfunded expenditure that the opposition has found. I am really concerned. We have the big Buswell black hole, which is an extremely unpleasant thought. Do we also have another small Buswell black hole? Do we have two black holes of the Treasurer's creation? The Treasurer has said that the \$41.3 million makes up part of that contingency of \$149.3 million. I ask the Treasurer to right now list all the other items that make up that contingency; otherwise there is only one conclusion we can draw, and that is that the Treasurer is making it up as he goes along.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Clearly, either the Treasurer is not up to his job and simply cannot get across the detail to explain it or we are reverting to the situation with the then education department when the now Premier was the Minister for Education. What the then Minister for Education did in one year was blow the budget by \$100 million. When we came to government, we had all these unfunded commitments that simply had not been brought to book. Perhaps the Treasurer is under the Premier's instructions to go back to running the Department of Education and Training as though it is a piggy bank and he can open the little hole at the bottom and take out money whenever he likes and no-one will worry about proper accounting and openness. It is just unbelievable that the Treasurer cannot explain how he put together a teachers' EBA of \$35 million, which is extra money that has to be approved and must come from somewhere, or the suggested cost blow-out of about \$40 million driven by 5 000 extra students in our schools this year. School enrolments were conducted on 1 February and tomorrow is 1 April. It is two months later and the Treasurer still cannot provide the details of the cost blow-out created by the extra students and other cost pressures in our schools.

The current accounts show a three per cent efficiency dividend of almost \$50 million across Education and Training. All told we have a risk factor on three issues of \$125 million. If the \$35 million for the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement suddenly becomes a problem—the money that has been moved cannot be taken because the Treasurer cannot explain where it has gone—and the cost blow-out becomes \$40 million with the

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extra students and extra costs, and the department cannot capture any of the efficiency dividend, although the Treasurer is confident he will get some benefit but does not know how much as it is still a work in progress, then the potential downside is \$125 million. That will make a big hole in the contingency figure, if that is what the Treasurer ends up with.

We have the track record of previous Liberal governments. Back when the budget was half the size it is now, the now Premier and then minister could blow \$100 million in one year! It looks as though we have a Treasurer who will not put his hands on the wheel, who does not know which direction to take and who cannot drive the vehicle or answer the questions. All we can guess is that if things do go south, the Department of Education and Training will have a \$125 million overrun in just half a year—the time members opposite have been in government. The Liberal-National government is messing it up again.

The Labor government took eight years to straighten out the books. Members opposite had five deficits out of eight budgets. They left the state in deficit when they lost government in 2001. The government's own midyear review showed that. The state was in recession when the Labor government took over from the former Liberal-National government. That is what members opposite did to this state through poor management, and now this Treasurer is doing it again.

Point of Order

Dr K.D. HAMES: I do not think this is relevant to the clause.

The SPEAKER: I have given the member for Balcatta some leniency because I did believe, when he was given the call, that he was directing questions to the Treasurer. It seems that he is swaying a little away from clause 3, and I ask the member to return to that clause.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Clause 3 is about the authorisation of two amounts that total \$1.2 billion for which this Treasurer has a fair amount of leeway in how it is spent. In discussing this government's lack of financial control and comparing it with what we have experienced with previous Liberal governments and what is on show here tonight, I have grave concerns that taxpayers' money will not be spent in an appropriate way—with proper controls and transparency so that people can see where the money will go—and we will end up with a budget overrun.

The difficulty we have is that instead of a planned budget overrun in which the government sets out the case for expenditure that will benefit a particular department—say Education and Training—or for broader economic outcomes, we have no plan because the Treasurer cannot explain it. He cannot say why he needs this money for Education and Training. He cannot even tell us how much will go to Education and Training because it is for “unforeseen circumstances”. Perhaps the election of the government was an unforeseen circumstance. We had hoped the government would rise to the occasion and deal with these issues, but so far the Treasurer has not.

Mr B.S. WYATT: We might be able to short-circuit some of this debate on the contingency fund. I assume that the contingency figure has not been plucked from the air but that Treasury has given the Treasurer an estimate of likely overruns. How much of the contingency fund is allocated to Education and Training?

Mr T.R. Buswell: If it were allocated, it would not be a contingency.

Mr B.S. WYATT: How is the contingency fund calculated?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Just so that members understand—I hate to break the member for Bassendean's bubble on this matter—if we had listed the elements to which the contingency fund was to be allocated, it would not be a contingency fund. We need to establish a couple of basic principles at the start. It is an acceptable practice within the context of the Treasurer's advance to have a contingency fund. I do not think there is any debate about that, except by the member for Bassendean, who in his own orbit has formed a view that we should allocate a contingency fund, in which case it stops being a contingency fund. One day he will return to the orbit in which most of us inhabit.

As I understand it, last year's contingency fund was \$78 million of the \$750 million Treasurer's advance. That is a 10.4 per cent provision. I have received advice that this year's contingency fund is a 12.4 per cent provision and that that is the amount Treasury deemed would provide the necessary flexibility to deal with the increased level of volatility with which the government is faced. That is why the contingency fund is there. I repeat: expenditure of the Treasurer's advance will be thoroughly documented in the appropriation bills that will follow.

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We will once again have an opportunity to go through each item of the Treasurer's advance line item by line item, including those items that are funded from the contingency fund. I have already acknowledged the point made by the member for West Swan that if there are underachievements in regard to the three per cent efficiency dividend, for example, in education, and there are issues surrounding the total budget management in education—they are still live issues that are being resolved—those moneys, on the balance of probabilities, will be funded out of the contingency fund or some of the unders and overs of the Treasurer's advance that we talked about earlier. That is the rationale behind the contingency fund, and it was based on a recommendation put to me by Treasury to allocate to the contingency fund 12.4 per cent of the estimated Treasurer's advance.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I understand the need for a contingency fund; it should be for unforeseen expenditure. However, there is nothing about the \$35 million that was unforeseeable. We know that the government must finance the teachers' wage increase under the enterprise bargaining agreement and that the government has not met the three per cent efficiency dividend that it said would fund that increase. There is a black hole here. The Treasurer told the member for West Swan that the teachers' wage increase would be covered as part of the contingency fund.

Mr T.R. Buswell: May be covered.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: "May be". This was entirely foreseeable, which goes back to my original point. Because it was foreseeable, the prudent thing to do would be to recognise it as a separate line item. The Treasurer is making it up as he goes along. He cannot have it both ways. This \$35 million plus the \$6.3 million for behavioural management was entirely foreseeable. It should not be part of the contingency fund because that is not what the contingency fund is for. The Treasurer told the member for West Swan that even though the government has no way of paying for it, it is coming out of the contingency fund. The Treasurer cannot have it both ways. He is not a schoolboy running around with a whoopee cushion cracking fart jokes anymore; he is the Treasurer of the state and he has a serious job to do. The Treasurer must identify where and how government expenditures will be funded. The reality is that the \$41.3 million, plus the money identified by the member for Balcatta, totals \$121 million in unfunded expenditure. The Treasurer explained that away by saying it would come out of the contingency fund, although it would not come out of the contingency fund because that is not what a contingency fund is for because he could see that it was coming. A \$1.2 billion Buswell budget black hole: is it a \$41.3 million tiny Buswell budget black hole or is it another \$120 million slightly bigger Buswell budget black hole? The Treasurer must take his job seriously. I know that it is highly unexpected and I know that people around the world are gasping in astonishment that he is the Treasurer; nonetheless he is the Treasurer.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: He has a responsibility to do his job properly.

The SPEAKER: I urge the member for Bassendean to speak to clause 3.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: What I am asking the Treasurer to do —

The SPEAKER: I have given the member for Bassendean considerable leniency. I urge him to speak to clause 3.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: The Treasurer has identified that this \$41.3 million will come out of the contingency fund, even though he has identified that contingency funds are not used for entirely expected expenditure, which this bill is for. Which other items of predictable expenditure does the Treasurer expect to come out of the contingency fund? He should list them now, because we will find them. If it takes days, weeks or months, we will find them. List them now and give us an idea, otherwise there is only one conclusion we can draw; that is, the Treasurer is making it up as he goes along.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Perhaps moving away from the contingency fund for a moment, I seek a little clarification from the Treasurer on what constitutes school capital improvement programs as part of Liberal election commitments and what the basis was for adding that into the Treasurer's advance. People in my electorate and in the electorate of Swan Hills are wondering, as a result of statements made by the Premier that were reported in newspapers earlier this year, whether combined projects worth around \$53 million, which should have been well underway and had the vast majority of their funding committed to by June this year, have been put on hold. I know that the president of the parents and citizens association at Comet Bay College has written to the minister. I know that in relation to detail the Treasurer's normal response is to handball it to the minister and to tell members to ask the minister. I have to tell the Treasurer that I have asked the minister and so have my constituents, and I am assuming that so too have the constituents of the member for Swan Hills in regard to Ellenbrook High School. However, I am asking in regard to Comet Bay College. The extension of that school to

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cater for years 11 and 12 is a \$25 million project. It is not a project that should be subject to any concern or discussion in this year's budget, but somehow it is. My question is: what was the basis for determining it; what has the Treasurer committed to in the way of infrastructure and capital works for the Department of Education and Training; and how does the additional \$48 million on top of that relate to projects such as those two additions to high schools that were going along swimmingly until January this year? Are they part of the Treasurer's contingency fund? Is the Treasurer just going to "cank" them and kick them into the forward estimates and they will become part of the savings to cover the EBA for teachers? We do not know because there is not much detail that the Treasurer is able to deliver. However, I am wondering whether he can deliver on the issue of the two high school extensions, for which the combined total for their full commitment this year was supposed to be in excess of \$50 million.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is that I do not have that detail down to school level. I can simply confirm for the member for Warnbro, as I have confirmed previously, that we are seeking in the education and training portfolios a Treasurer's advance allocation of \$48.4 million to fund commitments under the Investing in Schools program and the other \$50 million school program. If the member for Warnbro has specific questions on the timing for specific schools in his electorate, or indeed in the electorate of the member for Swan Hills, he should direct his inquiries to the Minister for Education.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I missed part of this debate as I was out of the chamber. I have returned whilst we have been discussing the education and training school capital improvement program. I am a little surprised as I just heard the Treasurer say—I understood he said this earlier—that we should ask the Minister for Education about school capital improvements. In response to the member for Cannington, I heard the Treasurer say that he is not here to answer questions about the teachers' EBA; he will answer questions only on school capital improvement programs as part of the election commitments, yet when we ask him questions about school capital improvement programs as part of the election commitments, he says that he will not answer them. We are discussing a Treasurer's advance and the Treasurer will not answer questions on issues that might be covered within the contingency and he will not answer questions about school capital improvements.

What is a school capital improvement? It is the construction of buildings at a school. The government has allocated \$48.4 million and the Treasurer will not tell us what those improvements are. Is that not what this process is all about—for the Treasurer to answer questions on what they are? Is that not what we are here to do? This expenditure is for extraordinarily unforeseen matters, cost blow-outs and new projects that need to be commenced by 30 June this year. I would not have thought it would be hard to find out, almost at the beginning of April, what these commitments are. The government has three months in which to commence the expenditure of the money yet the Treasurer cannot tell us what he is going to spend it on. That is why we are here. He refused to allow us to send this matter to a committee, which might have been able to get to the bottom of it. This is an absolute cover-up.

Mr T.K. Waldron: You can't even stay serious yourself.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am being serious. This is laughable. I will ask the member for Wagin a question; he is a reasonable fellow. Should the Treasurer answer the question on what school capital improvements are?

The SPEAKER: Member, I urge you to address your remarks to clause 3. For the sake of everybody in this house, I urge you to ask the question of the Treasurer if that is your point.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will ask the question of the Treasurer; I thought the member for Wagin might give me a more sensible answer. A total of \$48.4 million has been allocated for the school capital improvement program as part of election commitments. I was aware of the education commitments made during the election campaign. I recall that most of the education commitments made by the then opposition, now government, were copies of commitments that we made as a government. For instance, in the case of Donnybrook, the candidate for Donnybrook came out shortly thereafter in relation to that commitment. We made a major commitment to Bullsbrook District High School. The candidate from that area came out in relation to that shortly thereafter. In relation to various schools, Mount Lawley Primary School and Coolbinia —

Mr M.W. Sutherland: You offered them millions.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We did. We committed a lot of money in that area. The member for Mount Lawley came out as a candidate shortly thereafter and copied the commitments that we made in those areas. In the case of Ellenbrook, the same sort of thing happened.

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The SPEAKER: Member for Rockingham, I urge you to return to addressing clause 3. I instruct all members in this place that this is not the place for a general debate. Members' remarks need to be very specific to clause 3. I urge the member to make that point.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am referring to the school capital improvement program as part of the election commitments and I am referring to government election commitments in relation to school capital improvements. However, I ask again: why does the Treasurer not reveal to us what they are? It would not be hard to find out what commitments were made. It is appropriate that the Treasurer advise the house of what they are. Secondly, in relation to the contingency provision, I heard the Treasurer indicate earlier that last year there was a commitment of roughly 10 per cent and this year it has been increased to 12 per cent of the base amount. He did not tell us why except to say "Treasury told us", yet the amount of money is way higher because the base amount is way higher. There must be a basis to it. It is like a Donald Rumsfeld known unknown. There is some basis to actually give an estimate for what it is. I am asking two questions: why is the Treasurer not telling us what the school capital improvement program is, which he said he would, and how has he come up with this known unknown?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think these will be the last couple of points about the education and training section. I want clarification about the funding for the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement. Listening to the Treasurer's previous answers, I was quite astounded to hear that there is no provision in the Treasurer's advance authorisation for the teachers' EBA. Funding is provided in the TAA for the Civil Service Association of WA agreement and some of the health EBAs, but there is absolutely nothing for the teachers' EBA. That is quite amazing, given its \$35 million impact in the 2008-09 budget. I am just not sure how it will be funded. Is that why Education and Training will be blowing its budget by \$40 million, because it will have to try to find the efficiency dividend, together with funding the teachers' EBA for this year?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will answer a couple of points that have been raised. Firstly, the advice I have on the general agreement provisions is that they have to be represented in the Treasurer's advance because they are movements of money out of the Treasury account across the agencies. They have to be accounted for by way of the TAA; it is the only way that appropriation can move out of the central Treasury account, for want of a better term, across to the agency. That is why they appear as individual line items.

There is funding in the government's finances for the teachers' EBA. Those funding amounts were clearly specified in the midyear review. We have had this discussion; they appear on page 7 of the midyear review. They are funded out of education by way off an offset against the efficiency dividend. I have clearly stated that in the event that the efficiency dividend is not realised in full—I acknowledge there are difficulties in achieving that—it will necessitate a draw-down on the Treasurer's advance to fully fund the teachers' EBA requirements and/or the other requirements that the member for Kwinana alluded to. That is just the way it is. On the balance of probabilities, it will be funded from the contingencies, although as I have indicated, there are ups and downs in a whole range of line items within the TAA. Hopefully, that clarifies that point.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: While the Treasurer is on his feet, will he confirm that Education and Training will have to find \$35 million for the teachers' EBA, as well as \$45 million for the efficiency dividend?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, it will not. The efficiency dividend effectively offsets or pays for the teachers' EBA. If the efficiency dividend is not realised, there will have to be a draw-down against the Treasurer's advance.

Secondly, in relation to the question asked by the member for Rockingham about the list of schools, he will have to put that question to the Minister for Education. She has responsibility for delivering on our commitments to education. It is entirely her prerogative how and in what form she announces those. I am presenting an aggregate amount to cover off on those two funding streams. I understand members have issues with that, but notwithstanding, that is the position.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Will the Treasurer clarify the answer he just gave to the member for West Swan —

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, it is outrageous!

Page 88 of the midyear review shows \$6.4 million in additional recurrent expenditure and \$43.2 million in expense savings —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am sorry, member, I just could not hear—I had the respective health people talking behind me.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Page 88 of the midyear review records \$6.4 million of additional recurrent expenditure. Then there are a whole series of offsets for three per cent efficiency dividends, leading to a total expense reduction of \$43.2 million in the education and training portfolio. From the Treasurer's answer to the last question from the member for West Swan, am I to take it that the expense reduction is not actually \$43.2 million, but in fact \$75.8 million because there is also a \$35 million expense growth item for the teachers' EBA, as the Treasurer directed me to on page 7?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Where is the expense item that the Treasurer has indicated to me on page 7 for the parameter variation, which is the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement at \$35 million in the current financial year? Why is that not shown in the Education and Training expenditures, because it would seem to be axiomatic that education expenditure would be shown in the Education and Training expenditure list? It is an unusual thing to expect, but I actually expect it.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, while you are on your feet, Treasury advises me that, historically, EBA outcomes have been treated, for the purpose of their presentation, as parameter items. It is a fair question. I did ask the question. That is why they appear in the chart on page 7 as opposed to the chart on page 88. I acknowledge that it may well have made it a little clearer had they been on page 88, but my understanding is that that is how they have been treated historically. There is also a footnote on page 88 that draws attention to the EBA. However, it is a fair question, and I hope that has provided some clarity of that issue.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Leaving aside the argument about the contingency fund, I want to confirm that no recurrent expenditure is allocated by clause 3, which we are currently debating, towards EBA expenses for teachers.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: At the moment, based on information contained in the midyear review and the information that we have, there is no need for a draw-down on the Treasurer's advance to fund the teachers' EBA. The teachers' EBA is fully funded.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No. An additional amount of \$170 million over the four years of the forward estimates has been allocated and funded in the midyear review to pay for the teachers' EBA. It may well be that there is a Treasurer's advance item relating to the EBA, but it would be as part of the inability of the department to meet the three per cent efficiency dividend, because the EBA is funded, or assumed to be funded, from the savings of the efficiency dividend.

Ms R. Saffioti: The confusion is that the TAA is not against Education and Training. You were talking about allocating the EBA money to actual agencies for the GA4, but that hasn't occurred with Education and Training.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No; I agree. However, it came out that the way in which the GA4 was funded—provision was made in that Treasury account at the time of the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*—was that the Treasurer's advance had to be used, as I understand it, to transfer that money out of the Treasury account across into agency accounts. The teachers' EBA was a different funding regime.

Mr R.H. COOK: I get the feeling, as do many people in this chamber tonight, that we are looking at a bit of a train wreck in slow motion. We have reports from a number of different areas that some departments are not going to meet their three per cent efficiency dividend, yet we are assured by the Treasurer that a lot of the expenditure, in particular the EBA agreement for the teachers, is fully funded out of the three per cent efficiency dividend. This is the three per cent efficiency dividend that we all have a very good sense will not be achieved by the Department of Education and Training. Indeed, I have to foreshadow that we suspect that the situation will be similar for the Department of Health.

We are also informed by the Treasurer that the contingency amount that has been recommended to him by his own department is two per cent above the contingency amount that the previous Treasurer sought in a similar bill at this time last year. Therefore, my question to the Treasurer is: has the Treasurer been advised that that two per cent differential, which, by my calculations, represents \$24.5 million, is a contingency or an estimation of the failure to realise the three per cent efficiency dividend; and, if it is not, why is there the extra \$24.5 million? What is the basis for that extra contingency?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not the Treasurer, but I can tell the member one thing: the EBA for teachers is not funded out of the three per cent efficiency dividend. It is not. It is simple maths. It does not add up.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr R.H. Cook: That is what the Treasurer has said.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it is not. It is not funded by the three per cent. A three per cent efficiency dividend does not add up to a six per cent pay rise for teachers. It is simple maths.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand that the Premier was not here for the debate, but on a number of occasions the Treasurer has told us that the EBA for teachers—which is valued at \$35 million and is listed on page 7 of the midyear review—is funded by the existing allocation that was made in the 2008-09 budget by the Labor Government. He has told us that six, seven, eight or nine times. The Premier—the would-be Treasurer—has now come into this chamber and said, “Well, despite the fact that my Treasurer has said to you half a dozen, or more, times that the money allocated to the EBA is in fact included in the budget for 2008-09, it is not”. There is a simple, simple question that needs to be answered immediately. That question is: why is there no explanation—in the four-page document that has been given to us by the Treasurer by way of briefing—to justify the 225 per cent increase in the Treasurer’s authorisation that the Treasurer is seeking this year? That is two-and-a-quarter times higher than last year’s appropriation. It cannot be hard for a government with 99 000 employees to explain to us what is happening. Where is the money coming from?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There was provision in the forward estimates, prior to the election, for wage increases. This government made the decision during the election campaign to set aside \$120 million for wage increases, and we negotiated a six per cent pay rise for teachers—and it worked; teachers were paid that increase. Do members opposite oppose that? Does anyone in this house oppose paying teachers that money? So, they support it!

Mr M.P. Whitely: We just want to know how it will be paid for.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am curious. Do members on this side support a six per cent pay rise for teachers?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members on this side of the house support a six per cent pay rise for teachers.

Point of Order

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Mr Speaker, I thought that we were supposed to be asking questions of the Treasurer. I understand that if the Treasurer is not available or is out of the house or something like that, it is quite appropriate that someone step in to take his place. However, the Treasurer is in the house now, and he can answer the questions. Can he not come back to the table and answer the questions?

The SPEAKER: Order! Let me answer the point of order from the member for Joondalup. There is no point of order. When the Treasurer came back into the house, the Premier was on his feet, in response to the question that the member for Cannington had asked. If the Premier wants to engage with members in this house while he is on his feet, that is a due process in this place, and all members are aware of that. There may be, at some point when the Treasurer comes back into the chamber, an opportunity for him to take his place at the table, but at the moment the Premier is answering the question.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members on this side of the house do support proper payment for our teachers. I have been listening to this debate all night.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We need to come in here only about every 10 minutes, because everything that is said by the opposition is repeated for the next two hours; so if we come in and out, we can catch what is happening—which is not much. Members opposite seem to have the view that the Treasurer’s advance is some micro dollar-by-dollar allocation of money. It is not. It is fundamentally not that. It is an ability for the Parliament to appropriate money, which is then accounted for through the normal processes. Members opposite are trying to turn the Treasurer’s advance into a dollar-by-dollar allocation of money. The Treasurer’s advance is not that. The opposition is completely going down an extraneous path and it has been doing it all night.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Victoria Park!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What members opposite are doing—and the newer members in this house have yet to witness or take part in an estimates committee process—is effectively trying to run a de facto estimates

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

committee. However, this is not an estimates committee and it is not the budget; it is the Treasurer's advance. The valid point members can make is, yes, the \$776 million is a large amount for a Treasurer's advance. Fair enough; members opposite have repeatedly made that point. Beyond that, they have not made a point all night.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Quite frankly, I think it is somewhat outrageous that the Premier finds himself sitting at the table. The Treasurer walked back in and scampered back outside. It is not an issue of whether we support pay rises for teachers; the simple fact of the matter is that we have the right to go through this document that the Department of Treasury and Finance has provided the opposition with. If the Premier does not like that, I do not particularly care. However, the Premier cannot just come into this place and get all petulant now that we are here at 20 minutes past 11 and he wants to go home and go to bed. The Treasurer is probably hanging outside the chamber now. Bring him in and we will go back to the sensible conversation we were having until the Premier said, "Well, who supports pay for teachers?" It was an absurd comment from the Premier of this state. Move on and get the Treasurer back in!

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Victoria Park! I urge all members in this place once again to return to clause 3 of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2009.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I will return to clause 3 of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. I am confused.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am not surprised!

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I was not confused until the Premier sat at the table. However, I want a clear answer to this question: when the Premier took the chair, I think he said that the \$35 million for the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement was not going to be financed out of the three per cent efficiency dividend. Did he say that?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The member got it wrong, didn't he? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the teachers' EBA was financed out of the three per cent efficiency dividend, and I simply made the point how can a six per cent increase be financed out of a three per cent saving when about 80 per cent of the education department's costs are salaries. Do the math; it does not work out.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Okay. That is fine. Thank you for that. This is why we are here; we are trying to elicit detail from the government, and I think we are getting some.

Where is the money for the EBA in the \$1.2 billion outlined in this document? Where is it? It was not in the 2008-09 budget. We understand that because members opposite were not in government; we were in government at the time. Members opposite have made an extra commitment to teachers, and full praise to them for doing that. I used to be a teacher, and, who knows, one day I might be a teacher again.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: However, it is a relevant question. I want to know where the \$35 million for the teachers' EBA is in this \$1.2 billion document.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Again, the Treasurer's advance is a global allocation of funds to pay wages, basically; it is what governments spend money on. It is a global allocation. The document that the opposition has been given is an indicative document to point out why—justifying, if members like—an extra \$776 million is required. Therefore, it is a justification and an explanation in broad terms. It is not a budget as such; it is not a detailed line-by-line accounting of both recurrent and capital expenditure. That will come down in the budget, when this government presents its budget in six weeks' time. Although what members opposite are doing may be very entertaining and very long-winded, and they can go on for days and days and we will sit in this place for days and nights if that is what they wish, they are trying to treat this bill like an estimates process. The fundamental flaw in what they are doing is this is not an estimates-type document; it is a global allocation, basically, to pay salaries.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can I clarify that the Premier said the \$35 million was not coming out of the efficiency dividend, which completely contradicts what the Treasurer just said. Can the Premier explain the difference?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. I will repeat myself for the member's benefit. This is a global allocation. If the member can tell me how a three per cent saving can fund a six per cent pay rise, she is cleverer than I am.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I ask again: is there one dollar in this Treasurer's advance for the pay rise in the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is not a one dollar item in this document, is there? Is there a dollar item in the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill? No, there is not. May I explain for the third time? This is a global

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allocation to Treasury, with a right to spend and to allocate. The details ultimately are line-by-line, recurrent capital in the budget. This is not the budget. What opposition members are trying to do is to treat this as a budget estimates process. I have had a nice long break because I might be here for quite a while, which is excellent. I have had a few hours rest, and so I can be here for the rest of the evening. We can deal with this as we wish. If opposition members want to go line by line when there is no line by line, it will be a long night. That is fine.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will take this up with the Premier. If these are not line-by-line items, would the Premier explain this document I am holding up?

Mr C.J. Barnett: That document is a broad explanation of why the money is required and that is all it is.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I put it to the Premier that this document is a line-by-line item document given to the opposition by the Treasurer to explain where the Treasurer's advance authorisation of \$1.2 billion will be expended. The Premier can wish this document away and say that it represents a global allocation, but clearly in front of the Premier are four pages of the line-by-line expenditure of that \$1.2 billion. Further, the Treasurer gave a commitment to the opposition in answer to my question about this document during the second reading debate when the Premier was in this place. The Treasurer said that he would explain all during consideration in detail and that he would give us a thorough understanding of what these items are line by line. I remind the Premier that that is exactly what he asked for last year, the year before that and the year before that. He indicated to the house that he would always support a Treasurer's advance authorisation bill, and when we were asking for a Treasurer's advance of \$750 million, he put to the house that the government of the day, that then being our government, should explain to the house on a line-by-line basis what that money was going to be expended on. We are asking the Premier exactly the same question. We are not asking him to dismiss every question by saying that this is simply a global allocation. His Treasurer put to the house earlier this evening that the \$40.4 million, which was highlighted in the midyear review and which was partially for teachers' wage increases, would be found from the three per cent efficiency dividend savings of \$45.6 million. The Premier has said that is not the case. We are trying to find out who is telling the truth: is the Premier telling the house the truth or is the Treasurer? Would the Premier please explain?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not think anything I can say or do would improve the member's understanding, which was the premise of his comment. May I again repeat one more time that the budget that goes to the estimates committee is a line-by-line appropriation for every program. This is not that; this is a broad indication of why extra Treasurer's advance funds are needed and broadly explains what the need is. It does not appropriate and allocate funds within the budget. When the budget bills come down for members, there will be a detailed allocation of every dollar. They are appropriations to specific tasks by department and by subprogram within departments. This is not that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, member for Perth!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Is the member taking a point of order?

Ms R. Saffioti: No, I am not.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Why did the member stand?

This is not a budget as such. The Treasurer has quite validly and appropriately given a document to all members that broadly outlines why the total allocation of \$1.2 billion is required. It is indicative; it is not a line-by-line allocation, which is the function of the budget. In six weeks, the opposition will have a line-by-line appropriation for every program, every department and every single dollar, and that is when the opposition's questions will make sense. At the moment, all the Treasurer can do is comment broadly on why the funds are required. Does the member think this is a budget?

Mr P. Papalia: You don't trust him to answer.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do. That is not the budget; it is a broad indication.

Mr P. Papalia: He's sitting right behind you! You don't trust him to answer!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Of course I do. He is having a break. He is exhausted—the opposition has worn him out! Poor boy! He needs a break, but I am as fresh as a daisy. I have got hours in me!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can I clarify that the Premier said that this is not an appropriation bill?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I said that this was not an appropriation, line-by-line.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: You said it was not an appropriation bill.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I didn't.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, you did.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is indeed a very extraordinary situation. I remind the chamber that it is unprecedented to request extra funding heading into the last quarter of the financial year. That is a quote from last year by the current Premier. That was in reference to an amount of \$313.5 million. Now the Parliament is being asked for 2.25 times that amount under clause 3(2) of this bill. As the Premier said, that is unprecedented. As the Premier explained, never before has so much money been asked for from the taxpayers of this state by a government; never before have we had a profligate government such as this government bringing a request for a raid on the taxpayers of this state. This is unprecedented in history. However, the Premier is saying that the government is not going to tell us anything about it, and that it wants the Parliament to authorise to the executive \$1.2 billion, but that we should not worry; the government does not care what is in the detail, and it does not even know. The Premier waves a piece of paper around like a schoolboy and says, "Here it is." With respect, that is the whole point. The Premier does not seem able to answer the question, and that may well be because he does not know the answer.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What is your question?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The question which has been asked on a number of occasions and which the Premier refuses to answer: why, on page 7 of the midyear review, does it say that the EBA offer is worth \$35 million above the amount that was allocated in the 2008-09 budget? Why, on page 88 I believe, is there a \$43.2 million reduction in expenditure by the government for the education system in this state? That is \$8.2 million more, not less, than the government allocated to teachers in this state. Perhaps the Premier can explain why the government says that six per cent is worth \$35 million, and three per cent is worth \$43.2 million. It is not me or the member for West Swan saying that; it is the Premier's government. His arrogant behaviour is extraordinary. It is not unreasonable for us to believe the Treasurer. When the Treasurer tells the Parliament that the government is paying for this out of the budget savings, the opposition says, "Well, fair enough; we just wanted to get that clarified", and we ask whether it is true. He replies that it is, but the Premier contradicts him, so we have to ask the Premier whether his contradictory answer is the one he is sticking with, or whether he will go back to the answer given by the Treasurer. Is it true that the \$35 million additional expenditure outlined on page 7 is paid for by the \$43.2 million savings on page 88? If that is true, that is fair enough, because that is what the Treasurer explained to us. Perhaps some other money needs to be allocated, and that additional allocation is part of the \$1.2 billion that the government is seeking from the Parliament, but is not outlined in this document. One of those two positions is right. Either the Treasurer got it right, or the Premier got it right. If the Premier wants to contradict what the Treasurer said and explain to us that he is right, that is fair enough; he is entitled to say that the Treasurer is wrong, but the idea that, somehow or other —

The SPEAKER: Member, I urge you to get to your question.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have already asked two questions, but I continue to point out that I am referring to clause 3(2) of the bill, where \$762 273 480 is sought to be allocated by the Parliament to the executive, although, from the information provided to us so far, not one dollar is allocated to teachers. I would be interested in the answer to those two questions.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The cost is an additional \$35 million. That is funding for the six per cent pay rise that the Liberal-National government gave to teachers, because we respect and value teachers. This is something the opposition vehemently and publicly opposed during the election campaign.

Mr M. McGowan: We did not.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Labor did not come out and support it. It did not match the promise. It was the main plank of the campaign launch by the Liberal Party—\$120 million immediate increase—and the Labor Party was silent. The opposition was silent, and we settled that dispute within four weeks; something the previous government had been unable to do for 12 months. There is an additional \$35 million for teachers' pay during this financial year. The three per cent efficiency dividend has reduced the estimate of overall Department of Education and Training expenditure by \$42 million. What is the point of the member for Cannington? Who paid for what? This is a global allocation of public funds to the Treasurer.

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Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth has not been in here all night. I appreciate that—not all of us want to be in here all night. I have given the member for Cannington plenty of opportunity to ask this question. I am sure he wants to be able to hear the answer that the Premier is giving. The member for Perth does not need to assist either the member for Cannington or the Premier in the answer. I call the member for Perth formally for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Expenditure on salaries goes up by \$35 million. The three per cent efficiency dividend will, in this financial year, reduce education expenditure, if fully achieved, by \$42 million. The member can argue that the reduction is more than the extra spending, but does it go from that pot to that pot? No, this is a global allocation. This is not a budget detailed allocation by program; it is a global allocation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have an early appointment at five in the morning, and I will be here waiting for it, because my appointment is at Parliament House. It will save me going home. I will need to have a good shave, but I will be here. We are dealing with the Treasurer's advance tonight, so let us get on with it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are happy to stay here until five in the morning if that is what members want. I want to put on the record that the Premier has no confidence in the Treasurer. I want to put it on the record —

The SPEAKER: Member, the point of this process is to speak to clause 3.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am speaking to clause 3 and in doing so I will raise it with the Premier rather than the Treasurer, who is sitting in the chamber at the moment but is not permitted to sit at the table and actually answer the question. I will put the question to the Premier, who does not understand what the Treasurer said prior to him intervening, even though he is sitting directly behind the Premier and could advise him what he has said in the past couple of hours. I will put my questions to the Premier, who will not allow the Treasurer to answer the questions. The Premier sent the Treasurer out of the chamber for a sleep, but he has come back in, so that was obviously a bit of a furphy.

The point we were making was that the Treasurer said, prior to the Premier intervening and taking his place, that the \$35 million for the teachers' pay rise would be paid from the three per cent efficiency dividend. That is exactly what he said. Then he said that the government might not meet the full three per cent efficiency dividend, so any amount that is not met from the efficiency dividend will be paid from the contingency, which is within the provisions.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: No, the Premier said exactly the opposite. He said that teachers will not be paid from the three per cent efficiency dividend; he said that that would be ridiculous. The Treasurer has said something quite contrary to what the Premier has said. If we have to stay here until five o'clock in the morning to debate that point, I am quite happy to do so. We are all keen to ensure that the truth will out on how the pay rise for teachers will be paid for. The Premier keeps saying that this is not a budget; this is not something that is examined dollar by dollar or line by line. We have a four-page document that outlines a \$48.4 million allocation for school capital improvements. That is not dollar by dollar; that is \$48 million of public expenditure, but the government will not tell us a single item that it will be spent on. We would like to know what that money will be spent on, but the government will not tell us a single thing that that \$48 million will be spent on. I think there is a fundamental difference between us. First, we think the government should tell us that information, and we will keep questioning the government until it gives us some indication of what that money will be spent on. Secondly, we want to get to the bottom of why there is a difference between what the Premier has said and what the Treasurer said moments before the Premier rudely kicked him out of his seat. The Treasurer is now back in the chamber but he is not allowed to answer the questions.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I've answered it several times; I'm not answering it again.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I do not have the Premier's capacity for great vision—the \$10 billion or \$12 billion; who cares what figure it was for the canal—or for spending an extra \$100 million as Minister for Education; full steam ahead, damn the torpedoes. I do not have that sort of vision; I am a nuts and bolts, small-picture person. I want to understand where I can find the details of the expenditure of \$35 million for the teachers' EBA—all credit to the government for doing that; that is one of the reasons members are sitting opposite—and the

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\$6.3 million for behaviour management. That is a total of \$41.3 million. It must be detailed either in last year's budget—I suggest it cannot be there because that is not the government's document—or in the document outlining the extra \$1.2 billion that sits over and above the budget documents. If it is not detailed in the \$26 billion document or the \$1.2 billion document, the Buswell-Barnett budget black hole —

Mr C.J. Barnett: How original! We had those speeches four years ago.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Do we have a third black hole, a smaller black hole, of \$41.3 million? I simply want to know in which document I should look for the detail of it. I think the Premier's answer is: "I'm a big-picture guy. It's \$1.2 billion. Get over the detail. I'm in charge now. We paid the money." If that is his answer, I do not think it washes. The Premier has a responsibility to the public of Western Australia to be accountable for the expenditure of its money. The government is spending the public's money and the Premier will not tell us where this \$41.3 million is to be found. Is it in the budget papers or in the \$1.2 billion Treasurer's advance, or is it somewhere else? Is it unfunded expenditure, like the \$100 million that the Premier spent on unfunded promises when he was the education minister? Is it like the goodness-knows-how-much he was going to spend for a canal—that uncosted project? I was panicking in 2005 when Mr Barnett came on the radio and told people he would build a canal! I will tell members a story.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, you will not be telling us any stories; you will be asking a question of the Premier with respect to clause 3.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: My question with respect to clause 3 is: where is the \$41.3 million? Is it in the \$1.2 billion Treasurer's advance or is it in the budget? It must be somewhere.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Let me tell the member for Bassendean that he will not find the extra money for teachers in the former government's budget, because members opposite did not have a policy of paying teachers properly! The member will find in fine detail all the money for education and training schemes, as indeed for every other item of government, when the budget comes down in six weeks.

The Treasurer's advance is, basically, provisional funding; it is a global funding arrangement. To assist members opposite—I must say to the Treasurer that he made a fatal mistake trying to assist members opposite; it was a grave error on his part—the Treasurer did the right thing and gave members opposite an indicative document, not part of any official Treasury statistics or published data, showing why that amount of \$1.2 billion is required and broadly how that will be allocated across the portfolios. It was very proper. However, this is a bill for a global allocation; it does not have line-by-line appropriations. For as long as members opposite persist in asking questions that are of an estimates committee nature, we will continue to go round and round in circles, because they are basically kicking into the wind. There is no bill of that nature before the house.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In light of the advice from the Premier, I intend to focus on a question that is not of a line-by-line nature. What we are discussing, as has been said on numerous occasions this evening, is an unprecedented level of Treasurer's advance. A massive quantum of \$1.2 billion has been requested by the Treasurer.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I think it has been mentioned before tonight.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It has. In light of the unprecedented quantum of the advance, I refer to another unprecedented occurrence this evening. Having answered a number of questions over several hours this evening, the Treasurer was sent scurrying from the chamber, away from the table with his tail between his legs, on the pretence that he was tired. His having subsequently returned to the chamber would indicate to all of us present here—and to Hansard because we are ensuring that it gets recorded—that the Premier has undermined the Treasurer. The Treasurer has no credibility. The Premier has completely contradicted him on several answers to different questions from a number of members of the opposition. How are we to assume that anything the Treasurer has said is valid?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Expenditure must be appropriated. It is the duty of Parliament to appropriate expenditure and to authorise the government to expend the money. We do not make the appropriation an automatic event. It has to come before this Parliament. It is an information document and the moneys must be appropriated. The \$41.3 million expenditure for the teachers' pay rise must either be appropriated in 2008-09, which we both acknowledge it cannot be because that is our budget and it is the new government's expenditure, or be provided for in the Treasurer's advance, but it is not. The only item that appears under Education and Training is \$48.4 million for capital improvements. Not one cent in recurrent expenditure is provided for. Where have we appropriated the \$35 million for the teachers' pay rise, and where is the \$6.3 million for behavioural management? It cannot be spent if it has not been appropriated. Tell us where it has been appropriated.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr R.H. COOK: I was on my feet earlier before the house got distracted by the conflicting answers given by the Premier and the Treasurer. The Treasurer reported to the house that last year in the Treasurer's advance a contingency fund of 10.4 per cent of the Treasurer's advance was asked for and that this year that amount is 12.4 per cent of the overall amount. That was said in the context of the Department of Education and Training not meeting its three per cent efficiency dividend. The two per cent differential represents about \$24.5 million. Was that an estimate by the department? Was the Treasurer advised by the department that that was an estimate of the failed three per cent efficiency dividend saving; and, if not, what is the basis for the extra two per cent of the contingency fund?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In percentage terms they are not great differences. The contingency fund is notionally \$149 million. That could be used for a variety of things, such as wage claims that are settled that are different from what was anticipated, first home owner grants and tax refunds or claims. A contingency fund is for unforeseen, unexpected and unanticipated items, as happens every year.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I will try to ask the Premier an easy question. A figure of \$1.4 million is provided for the general agreement for firefighters—the GA4 wage increase. The Premier is saying that we cannot deal with the minor points of budgeting and that we must wait for the budget to be brought down. If the government arrived at the figure of \$1.4 million rather than \$400 000 or \$4 million, it must have details about how it arrived at the figure of \$1.4 million. We are trying to piece together how the government has arrived at the grand sum of \$1.4 million. When arriving at the figure of \$1.4 million, what is the attrition rate of firefighters? How many firefighters are being lost who are not impacted on by the efficiency dividend to get this magical figure of \$1.4 million? Surely the Premier can tell us exactly how many firefighters we are losing and how many new employees we will be getting with the \$1.4 million.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is one of the best questions I have heard all night. I encourage the member for Perth to ask it of the Minister for Emergency Services during question time tomorrow. The member for Perth is interested in the attrition rate of firefighters, which is an important issue. I do not know whether there has been a change in the attrition rate. If the member is concerned about the issue, I suggest he ask the minister about it tomorrow. Perhaps it can be the first question the opposition asks tomorrow. Our members will hesitate; we will give him the first call so that he can ask that question tomorrow. We will all be waiting for the member for Perth to ask about the attrition rate of firefighters.

What we saw then was a member just trying to think of something to say. It is \$1.4 million because that is Treasury's estimate of what might be necessary for the impact this financial year of an enterprise bargaining agreement. That is Treasury's estimate and it was done to the best of Treasury's knowledge.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Further to that, surely the EBA has already been signed off with the firefighters; therefore, it cannot be an estimate or a guess. Surely if we are looking at a total of \$1.2 billion that the government has put in the bill, the government is now fudging it by saying that Treasury has rubbed a couple of sticks together and come up with an estimate figure of \$1.4 million for the EBA. We want to know whether it is \$400 000 or \$4 million. If the figure really is \$1.4 million, surely the Premier can tell us the number of firefighters it will go to. What is the attrition rate? What number of firefighters will get this \$1.4 million? If the government cannot tell us how many firefighter employees it has in the state, how can we have any confidence in these figures? The figure of \$1.4 million is a very small figure. If the government cannot get the figure correct of the number of employees, how can we have any confidence that the figures in education or health are anywhere near \$100 million in or out either way? Surely the government has negotiated on this. Has cabinet signed off on the EBA for firefighters, Premier?

Mr R.F. Johnson: You can give me a dorothy dixer in estimates committee on that one.

Mr J.N. HYDE: This is not estimates. We are voting tonight on whether to give the government \$1.2 billion. Surely the government is obligated to tell the people of Western Australia whether or not it has signed off on an EBA with firefighters, or whether this \$1.4 million is just a figure it has plucked out of the air.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Again, this question seems to be about attrition. I just make the point that until midnight on 30 June, every single budget figure is an estimate—every single one. They are estimates and they become actuals only after the final reconciliation is done at the end of the financial year. So up until 30 June, every single figure in every budget document is an estimate by definition.

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is our duty to ensure they are good estimates.

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth asked a question.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr J.N. HYDE: That is the whole aim of this appropriation bill tonight. The Premier is already on the record as saying that it is not an appropriation bill. The Premier is on the record as saying that Treasury is just coming up with a guess, a wink and a nod. The government is not confirming whether —

The SPEAKER: Can the member confine his question—I am assuming that it is going to be a question—to clause 3?

Mr J.N. HYDE: All right. The clear question that I am asking is: what is the basis of the government's estimate in coming to \$1.4 million in this line item that the government has provided? We thank the government for providing it; it has tried to do so in a transparent way. The government is on the record publicly; it has put the \$1.4 million in print. Surely it is not insulting to the government for us to ask exactly how it came to this figure of \$1.4 million.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The simplest way of doing it would be to know the component of the EBA that is payable this year and multiply it by the number of wage and salary earners to be paid. That is how I would do it. I would take the sum and I would multiply it by the number of people. I would get an answer, record an estimate and I would put it in the figures. Treasury would probably do something a bit more sophisticated than that, but basically that is what happens.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I want to take the Premier back to the answer to my last question, because again I am confused. I am increasingly confused. I am confused because it was difficult enough to understand the Treasurer's answers, but the Premier's answers are just mystifying. My question was: where is the appropriation for the \$41.3 million that I referred to? There is \$35 million for the teachers' EBA and \$6.3 million in behaviour management money. We both agree that they are not in this bill.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is right because you don't support teachers.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I said to the Premier that they must be in here.

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I refer you to standing order 97 about a member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition. That is what we have heard all night from the member for Bassendean. This specific item falls into this category and I ask that he desist.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge what the Leader of the House has said. I only hope that the member for Bassendean will present some information in his question to the Premier that is different from that which we have heard previously.

Debate Resumed

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The Premier said that it is not in the \$1.2 billion advance. He told us to wait six weeks until the budget comes out. The money has been spent this year. Do the teachers have the money now?

Mr C.J. Barnett: This financial year.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Where is the appropriation for that money? We agree that it is not in this document, so where is it in this one? Is there some other magic fund that we do not know about? It had to have been approved by this Parliament when we passed the 2008-09 budget or it has to be approved in this appropriation. As the Treasurer answered before, it cannot be in the budget that is coming because that relates to 2009-10. This money is being expended in 2008-09. Have I got that wrong? If I have not, clearly the Premier has. I ask again: where is the appropriation of the \$41.3 million? It is not in next year's budget because the money has been spent. Where is it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Next year's budget will detail the estimated outcomes for this year. You will find it in that.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Premier —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You've driven me away; it's been too much!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I now direct my question to the Treasurer, who has been allowed back into the chair. The Treasurer was willing to specify quite distinct amounts against GA4 wage increases on a number of the items on the schedule he provided. Approximately how many GA4 wages employees are there in the Department of Education and Training, and what will be the increase for GA4 employees within that department?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have from Treasury is that a certain percentage are over five foot six, a certain percentage are under six foot and we have two seven footers! I do not know. One thing that has become obvious is that we do not have, nor has the government ever had to provide, that level of detail in this forum, and we are not going to provide that level of detail.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We have sat on the opposition benches and asked for this year after year. We will not provide that information. Members opposite can sit there all night and ask questions until they fall asleep. I expect that half of their cranial spaces have already lapsed into sleep, based on the quality of the questions that I have had to listen to. We do not have that level of information.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: But there are GA4 employees within Education and Training?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes. However—I have probably explained this only six times—a funding allotment was made over and above that which was in the budget for GA4. That went in a Treasury account in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. That money is then moved to relevant appropriations so they can pay under that regime. The amounts differ for a range of reasons for each of those different portfolio areas, such that there is not necessarily a link between the number of employees and the amount that is transferred across. I do not have the information and I will not provide it.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I draw the Treasurer's attention to the schedule provided, where under the heading "Agricultural and Food", GA4 wage increases of \$3.1 million are listed. The Department for Child Protection has a GA4 wage increase of \$2.2 million. With respect to a range of others, the Land Information Authority has a GA4 wage increase of \$3.2 million, The Department of Mines and Petroleum is lumped with something else and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure has a GA4 wage increase lumped with other costs. We can go through a range of areas in which the data is clearly in the Department of Treasury and Finance, and it knows what the wage increase is for the GA4 across a range of agencies. It is my expectation—although I am happy to be corrected—that there are quite a large number of GA4 wages employees in the Department of Education and Training. The issue is that either the Treasurer treats this house with respect and answers what are quite genuine questions, or we are simply going to see what we saw when the current Premier was the deputy leader of the last Liberal government—a budget out of control because no-one wanted to take the time and trouble to address the issues and ensure that they were on top of the budget and managing it properly. I again ask the Treasurer whether he will consider telling me, even if it is only an approximation, the amount of money required for GA4 wage increases in the Department of Education and Training.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Sorry not to jump up—I have to conserve my energy!

We have given an undertaking to the member for Cockburn on GA4 wage increases, and it will extend to education. Hopefully, when that information is provided, if there has been an application of those funds across, that information will be provided at that time. We have given that undertaking.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer for that answer, but in saying that, he is acknowledging that there would have been a cost increase there —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am not acknowledging that; I am saying —

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Clearly, the only way there would not be is if there were no GA4 employees in the Department of Education and Training.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Not necessarily. As I have attempted to explain to the house six times now, it is slightly more complicated than that. My undertaking to the member is that we will source that information and provide it as soon as practically convenient.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer, but I thought he had made absolutely clear—although the Premier came into the house and totally contradicted him—that the wage increases for the teachers' enterprise bargaining arrangement were being covered by the three per cent efficiency dividend, and that is how it was going to be done. I think that finally the Premier recognised that what he said was actually stupid and wrong, and then he came around to recognising it as well and tried to weasel his way out of what he had said.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That's not what I heard!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Yes, but the Treasurer was outside.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I was still listening—I was only consuming four Red Bulls to keep me awake!

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Several members interjected.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I think it is fair to assume, given the Treasurer has not put any GA4 increase against the Department of Education and Training in his schedule, that it will also meet that increased cost through the efficiency dividend or some other internal funding. I am seeking an answer to what is the source of that alternative funding to meet the GA4 wage increase.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will get the member that information.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Turning to the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Have you moved off education?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes—the Premier did such a good job!

The firefighters are to receive an additional \$1.4 million of funding, but again there is an efficiency dividend of \$2.6 million for 2008-09. Will the Treasurer confirm that that efficiency dividend is on track and that no additional funding will be called upon under the Treasurer's advance authorisation for this item?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The short answer is that the delivery of the efficiency dividends across agencies will be provided in the budget documentation. I will not discuss that with the member. I have given a very clear undertaking that that will be the case, and that detail will be provided.

The member's second question related specifically to an undertaking that there will be no more calls on the TAA—I believe that is what I heard asked —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was in respect of FESA.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I cannot give that undertaking. The TAA, by its definition, revolves around unforeseen or unexpected expenses. There are still two months left of this financial year. An event may occur that requires FESA to draw additionally on the TAA. The member for Balcatta asked that question previously. I did not give that undertaking to him and I will not give it to the member for West Swan now.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Treasurer gave us that undertaking initially with some of the earlier departments, by saying those departments were on track to meet the efficiency dividend. I am not asking anything different from that question. Obviously, the mood of the chamber has changed since the Premier came in.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am sorry; I just want to check. I may have misheard you. I thought you had asked me to give an undertaking that there would be no more draw-downs on the TAA out of FESA.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I asked whether the \$2.6 million efficiency dividend for the Fire and Emergency Services Authority was on track; and, if that was not the case, whether there would be an expected draw-down on FESA for that efficiency dividend.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: My question also goes to the Fire and Emergency Services Authority. As the Treasurer would be well aware, there is the emergency services levy, which provides major funding for FESA, and there is also government money directly from the consolidated fund. Does the three per cent efficiency dividend apply across the whole cost of FESA, or does it apply only to some lesser component of the funding of FESA?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am going to maintain my position; that is, that details of the three per cent efficiency will be provided in the budget, and the member will just have to hold his breath for six more weeks. That is how I will continue to respond to issues surrounding specifics of the three per cent. We are here to discuss matters regarding unforeseen expenditure as it relates to, in this case, fire and emergency services, and specifically the public sector general agreement 4.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I do not know whether the Treasurer just does not know the answer and therefore is getting a bit tetchy at this hour of the night. The fact is, according to the schedule that the Treasurer gave us, that the \$1.4 million being allocated covers both the firefighters' agreement and the GA4 wage increase. At the same time, FESA is facing an efficiency dividend. It makes a huge difference to FESA if that efficiency dividend is across the whole of its expenditure, because a lot of its funding is from the fire and emergency services levy, which is paid by homeowners across various parts of the state. FESA does not have direct control over the money coming in from that levy. That will come in anyway, depending on what level the government sets; it has the right each year to set the levy that will be paid by property owners. Therefore, the level set makes a big difference. I thought the Treasurer would be able to answer the question about what he is applying the three per

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

cent efficiency dividend to—that is, whether it is just the money that he will put in the budget or whether it is a larger amount of money that he is applying the dividend to.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I would like to move to Health, if I could. No doubt the member for Albany will ask questions. The question that I have of the Treasurer is about that first figure of \$20 million. I think I can work out the breakdown of the election commitments that the Treasurer has listed versus the Liberal Party costing. With the Royal Flying Doctor Service, I note that there is some funding in respect of that figure, as well as some included in the general global figure for royalties for regions. Can the Treasurer explain what each amount of money is being used for?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am just getting some information. It was very nice of the Premier to assist me in my hour of need, but, unfortunately, he has mucked up the arrangement in which I had my papers on my desk. Therefore, although I returned from the substitution a much relieved person, I am having to search for the documentation as it relates to Health. I will give the member some information that I have, and if he could ask that question later by way of a supplementary question, hopefully by then I will have located what I am looking for. I will read the advice that I have, which relates to a \$21.5 million allotment. The *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* says that the projected draw-down from the Treasurer's advance for delivery of services and capital appropriations was \$13.5 million, mainly due to policy decisions to provide assistance to the RFDS in purchasing five aircraft, and planning for the Albany hospital. Therefore, I anticipate that they are draw-downs that were already identified in the Treasurer's advance at the time of the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. This has increased by approximately \$8 million due to the need to advance funds for a portion of the election commitments, the impact of some of which is offset by the three per cent efficiency dividend. I am keen to get additional information in relation to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It is my understanding, in relation to the royalties for regions funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, that it will be \$5.7 million this year.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is that for the aircraft purchases that you have mentioned?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is part of that \$21.5 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to health and to the efficiency dividend of approximately \$60 million that was forecast as of the midyear review. Again, I seek confirmation that what was reported last week in the upper house estimates committee is correct; that is, that health will not be delivering the \$60 million efficiency dividend this financial year. That will impact on the Treasurer's advance authorisation, and at least \$60 million will need to be drawn from the contingency, or from whatever other sources. I seek confirmation of that from the Treasurer.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Without getting into the specifics, it has been reported that health will not deliver on its full three per cent efficiency dividend this year. However, there is no way that that will result in a \$60 million draw-down on the Treasurer's advance, because health will be achieving a significant proportion of the efficiency dividend. Although the shortfall—the exact amount of which has not yet been finalised—will still have to be funded this year, I understand from health that it will be picked up in the out years. I actually have spent a considerable amount of time with the Minister for Health, as has he with his department, and I think the Health Department has responded positively to the three per cent efficiency agenda of the government.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I just seek confirmation that a part of that \$60 million efficiency dividend will be delivered. Is that the outcome of what the Treasurer has just said?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not going to speculate on exactly what the final amount will be. As I have said, that is still subject to finalisation by cabinet. At the moment, health is short. It is not a significant amount, but it is short. We are still working on some options. I suspect that health may not get there by the close-off date. If that is the case, that will be effectively—as we discussed earlier in relation to education—an under that ultimately we will need to fund. Whether that is an under that can be funded from within agency resources—I suspect it cannot be—or whether it is an under that will need to be funded by a specific appropriation under the TAA, only time will tell. However, as I have said, that will dutifully be reported in the appropriations at the time.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Mr Speaker, it is 10 past 12, and I think it is time that the debate came to an end. I have been looking at the debate last year and have been adding up the time that we spent on this debate last year. It is interesting, because last year, the then Minister for Education and Training said to the then Treasurer that the items that the Treasurer had listed —

Point of Order

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Speaker, my point of order is on the question of relevance.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I think that I, and the Deputy Speaker and Acting Speakers who have been in the chair tonight, have given all members in this place considerable tolerance in asking questions. I am giving that tolerance currently to the member for Alfred Cove.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I refer to clause 3, which states in part —

Payments and advances are authorised to be made under subsection (1) that do not in total exceed \$762 273 480.

In this house tonight we have had one member after another questioning the Treasurer about line items that will appear in the budget. As I was pointing out previously, the current Minister for Education last year stated —

... the items that the Treasurer listed in that speech do not add up to \$750 million. Correct me if I am wrong, but they add up to only \$410 million. That is slightly below the three per cent ...

She went on to state —

I do not think the Treasurer has accounted in his speech for that extra \$313 million.

That is a theme we have heard consistently tonight. The member continued —

I would like the Treasurer to tell us line by line what he intends to spend that money on, because he has not told us as yet.

The current Leader of the Opposition, who was then Treasurer, said —

Those items are detailed in the midyear review, the quarterly financial results reports and the annual report on state finances. They will also come before Parliament later this year in two appropriation bills. Those bills will contain a schedule for each item. The government, in pursuit of that debate, will table detailed information. The way the system works is that the Treasurer makes decisions under the Treasurer's advance. In fact, under our system, those decisions are made by the expenditure review committee and then by full cabinet. They are then reported to Parliament and are subject to parliamentary debate and approval. In the meantime, before they are reported to Parliament, they are reported in the midyear review, the quarterly financial results reports and the annual report on state finances.

I think we have been in this place for quite a while and we all have to come back tomorrow. Many of us have committee meetings.

An opposition member interjected.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: We are meant to do a proper job for the community. We are keeping the staff up very late —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: We are keeping members up very late; people in this house tonight will not be performing 100 per cent tomorrow. We are meant to be in this place working on behalf of the community, and asking questions on line item after line item is not getting us anywhere. The opposition will continue asking and the government will continue with basically not giving the opposition answers. The same thing happens in this place year after year. Let us call it a day, guys.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think the Treasurer is doing a great job in giving some information to the house, so I am not sure what the member was saying about the government not giving any answers.

Returning to clause 3, can I confirm again, Treasurer, that like the Director General of the Department of Education and Training, the Director General of the Department of Health has claimed that his department will not only not meet the efficiency dividend, but also be over budget to the tune of, I think, \$200 million as reported last week. Again, we seek confirmation that Treasury has been informed of that, that the Department of Treasury and Finance is working with the health department on that issue, and that should that blow-out occur, it would impact on the draw-down from the Treasurer's advance authorisation.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Let me answer that very quickly: yes, we have been informed, and we are working with the Department of Health on that budget issue. As I indicated in relation to the education department, it is a live issue before government. As I understand it, these sorts of issues often occur at this time of year. I am not in a position, nor will I be in the context of this debate, to provide any further information to the house about that matter. It is on the public record that there are budget pressures within health and we are currently working with the department at a ministerial level and at officer level in Treasury to resolve some of the issues that have been identified.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I refer the Treasurer to the document he provided to the opposition to justify clause 3 of the bill, particularly page 3 of that document, which deals with the Public Transport Authority, and the first dot point on that page. My question goes to an answer that the Treasurer has already given tonight on the oil price. The Treasurer has \$50.2 million against election commitments and parameter adjustments for depreciation in the oil price. This is really just to tease out what we talked about earlier on with respect to that line item on oil price increases. Does the Treasurer know how much of that \$50.2 million may well be allocated to oil price increases for the Public Transport Authority, and would the Treasurer deal with that element of the oil price increase in the same way as he would with the previous one; that is, effectively delete it from this year's budget on the basis that oil prices are now about \$50 instead of the \$97 that Treasury estimated in the midyear review?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is a line item. For the member's information, the advice I have is that of the additional funding in the total context of that \$50.2 million, the oil price allocation was \$22.2 million. Again, it is unlikely that that will eventuate. I understand that was based on the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* oil price at \$US134 a barrel, as Kochie told us this morning, and he is never wrong! The issue is that it is there as a line item and will it eventuate? I think that is highly unlikely. Will we take it out? No. Will it be accounted for and subject to proper scrutiny? Absolutely, through the processes so well described by the member for Alfred Cove. I congratulate the member for Alfred Cove on her contribution. We have answered about only 1 016 questions. I think her contribution stood head and shoulders above the rest.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: We are only following up on what the Treasurer offered to us.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Some of you are. Some of the questioning has been a tad —

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Repetitious.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Dopey.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Treasurer indicated that the Commissioner of Main Roads line item of \$20.7 million was primarily the oil price adjustment and that it probably would not appear in the budget estimates that the Treasurer will be bringing back to the house. I can only assume, even though the Treasurer has asked for it here, that he will probably do the same again with that sum.

Mr T.R. Buswell: More than likely.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I hope the Treasurer does, because it will mean that between us we have saved \$40.2 million out of the Treasurer's advance. I think the Treasurer and I have probably done better tonight in getting some savings than the Minister for Education and the Minister for Emergency Services. I hope the Treasurer puts on the record that the member for Cockburn helped to get three per cent dividend savings in a far better and more efficient way than the Minister for Education and the Minister for Emergency Services.

Dr E. Constable: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The minister should have been here earlier on. I hope the Treasurer acknowledges my contribution.

Mr R.H. COOK: Could the Treasurer clarify the contribution to the hospital fund, which appears to be a generic reference? I wonder whether it is a reference to the hospital nurses support fund or some other fund. Could we have a breakdown of the \$13.6 million? It is noted in the document that some of it is for the health services salaried officers wage increase, but I would like to differentiate that from the election commitments.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am just looking at the documentation. My advice is that it is the \$13.6 million allocated there, which is entirely composed of the health services salaried officers enterprise bargaining agreement outcomes.

Mr R.H. Cook: And the actual hospital fund, where it refers to contribution.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My understanding is that is the funding mechanism that flows through the hospital fund and is reflective of the EBA outcomes.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a question about the Liberal Party's commitment to the rebuild of Royal Perth Hospital. I wonder whether there is any money in this bill for that, given that it was a core election commitment. Given the \$7.5 million to plan a juvenile jail, I am wondering why there is not any money allocated to plan the rebuild of Royal Perth Hospital.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There was never any funding in the Liberal Party election commitments for this very core Liberal Party election promise in this financial year. That is why there is no appropriation. The cash flow-in for that will occur in 2010-11 and 2011-12.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I refer to one of the line items provided by the Treasurer, and direct him to page 204, specifically the mines and petroleum section. I will not ask about the GA4 wage increase because the Treasurer has already dealt with that. I refer to the Square Kilometre Array project, and I commend the government for continuing that project. I hope that the government will succeed in getting the world's largest science project for this state. Could the Treasurer advise the chamber about how much of that \$1.7 million is allocated?

Mr T.R. Buswell: The advice I have is that there has been some movement around the total amount. The total amount relates to the expenses for the purchase of Boolardy station that are over and above the anticipated totals. I suspect that when we get information on the GA4 wage increases, any that apply to mines and petroleum will flow through in that information.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Is the \$1.7 million really for SKA?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, the advice I have is that it is related to Boolardy station.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can I confirm that the commonwealth money that is flowing through for health waiting lists will not come through this Treasurer's advance authorisation because it comes from a different fund? Will it be through the appropriation bill?

Mr T.R. Buswell: That is my understanding, yes.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question is in relation to election commitments. I want to confirm a breakdown. I believe that there is \$5.7 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Is that the total amount for the Royal Flying Doctor Service? If so, what is the breakdown for the other elements?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Just to clarify, the midyear review document on page 92 lists the amounts that are allocated in 2008-09, and as the member can see from that, they are around \$59.3 million across that spread. I will not go through them all in detail. As has been discussed previously, for the purposes of funding alone, there is an offset in relation to the efficiency dividend specifically, and that is as it is presented in the midyear review. Clearly, to highlight the point made earlier about education, if there are shortfalls in the efficiency dividend, for the purposes of the presentation of the budget, there will have to be a TAA line item presented for consideration.

Mr R.H. COOK: I have a further point. At a recent public hearing, the Director General of the Department of Health estimated that the budget was running anywhere between \$180 million and \$230 million over budget. I am wondering whether the Treasurer would care to comment about that, and how that will impact on this bill.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I say only that that is a live issue currently before the government. There is a lot of negotiation happening between the Department of Health, Treasury, the Minister for Health and me. I will not provide any additional speculation around that figure. It will be reported through the appropriate mechanism, but it is a work in progress for the government.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer to the \$13.6 million allocated undercontribution to hospital funds, health services salaried officers wage increases and election commitments. Is the Nickol Bay Hospital included in that amount?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, that is a payment that goes from consolidated revenue to the hospital fund, and from the hospital fund into the pockets of health services salaried officers. That \$13.6 million relates specifically to the EBA outcomes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to page 92 of the midyear review, specifically the additional items as of December. A sum of \$3.7 million was allocated for the rebuild of Albany Regional Hospital in 2008-09. I just noticed that that does not seem to be mentioned in the health line items. I wonder whether that is because it has been deferred a few months. Where has it gone?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that that capital funding is included in the \$21.5 million that appears in the documentation given to the opposition about election commitments. It is the figure of \$20 million at the top.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Ms R. Saffioti: Does that \$20 million include the \$3.7 million for Albany?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is my advice, yes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have read the items on page 92 of the midyear review, and I have examined the document the Treasurer provided to us as advice. I want to clarify that the government is not seeking through this authorisation any additional money for additional nurses. Those additional nurses are already budgeted for, or will be budgeted for in future years, but no additional money is being sought.

Mr T.R. Buswell: My advice is that they have already been budgeted for.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: So there is no additional money in this process for that?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No.

Mr R.H. COOK: I draw the attention of the Treasurer to the section on page 3 of the document he provided, referring to the Department of Treasury and Finance. I know it is not in the health section, but it is health related, and deals with the health services development fund and the rebuild of Albany Regional Hospital. In relation to that, that is where we are identifying —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I extend my apologies for that previous misinformation. I will berate Michael severely. He has been sitting here for only five hours, not having had a break like I did. My apologies for that.

Mr R.H. COOK: Just on that point, the midyear review has a contribution to the health services development fund of \$6 million, and to Albany Regional Hospital of \$3.7 million. I appreciate that it might be funded out of other elements, but the election commitment has been a common theme or characteristic of items appearing on the list. I just wanted to clarify that. Has enough been set aside for the hospital development fund, assuming that the \$3.7 million is for the Albany Regional Hospital?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Our advice is that adequate provision has been made.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are jumping around a little now, but I will move to the \$50.2 million Public Transport Authority election commitments. I think the member for Cockburn has talked about the oil price issue. I was just wondering whether we could get a breakdown of that \$50.2 million, as in which election commitments are contained in that number?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I can provide some additional information. As it relates to election commitments, a total of \$11.3 million is sought: the 20-year transport master plan, \$2 million; seniors' free public transportation, \$5.5 million; better transport system, 3 000 parking bays, \$4 million; and the north Greenbushes railway, \$5 million, with an offset in relation to the efficiency dividend in there as well. Also, \$24.1 million is sought by the PTA to meet additional depreciation costs; \$31.8 million to meet contractual obligations relating to the New MetroRail project; and the \$22.2 million that we talked about in relation to oil price fluctuations. I think that is the vast majority.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can I just get the Treasurer to clarify the figure of \$5.5 million for free public transport for seniors? That seems to be a four-year cost, given that it will be implemented today. That is about one-quarter, so does the Treasurer not expect that \$5.5 million to be spent?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I suspect that you are right.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Also, I think the Treasurer said that \$4 million has been allocated to parking bays. Given that we are three months from the end of the financial year, is that amount not expected to be expended?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I think I indicated to the member earlier that there is a possibility that some of these items may slip. I am not saying that this is one of them. I do not have that information. I am trying to understand what the spend profile was across the out years, although I suspect that the member's comment may have a degree of accuracy.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I jump to the line item for royalties for regions. I seek an explanation of whether this amount of \$337 million is the same amount mentioned on page 14 of the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, it is.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In light of that, and given that this \$337 million has to be expended between now and the end of the financial year, is it true to assume that this money will not reappear in the budget for the next financial

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

year? In effect, this will be the only time that we will get to analyse how this particular allocation will be managed and expended.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Pursuant to the Treasurer's advance, there will be supplementary appropriation bills, which, under the old regime, were numbered 3 and 4. They will come before the house in due course after the end of this financial year. I am pretty keen to bring them in a bit quicker than is normally the case. We still have appropriation bills 3 and 4 from last year, which we will present on behalf of the previous government. I do not think the level of scrutiny will be quite so intense. I always thought this was a flaw in the process, but we will bring those bills in as quickly as we can. That will give members opposite an opportunity to examine these expenses on a line-by-line basis.

Mr P. Papalia: When did you say those appropriation bills will be available?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is normally post end of the financial year. We will try to bring them in before the end of the year. That is not usual, but that is what we will endeavour to do. It may be usual, but this year has obviously been impacted on by the election. We will endeavour to do that, because it is important that members opposite have an opportunity to question the government about those matters while they are still moderately fresh in their memories, as well as in our memories.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not think there is any way that this amount of money will not be fresh in my memory. In light of the fact that most of the money will be expended between now and when those bills become available, which is when we will be able to analyse them line by line, the Treasurer would have to concede that it would be legitimate for us to ask a few questions about this money. I am particularly interested in the country local government fund: \$100 million will be allocated to 110 country local governments over the next few months. Would the Treasurer concede that it is appropriate that we ask a few questions specifically about how Treasury has satisfied itself of the appropriate allocation and management of that amount?

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will make a quick comment on that issue. As the member knows, \$100 million has been allocated in accordance with the mechanism by which the Department of Local Government and Regional Development allocates its grants to local governments.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr P. Papalia: This is the country local government fund specifically.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is a mechanism in place that determines how much each regional local government gets based on the formula that the Local Government Grants Commission uses. I think the formula is reasonably well understood, although, I hasten to add, not by everyone in local government. The Shire of Busselton never seems to get much. Notwithstanding that, I ask the member to direct his question on the audit procedures to the Minister for Regional Development. However, I can assure the member that the government has insisted that adequate audit and probity provisions be put in place.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It seems inconsistent that the Treasurer assures me that appropriate audit procedures have been put in place, while at the same time the Minister for Local Government wants to amalgamate councils around the state because he sees them as incapable of providing financial management, amongst other reasons. In light of that, can the Treasurer assure me that all the councils that will receive their portion of the \$100 million over the next few months at least complete their annual compliance reports?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I do not have that information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How can the Treasurer assure me if he has no idea —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is \$100 million; it is not peanuts. How can the Treasurer assure me that this money is being managed in an appropriate fashion when he is directing me to the Minister for Regional Development?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The government has put in place audit and probity compliance procedures that the department will have carriage of through this process. It is my understanding that those procedures are independent of potential differing capacities of local government. The government has put in place an audit and probity measure, and the member may have views as to the quality of individual local governments, but I am not going to speculate on that —

Mr P. Papalia: It is your minister.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: — although I tend to agree with the member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In light of the fact that we are talking about \$100 million, which is a significant amount of money, and in light of the challenges faced by education, health, and other departments like police, not meeting the three per cent efficiency dividend, should the Treasurer not show a little more interest in the process by which this money is being distributed and managed throughout this state's 110 country local governments?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I support the royalties for regions program, and given that the Pilbara alone generated \$1.4 billion in royalties to the state, will the Treasurer provide details of the allocation of \$337 million? The Treasurer mentioned the \$100 million local government fund. Where will the other \$237 million go? Given that the Pilbara earns more than \$1.4 billion of revenue for the state, I am interested to learn what programs and which areas of the state that money will go to.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not have the detail of where that money will flow by geographical region. I draw the member's attention to page 15 of the midyear review, which provides a detailed breakdown of the \$337 million of planned expenditure and lists all the recurrent and capital expenditure programs.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Contrasting the \$1.4 billion generated for the state by the Pilbara with the proposed allocation of \$337 million, it seems that the Pilbara is being short-changed. Will that \$337 million fund the capital works programs for the Pilbara in my seat of North West? For example, will the Karratha Senior High School and Karratha Primary School be funded out of this \$337 million? I add to that list the Carnarvon Police Station and the Carnarvon justice complex.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My very strong advice is that the member should direct his questions to the Minister for Regional Development. My understanding is that funding for the schools that the member referred to in Karratha is not part of the \$337 million royalties for regions funding for this year, and nor is funding for the police and justice complex in Carnarvon.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: During the election campaign the Liberal Party made a commitment to spend \$10 million on the Nickol Bay Hospital. Since then the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Regional Development were present when an announcement was made that the \$10 million would come out of the royalties for regions funding. Is the \$10 million coming out of the \$337 million, given that the Liberal Party made that promise during the election campaign and that it was not to come out of the royalties for regions funding? Will the Treasurer confirm that it is coming out of the royalties for regions funding of \$337 million?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I do not have that information readily at hand, although I believe an allocation from the royalties for regions funding has been made to supplement the consolidated revenue funding for Nickol Bay Hospital. As to the exact breakdown, I do not have that information, but I believe some funding has been provided. I am sure that the Minister for Health can provide that detail.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the Treasurer also provide me with some detail about the commitment made by the Liberal Party during the election campaign regarding the upgrade of the Exmouth school and whether that funding will come out of the consolidated fund or the royalties for regions funding?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This would need to be clarified with the Minister for Education, but I understand that that funding will be part of the normal funding arrangements for schools. Announcements about the timing and the specific funding allocations will be made in the budget.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am sorry to harp on about the royalties for regions scheme, but it obviously affects my region quite dramatically. A lot of projects seem to have been wiped off the face of the north west. Has any funding being allocated to roadworks? The Carnarvon-Gascoyne Junction road is a very important road. Has any royalties for regions money been allocated to fund the final stage, which must be completed before the entire 166 kilometres of road is sealed? Some 25 kilometres or so of road must be sealed to complete the road. Is funding for that part of the \$337 million royalties for regions funding?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Not that I am aware of, but I ask the member to address his detailed questions to the minister.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I want the Treasurer to clarify an answer that he gave to the member for Warnbro earlier about detailed information regarding the royalties for regions funding. The Treasurer indicated that when he introduces the other appropriation bills later in the year, they will detail what is contained in the \$337 million allocation for the royalties for regions scheme. Can the Treasurer clarify that it will be a complete breakdown of where that \$337 million is to be spent? This is the only opportunity for us to ask any questions on it because —

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: We are dealing with money that is to be committed this year. This is the only time we have to deal with that.

Mr T.R. Buswell: My advice is that there will be a significant amount of detail provided in the context of the bill, but I am happy to ensure that an adequate level of information is provided to opposition members as part of that process so that they can properly scrutinise the actual royalties for regions appropriations that have occurred at the time the appropriation bills come into the house.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Just to get clarification again, will the \$337 million be broken down into the projects on which the money has actually been spent?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: In regard to the \$337 million, a northern towns development fund of \$10 million has been allocated from 2008 to 2012 in the financial projections statement under royalties for regions. Where will that money be allocated, who will be in control of that fund and who will spend that \$10 million? I ask the Treasurer to elaborate so that I know who will be in charge of that money and which department it will go to.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Cabinet is in charge of spending that money.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Also in the projections statement is an allocation of \$500 000 for a pre-feasibility study for the Gascoyne food bowl and Pilbara water project. Will that come out of the \$337 million?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Who will look after that feasibility fund? Does the Treasurer have a task force set up to look after that \$500 000, or will it go into a department to do the necessary work? Also, is it in relation to the expansion of the horticulture district in Carnarvon; and, if so, by how much will it expand?

The SPEAKER: Before the Treasurer answers that question, I once again remind members in this place that this is not a general debate. It is about a particular bill that we have in front of us and I ask members to direct their questions to clause 3. I repeat: this is not a general debate.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: Mr Speaker, with regard to your comment, it has been established in the commencement of discussions with regard to this particular allocation for royalties for regions that this is in effect —

The SPEAKER: Is the member asking a question of the Treasurer or is he seeking some clarification?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I am seeking clarification with regard to your guidance. We established earlier that this is the only opportunity prior to the end of this financial year that anyone will get to explore in more detail how this \$337 million will be allocated. Therefore, I suggested to the Treasurer that it might be appropriate for us to use the opportunity to explore things in more detail. He seems to have been quite happy pursuing that line of approach and I would ask that you reconsider your guidance.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: A sum of \$500 000 has been allocated for a pre-feasibility study for the Gascoyne food bowl. Again, I am just referring to publicly available documents—I refer to page 96 of the midyear financial projections. My understanding is that that money will be administered by the local government regional development fund. However, as with all programs under royalties for regions, they do not proceed without the approval of cabinet.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question is about the housing authority section in which a couple of areas of expenditure total almost \$100 million. Can the Treasurer break down that total a bit to provide us with a better indication of what those moneys are for? In doing so, will the Treasurer also clarify for me one point about royalties for regions? He may have done so in his answer to the member for Victoria Park earlier in the discussion. It appears to me that part of that \$94.2 million under the housing authority is covered over the page by the royalties for regions fund, which is fully funded at \$337 million. Nevertheless, in the previous section under health we have the Royal Flying Doctor Service. That is also listed in the royalties for regions section. I wanted to make sure that we are not double counting in that sense in relation to royalties for regions funding and portfolio funding.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will deal with the housing authority issue first. The \$94.2 million relating to the housing authority is broken down roughly as follows. There is an election commitment relating to community housing

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

and a disability program whereby the housing authority will construct five out-of-home respite facilities in metropolitan and rural Western Australia. There is \$5 million in funding for that this year. The major component is an \$89.2 million funding allocation, \$59.2 million of which is recurrent or operating, and \$30 million of capital, which will meet contractual commitments and underwrite the agency's operations due to an increase in building costs and, more importantly, to shortfalls in land sales. The agency confronted a significant funding shortfall this year. We had to take an increased appropriation of almost \$90 million from consolidated revenue to help make that up.

None of the money for royalties for regions is a double up of any of the royalties for regions line items that specifically deal with housing. The Housing our Workforce commitments come under royalties for regions. Housing our Workforce has both a recurrent and a capital funding component. None of that has been double counted, if I could use that term, across into housing authority funding.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Treasurer mentioned the royalties for regions Housing our Workforce project. An amount of \$59.8 million has been allocated over four years. Have any projects been announced recently? I am going on what happened in South Hedland, where \$23 million was announced recently. Is that \$23 million part of the \$59.8 million that we have here? I ask the Treasurer to clarify that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I ask the member to direct that specific question to the minister. I am familiar with the project. I am looking to see whether I have any specific information on what it related to and what part of the royalties for regions fund it came out of. I do not have that level of detail with me at the moment. I can tell the member that there have been some announcements on Housing our Workforce, in particular the capital aspect of Housing our Workforce, which was to bring forward \$200 million of funding for the provision of government regional officers' housing. The Premier made that announcement a couple of months ago.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: If the Treasurer cannot answer my question relating to Housing our Workforce, I ask him to get back to me. When we were in government, we had \$22 million in our forward estimates going towards that South Hedland project. It seems as though it has been conveniently rebadged. I ask the Treasurer to get back to us and tell us whether this \$337 million that he has for royalties for regions has been rebadged out of any of the previous government's commitments. Can he confirm that any of that has not come out of the previous government's commitments?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The royalties for regions money, the \$337 million, is all new money. That matter was belted around some time ago. The member should pursue the specific project in South Hedland with the minister. I do not have access to that level of detail.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like to explore a little more the extent to which the Treasurer has satisfied himself that the \$100 million component for the country local government fund of this \$337 million for royalties for regions is being managed in an appropriate fashion. I have the guidelines for the country local government fund. The Treasurer assured me that the expenditure of this money would be audited appropriately. As a condition of funding, local governments are required to have fund expenditure audited. That documentation will be forwarded separately to the department and be included in the organisation's annual report. Compliance with reporting requirements for the fund will also be included in the annual compliance audit returns.

My concerns centre on the fact that in 2006, when the Public Accounts Committee inquired into the accountability of the local government sector, it identified that approximately 44 per cent of all local governments did not provide the Department of Local Government and Regional Development with copies of their audit returns by the statutory deadline. How has the Treasurer satisfied himself that this money will be appropriately managed and will be reported and audited on time and in an appropriate fashion?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am comfortable with the processes that the minister and his department have established. I am also comforted by the fact that at the end of the day the Auditor General has the capacity to examine these issues. I have a sneaking suspicion that that will happen.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the Treasurer mean that the Auditor General has the capacity physically, or that he has the ability under legislation?

Mr R.F. Johnson: Both.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The Auditor General has the capacity to audit activities of government agencies.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is true, but does he have the capacity to audit 110 local governments in the next few months?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr R.F. Johnson: Maybe not in the next few months.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It goes to the heart of the matter. How will this \$100 million that will be distributed over the next few months be appropriately managed? The Treasurer is not willing to respond to that question. It interests me that the Treasurer is not very familiar with the process by which the money will be distributed. The Treasurer has referred to a formula—there is a formula normally used for the distribution of funds to local governments; however, for the country local government fund the formula has been manipulated by the minister, who devised the scheme —

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the member return to clause 3 —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I ask the Treasurer if he is familiar —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Are you disputing the ruling?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I did not hear what the Speaker said.

The SPEAKER: I suggested that the member for Warnbro return to clause 3, which is the part of the bill we have before us.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In relation to the \$100 million, which is part of the \$337 million royalties for regions funding and for which the Treasurer is requesting a Treasurer's advance, is the Treasurer aware of the impact of the floor and ceiling on population levels that has been applied to the formula by which this fund is distributed, and the subsequent distortion of the distribution of the money around the state?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am aware that \$100 million has been appropriated to this component of the royalties for regions fund. Cabinet has been presented with a breakdown of how that money was allocated, cabinet approved the allocation of that money, and that allocation is occurring.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I ask again whether the Treasurer is aware that that formula disproportionately allocates a large portion of this \$100 million to National Party seats, as opposed to the places where the royalties are being operated.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Speaker, that question is clearly not relevant to the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2009. It is a matter of policy that can directed to the minister responsible.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: What is before the house is clause 3 of the Treasurer's advance authorisation, the allocation of approximately \$1.2 billion. It is absolutely appropriate to question the Treasurer—we would be failing in our duty if we did not—and the government about the exact details relating to that expenditure and what protection is in place to ensure that money is not wasted. It is absolutely crucial and it is the role of this house with such a bill.

The SPEAKER: On the point of order, if the Treasurer chooses to answer the question that the member for Warnbro has asked, he has that opportunity. Otherwise, I will put the clause.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: In regard to the \$337 million that the Treasurer wants allocated to royalties for regions, firstly, will any of that \$337 million go to any development commissions around the state? If so, will any of the money flowing to development commissions be used for any administration costs that the development commissions are incurring or will incur by handling that money being allocated to the development commissions? In reality, if, for example, \$4 million is to go to the Gascoyne Development Commission, how much of that \$4 million will flow to the community? I hear reports that only \$3.5 million will flow to the community, so the community will lose out on \$500 000. Can the Treasurer confirm whether any administration costs will be taken out of any royalties for regions money through the development commissions?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the \$337 million for this year, and again it relates directly to the Treasurer's advance authorisation. There are a number of new programs in that list that, again, will possibly be underspent, and underspent significantly, Treasurer. Is there a government commitment that if there is an underspend, there will be a carryover to 2009-10, or will that amount be exhausted at the end of June?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That specific issue is being considered as part of the budget process that the government is currently dealing with.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr R.H. COOK: I return momentarily to the health section, which details the Royal Flying Doctor Service under election commitments. Again, I believe the amount for this is about \$5.7 million, although it is detailed under royalties for regions. Therefore, I guess the question remains: is the full \$337 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service funded under the royalties for regions program, or is it related to the health section?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I thank the member for his question. I need to clarify this matter. There is the possibility that that may have been double counted. My officials will get more information on that item to the member in the morning. I apologise if I had not picked that up earlier. Clearly, there is an amount of \$5.7 million under royalties for regions recurrent funding. It is also included in the descriptor, without necessarily having an amount of money next to it. I am sorry about that. It is just not very clear in the document that I have. I will get some clarification of that.

Mr R.H. Cook: I put that \$5.7 million as part of the \$20 million, so you had \$12 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and \$2 million for the GPs. Therefore, that is something like \$5.7 million that is washing around in the system, which would be nice to clarify as well.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: In regard to Western Australia Police, the Treasurer has new police stations and upgrades as part of election commitments. An amount of \$7.6 million is allocated to that. Can the Treasurer confirm that the election commitment to build the Mt Magnet police station is included in that \$7.6 million? If it is not included, is there a commitment that funding for the Carnarvon police station and courthouse will come out of that amount?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: My advice is that the construction of the Mt Magnet police station is included in that, although I need to stress that the timing and finalisation of those decisions will be included in the budget documentation.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In this debate on clause 3(2)—payments and advances authorised to be made under subsection (1) that do not in total exceed \$762 273 480—questions have been asked about police, health, and road safety. I would like to point out from the “Road Safety Fact Sheet” for February 2007 that research indicates that 17 to 19 hours of sustained wakefulness produces similar, or worse, levels of performance in several performance tests as a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 per cent.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Mr Speaker, we have a duty in this place to debate issues. I cannot see how this is at all relevant. It is late. We should be debating the substance of the bill. I cannot see a shred of relevance in the member for Alfred Cove’s speech.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will take the point of order, member for Bassendean. However, as I have stated previously this evening, I am giving members considerable latitude in introducing the subject that they believe is relevant to the question that they want to put to the Treasurer.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Seventeen to 19 hours of sustained wakefulness is equivalent to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 per cent. Most of us in this chamber will have reached that level by now. Twenty to 25 hours of wakefulness produces performance levels similar to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10 per cent. I put that on the record, because in a moment I will be moving to gag this debate. We have a responsibility. I have brought up sitting times before in this house. It is unreasonable —

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Mr Speaker, you have allowed some leeway. I understand that. However, this has nothing to do with the Treasurer’s advance authorisation. It clearly has nothing to do with it. It is not related in the slightest sense. I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to sit the member down.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am waiting to hear from the member for Alfred Cove what her question is to the Treasurer, because I am giving the member the benefit—as I have given to every member here tonight—of considerable leeway in making her points about the bill before the house. I would urge the member for Alfred Cove to direct her comments to clause 3.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I am wondering, Treasurer, whether, in this funding for health, police, and road safety, the government will be taking into consideration the facts that we know about the hours that people are awake

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

and the equivalent blood alcohol concentrations. This debate should be finishing now. Parliament should sit for reasonable hours. I am notifying members that the next time I get on my feet I will be moving to gag this debate.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to the Western Australia Police and to the \$7.6 million for new police stations and upgrades as part of the government's election commitments. Is the Treasurer able to say what work is being done on what stations this financial year, and how much he anticipates will be spent by 30 June?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is clearly a request from WA Police in relation to the Treasurer's advance. The line items I have here, which I am pretty sure are similar to the line items that members have in front of them, indicate that there is a \$7.6 million allocation for new police stations, and an allocation to deal with the GA4 wage increase. In relation to those police stations, as I think I have indicated to the member for North West, there has been discussion about police stations—for example, at Mt Magnet. My very strong advice is that the member wait until the budget is handed down to understand exactly the profile of the government's capital works program.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Mr Speaker —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have not finished! I also say, before I conclude, that the budget is six weeks away.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Mr Speaker —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I still have not finished! On top of that, it is lovely to see the member get up and down a few times!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That is what they all say, Treasurer!

Can the Treasurer confirm that the commitment to reopen three rural police stations is not covered by that \$7.6 million? Is that covered somewhere else or is that not in fact occurring until the 2009-10 period?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Not all items that agencies are spending money on need to be covered under the Treasurer's advance. If the member has questions about the reopening of country police stations, I am sure my colleague the Minister for Police would —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Part of the reason for this is to meet pressing election commitments—is that correct? They have already been announced.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Some components thereof, although we have had a discussion previously. Not all election commitments are necessarily reflected in the Treasurer's advance because there is capacity within some agencies to deliver election commitments from the reorganisation of existing spend. I think we had a long conversation back in the early part of the evening—yesterday—about the capacity of the Department of Agriculture and Food, for example, to deal with one aspect of our government's policy platform.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I would like to address the issue of the housing authority, but in so doing I also want to address the comments by the member for Alfred Cove about the sitting of the house.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The member for Bassendean will raise a point of order—come on!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Alfred Cove spoke about the management of the house and the fact that we are sitting in this place at this hour. That is entirely within the control of the government. Therefore, when we hold someone responsible for it, the member can hold the Premier and the Leader of the House responsible for that —

Mr R.F. Johnson: We have been too generous to you—that's our problem.

Mr M. McGOWAN: All I say to members is this bill could quite easily be considered in detail tomorrow or later on today, in fact. We have roughly three hours of debate available to us to deal with this legislation later on today. Therefore, we do not have to actually —

Dr J.M. Woollard: If you move to adjourn, I will move the question be put.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We do not actually have to be sitting in this place. A move to gag, to ensure that there is no further debate, is not the appropriate way of dealing with this.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Just so members understand proper parliamentary practice, the appropriate way to deal with this is for the house to adjourn and we deal with this legislation later today. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that. What often happens is the house sits after private member's business or after the dinner break

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on a Wednesday evening—that is not unusual. I am happy to do it. However, if the government wants to continue in this place tonight, we are happy to continue on as well. Indeed, I would hate to think that the member for Alfred Cove would prove the Premier to have been telling an untruth when he said we could stay here until 5.00 am, and that he is happy to continue debating the legislation. I would hate to think that the government might vote for a motion to conclude debate—to gag debate—in light of the Premier's earlier statements and therefore show the Premier to have been telling an untruth earlier this evening.

My question is about the housing authority and the injection of funds of \$94.2 million. The Treasurer indicated that as part of that, \$59.2 million was to be used to meet contract commitments and underwrite agency operations. As part of the Treasurer's answer before, he indicated that costs have gone up and that proceeds of land sales have gone down. The advice I have received is that the cost of construction in Western Australia has declined by 25 per cent in general terms. Therefore, when the Treasurer answers the question by saying that we need to inject funds into the housing authority to meet an increase in costs, it is quite contrary, firstly, to the advice I have received and, indeed, secondly, the advice I received from government agencies that have undertaken construction since the election, after we ceased to be in government, whilst members opposite have been in government. Also, it is contrary to all the public commentary about to the cost of construction. Therefore, why does the Treasurer need that \$52.9 million, when in general terms the cost of construction has come down by 25 per cent? Secondly, the Treasurer indicated that the proceeds of land sales have gone down. I understand the housing authority is largely funded by self-generating proceeds; that is, it sells land for housing and therefore the land it sells can be put into public housing. Have land sales gone down because of a decline in the price of the land or because the government has reduced the number of blocks for sale? Those are the two questions. I will conclude my remarks by again indicating that if the government supports the gag, it will be the second occasion in a very short parliamentary year that the government has acted to stifle debate in this house, and there is absolutely no need to do it.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I was just talking to the notes I have been provided, which state that it underwrites agency operations due to increases in building costs and shortfalls in land sales. I think the point the member raised is valid, which is that any additional funding attributed to an increase in building costs would have to be minimal. We are talking here, as it relates to the housing authority, of construction of properties that, as I understand it, would generally be social housing in all its various forms.

Mr M. McGowan: It would have to be zero, would it not?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I would have to get more advice on that, but there has certainly been a massive reduction in revenues into the housing authority from its land sales activity. That reduction has not been brought about by a reduction in lots on the market. When we were looking at how we could accommodate the commonwealth boost, the housing authority's advice to me was that there are a significant number of vacant lots available to build on; in fact, we have already gone back to the commonwealth, having identified about 300 lots. There is a surplus of supply over demand, so it is clearly demand related. There are some significant issues in the agency around land sales forecasting. We are dealing with that. My view is that the vast majority of this extra money would be required to meet a shortfall in land sales and that that land sales shortfall has been caused by changes in demand.

Mr M. McGowan: Fewer blocks are being sold?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr M. McGowan: Rather than a declining price?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is also a declining price.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I go back to the Western Australia Police and the \$7.6 million that is budgeted for new police stations and upgrades. I accept that the Treasurer will not necessarily disclose which police stations they are until the budget is presented. In the context of the midyear financial projections, there is reference to a south metropolitan region police station and some \$5 million to be spent in the 2008-09 financial year. What is the location of that station? At what stage is the planning? What will the \$5 million be spent on?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I would ask the member to direct those questions to the minister. We had a long discussion about the location of prisons. There is an obvious interest in the location of corrective service and law enforcement-type facilities. I am not going to enter into speculation about where police stations will be built. That detail will be provided in the budget that this government will hand down in this place in six weeks' time.

Ms M.M. Quirk: In that case, without disclosing the secret location where there will obviously be secret police, how will the \$5 million be spent in the meantime, because it is due to be spent now? Will it be spent on planning?

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I imagine that some of that funding will be spent for planning purposes. I made the point earlier that clearly not all of the funding that is being sought in the Treasurer's advance will be spent this year, but we are attempting to make provision so that in the event that it is, we can cover that. Full details of the capital works program will be provided in the budget documentation.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Is the \$5 million included in the \$7.6 million that you have mentioned, or is it an additional amount?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have a sneaking suspicion that debate will probably shortly come to an abrupt end. I want to ask the Treasurer a question about the taxation refunds figure of \$95.8 million, which is up some \$20 million on the midyear review, and compares with the figure of the previous year of \$13 million. The Treasurer kind of discussed this earlier on, and it sounded as if there had been a significant court case that may have had an impact on this. I realise there may be legal issues, and I am not looking for details, but is this the result of a particular one-off refund, or is there a particular problem that has resulted in a large amount of smaller refunds?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is a good point; I asked the same question of the Office of State Revenue and was shown the door. I was not very happy about that!

To give the member some background, the 2008-09 budget provision in relation to refunds was \$39.8 million. The government is currently asking, as a result of the extra \$95.8 million, for \$135.6 million in total. Thus far this year, we have spent \$127.6 million of that. My advice was that there was a significant case. I am not sure whether that case was determined by the court or settled by some other process, but it was a very large refund required from the state government. It was a one-off.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: If you remove that out of it, is the amount of refund vaguely equivalent to previous years?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes. The single refund, as I understand it, was in the vicinity of \$90 million to \$100 million. I am not sure who that person was, but no doubt he is a lot happier with the outcome than I am.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I return to royalties for regions. During the election campaign, the National Party campaigned heavily, and unsuccessfully in parts, particularly in the Pilbara, and on many occasions the Leader of the National Party attended forums at which public sector employees were present. The hot topic for debate was the district allowance, and I remember distinctly that the Leader of the National Party said, "Elect the National Party, and we will deliver a higher district allowance for you." It has not happened. I want to clarify something: of the \$337 million advance the government seeks for the royalties for regions program—perhaps the Treasurer can point me in the direction of all the other headings he has given me—can the Treasurer explain what happened to the National Party's election commitment to give workers in the north west a fair go and increase their wages? Does any of this amount include an increase in the district allowance to public sector employees? I do not expect the National Party to fulfil these commitments. If it does not come under royalties for regions, does it come under any other heading of the \$1.2 billion advance sought by the government, so that public sector employees can finally know where their fate lies, and how much this government actually cares about public sector employees? The National Party campaigned heavily on that platform. Can the Treasurer please enlighten me?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The envy that rips out of that member when he dares to mention royalties for regions makes for an interesting observation from this side of the house. The member has asked me a range of questions that he could easily, and should have, asked of the minister, so that he can toddle off back to his electorate and attempt to shore up his backbench. I can assure the member that the one thing the Leader of the National Party, the Minister for Regional Development, has told me is that when he has someone on a spit, he likes to do him slowly. He told me that, up there in the north west, he is doing the member for North West slowly. He is watching the member crackle up, and he is doing him slowly, surrounded by banana leaves. But back to the basic point. The facts are that the issues around regional allowances are still being worked through by the government. It is a very complicated area of engagement with the public sector. They are still being worked through, and when that information is available, it will be made available to the member for North West, no doubt after it has been made available to public sector workers in that electorate under threat in the north west.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is amazing that the Treasurer has all these great actions about winding me up, but he forgets about his own actions, and how his own colleagues wound him up and got rid of him as Leader of the Opposition. Let us forget about the past, because we do not want to bring up the past when it comes to the Treasurer's behaviour in this place. We have plenty of jokes that we can throw at the Treasurer, but we do not, because this is actually serious. We want to debate the \$1.2 billion that the Treasurer wants advanced, given the

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

present financial climate, in which everyone is restricting spending or spending money in appropriate ways to stimulate the economy. I and my constituents in the north west and the Pilbara, where the National Party campaigned heavily, want to know why, out of that \$337 million that the Treasurer wants an advance on, no money will be allocated to public sector employees through the district allowance. I want the Treasurer to say on the record whether any money has been allocated out of that \$337 million, or any of that \$1.2 billion he is asking for, to public sector employees. Prison officers have been campaigning very heavily in my electorate and the Leader of the National Party gave them a real boost when he came and spoke during the election campaign. I think about 70 people were present at his meeting. We are probably seeing the National Party and the Liberal Party starting to unravel here, as a result of these questions that they cannot answer. I want to know whether any money has been allocated out of that \$1.2 billion for public sector employees. Can the Treasurer say that any money will be allocated to public sector employees through the district allowance?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I want to raise a question about the Busselton jetty refurbishment. That is a \$12.1 million commitment made by the Treasurer as the member for Vasse. In fact, one of the first things he did as Treasurer was to ensure that his electorate received that \$24 million commitment from the state government straight up, with no strings attached, for Busselton. At the same time as the AAA credit rating is under threat, the commitment of the \$12.1 million was made. Another \$12.1 million will be committed next financial year, taking the total to more than \$24 million. Of course, that commitment, which falls within clause 3 of the bill before the house, as part of the \$762 million, is small in the overall context. However, it is indicative of a government that is pretty profligate. The Treasurer will spend \$24 million on his own electorate on a project that would have paid for itself under the former government's program, which would have meant that the Treasurer's electorate received a whole range of new sporting facilities.

Mr T.K. Waldron: It'll get sporting facilities.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It was to get sporting facilities under this program. The Treasurer's electorate would have received a whole heap of new land dedicated to business developments, hotels, restaurants and the like and would have received land for the ongoing maintenance of the jetty. That shows not only a government attitude of ignoring good projects that would result in private sector investment, but also a profligate attitude towards the expenditure of public money. Why has the Treasurer decided to spend government money, rather than have the money refunded through the private sector involvement that the previous state government was going to put in place? Why has he taken the old-style approach that governments and taxpayers pay, rather than generate private sector investment to ensure that the costs accrued to taxpayers are limited?

In concluding my question, I note that the Leader of the House is about to rise. I suspect that he is about to move that the question be put; in other words, the Leader of the House is about to gag the debate. As we know, members cannot speak to the gag motion, so I want to make the point —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are talking about \$1.2 billion. It would have been very easy for Parliament to have debated this bill tomorrow. Members opposite are scratching their heads about why they have been kept here until nearly two o'clock in the morning. We could have debated the bill tomorrow and not gone through this process tonight. There is a range of important issues to discuss when a government is spending \$1.2 billion. That would have been the right way to have handled the debate. As the government has not done that, when we reach the third reading stage of this bill, members will have 30 minutes to speak and a range of opposition members will have a lot to say on this bill. We will take our time to discuss the bill. That could have been avoided if the government had acted with the slightest bit of reasonableness on this legislation. What is about to happen is a test for the member for Churchlands, who has stood in this chamber for 19 years and carried on about the gag and guillotine and has said how wrong it is. She will vote for it on the first occasion it is used and, I suspect, she will vote for it on the second occasion it is used. In other words, it is complete and utter hypocrisy by the member for Churchlands. It shows that her whole career has been a fraud.

Question to be Put

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I move —

That the question be now put.

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Extract from Hansard
[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 31 March 2009]
p2330b-2403a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely;
Mr David Templeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul
Papalia; Mr Chris Tallentire; Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames;
Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Hyde; Mr Rob Johnson; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Margaret Quirk

Ayes (28)

Mr P. Abetz
Mr F.A. Alban
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr J.J.M. Bowler
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr T.R. Buswell

Mr G.M. Castrilli
Dr E. Constable
Mr M.J. Cowper
Mr J.H.D. Day
Mr J.M. Francis
Dr K.D. Hames
Mrs L.M. Harvey

Mr A.P. Jacob
Mr R.F. Johnson
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr P.T. Miles
Ms A.R. Mitchell
Dr M.D. Nahan

Mr C.C. Porter
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr T.K. Waldron
Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr J.E. McGrath (*Teller*)

Noes (14)

Mr V.A. Catania
Mr R.H. Cook
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr J.C. Kobelke

Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Mr P. Papalia
Ms M.M. Quirk

Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr P.B. Watson
Mr M.P. Whitely

Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms R. Saffioti (*Teller*)

Question thus passed.

Consideration in Detail Resumed

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.47 am (Wednesday)
