

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire;; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Motion

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [4.03 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Barnett government for its attacks on public education, in particular —

- (a) cuts to school support program resource allocation;
- (b) cuts to teaching and education staff;
- (c) loss of Gonski Better Schools funding; and
- (d) a failure to adequately fund the moving of year 7s to high school.

This motion on public education that I bring before the house is very, very important.

Mr C.J. Barnett: More important than the earlier one.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is very important. I am glad the Premier realises that education is incredibly important. It is a shame that he has decided to cut funding to properly educate our children—the future of this state.

We need not go any further than to ask any parent or any teacher about the importance of education to the future of our children. There has been a lot of third party commentary on the cuts to education. Yesterday the Premier criticised the State School Teachers' Union of WA, which has a fundamentally important role to play in education. He dared to criticise the teachers' union for wanting to protest against the substantial cuts to the education budget. We do not just have to worry about the teachers' union. The president of the Western Australian Police Union of Workers, George Tilbury, was quoted in an ABC news report as saying that the education cuts will lead to increased crime and antisocial behaviour. The report stated —

The WA Police Union has weighed into the debate over budget cuts to the education sector saying the measures could lead to higher rates of juvenile offending and an increase in drug and alcohol problems.

The union says it has been told funding is being withdrawn from a number of engagement and preventative programs, and fear that may translate into wider social problems in the community.

The union President George Tilbury says the police stand side by side with teachers and parents in calling on the State Government to reverse the cuts.

“Because when you dig down into the detail of these budget cuts for education, what you find is that the attendance and engagement programs at public schools will be affected,” he said.

“We believe this will lead to an increase in juvenile offending, drug and alcohol problems and mental health issues.

“This will obviously have a flow-on effect to police and health.

“We fully support the state School Teachers Union, parents and interested members of the community and we will take whatever action is deemed necessary at the time.”

Yesterday the Premier decided that he should criticise the teachers' union for seeking to stand up for education in Western Australia. I wonder if the Premier will also now criticise the police union. Will the Minister for Police criticise the police union for stating that the cuts, not reform, to the education budget that have been led by this government are wrong and that the police union should not have the ability or the right to criticise these educational cuts because, as the president of the Western Australian Police Union stated, they will have a negative effect on crime in Western Australia? It is stating the obvious that if we substantially cut the amount of resources put into educational programs, infrastructure and teachers et cetera, that will have a number of consequences. One of the direst consequences is the issue of crime.

How can this government justify these educational cuts? It talks about educational reform. It has nothing to do with educational reform. It is about trying to meet the bottom line to try to overcome the spending of this Premier who is only interested in building monuments to himself. He is not interested in the future generations of our state; he is only interested in long-lasting monuments that he can drive past when he retires and say, “I built that.” I am sure that the Minister for Health understands the link between education and health. There is no doubt that the more educated a society is, generally, the greater the health of that community, or at least the greater the awareness of preventative health programs and measures that should be taken.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 September 2013]

p3891c-3920a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

What about the general wealth of the state and the nation? One can look at any economic forecast, economic figures, institute of economics study, university, the International Monetary Fund and various United Nations economic organisations to quite clearly see that the link between education and gross domestic product and other indicators of national wealth are very closely related. The correlation between education and the wealth of a state or a nation is very, very strong. If we do not invest in education, we are jeopardising the future wealth of our nation. That is what this government has decided to do. This government has decided to go to the heart of jeopardising the future of a number of generations to come. The damage that will be done to this state by these educational cuts is unclear at this stage. We know that it will have a major effect on the wealth, crime statistics and health of this state. Cutting the education budget in the short term means that down the track governments will have to put more money into crime prevention, health and other related measures. As was mentioned yesterday, it is absurd and absolutely ridiculous that this has all been brought about because we have an incompetent Minister for Education. He was an incompetent energy minister who wasted over a billion dollars in the energy portfolio. After the budget was handed down, he was brought to task after going on Paul Murray's radio program and saying that there would be no cuts to education and that no-one in education would lose their job. Three or four days later, Minister Collier fronted the press and said that he did not really mean education assistants because they are not part of the education structure; education assistants have nothing to do with education. What an absurd explanation to try to cover his tracks. He was brought to order by both the Premier and the Treasurer to come up with those cuts. He has no idea how to manage his portfolio. He did not know how to manage the energy portfolio and he cannot manage the education portfolio. It will be interesting to see how long the Minister for Education will last in his current portfolio.

We all know that he is there because he is a protected species—he is a numbers man. Many of the members in the northern suburbs owe their careers to the Minister for Education. We all know that. We also all know that he has fiddled documents. That was proven in the Western Australian judicial system. He fiddled documents to show that he was a powerbroker in the northern suburbs branches of the Liberal Party. That is the man who is now the head of the education system in Western Australia. His character has to be questioned. But let us leave that aside and look at how incompetent he is in his portfolio—he has been nothing but incompetent. The mistakes he made in energy were just incredible, and then he was promoted. One could argue that he was promoted into his dream job, which was to be the education minister. The former member for Churchlands was also the former Minister for Education and she would be very upset to see that her successor has managed that portfolio in the way that he has. Whatever we had to say about the former Minister for Education, and we had many criticisms of her, there is no way that she was as incompetent as the current Minister for Education. I am sure that the Premier would much prefer to have the former member for Churchlands as his Minister for Education than the current Minister for Education.

The government is trying to dress up these cuts to education as reform. We are still waiting for an explanation about how these cuts amount to significant education reform. I will summarise the cuts that the education system has to cope with. We were told that at one stage the cuts were to be even greater. There is a 1.5 per cent cut to procurement savings. One of the disappointing cuts that will have such a significant effect—this was raised by the WA Police Union president—is the 30 per cent cut to the school support program resource allocation. SSPRA funding is a pool of funding that is used for a variety of programs in Western Australian schools that allows them to run specialist programs for literacy and numeracy. We all know that literacy and numeracy are fundamentally important to the ability to obtain employment. The correlation between them is incredibly strong and closely linked. Many students in our education system have problems with literacy and numeracy, which may be due to their background or genetic issues and so on. Cutting the amount of money that is provided under SSPRA funding by 30 per cent will have a significant effect on many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In yesterday's matter of public interest debate there was discussion about empowering individuals. Yes, we should empower individuals, but it is hard to empower individuals who need specialised assistance when the government severely reduces their ability to obtain assistance by reducing the budget for SSPRA by 30 per cent. That reduction in funding equates to an additional 500 jobs that will go. How can this government justify that as an educational reform? It is a funny way to reform and improve the educational outcome of students when a pool of funding that is used for numeracy and literacy, particularly for disadvantaged students and students who need assistance, is reduced by 30 per cent.

Another interesting measure the government has introduced as part of these cuts is the measure affecting the long service leave entitlement levy. The government will claw back that money from schools that do not need to use the long service leave entitlement. The schools will have no control over that and the money will be clawed back as another way to pinch money from individual schools. We have been told that even postage will be affected

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and the ability of schools to communicate with their students will be reduced. Of course there is email now, but not everyone has email. In certain areas computers are not as highly utilised as in other areas.

Yesterday we were told there would not be a substantial reduction in full-time equivalent teacher numbers. Actually, there will be a reduction. The problem is that there will be a reduction in the number of teacher FTEs when there is a significant increase in the student population. We were told by the Treasurer in the pre-budget debates and during speculation on what would be in the budget that the reason that certain election promises were being broken was that the government must fund the increase in the student population. Of course the student population has increased—no-one is denying that—but these cuts will reduce the ability of the education system to cope with the increase in the student population. We should not be looking at cuts; we should be increasing funding. Yes, the government should look at reforms, but they should be proper reforms. Cutting is not a reform; cutting is just a budget measure to try to save funds and balance the books. That does not improve the educational outcomes of our students.

Level 3 classroom teachers in our education system are considered to be high-quality teachers who have reached a certain level. Because they are considered outstanding, we aim to enhance their professional development. They can also mentor other teachers and so on. In order to engage level 3 classroom teachers in professional development, relief teachers are needed because level 3 classroom teachers need time off to develop the curriculum or mentor other teachers. The cuts announced by Minister Collier will severely reduce the ability for level 3 teachers to do the job that they are there to do, which enhances the whole education system and improves the quality of younger teachers, because the relief teaching pool will be reduced by an additional 0.1 FTE.

There is a reduction in the full-time equivalent allocation for intensive English centres and also for the teaching of English to Aboriginal students and the teaching of Aboriginal English. We talk day in, day out about the need to educate and improve the chances of our most disadvantaged or people who have special challenges, but nothing in these educational cuts will assist that—nothing whatsoever. It is not reform. It is just a budgetary measure to reduce the cost of education without an increase in educational outcomes. This will place additional pressures on government. This was rightly pointed out by the president of the WA Police Union, who claimed that the educational cuts will have a significant effect on juvenile crime. Of course, juvenile crime leads to adult crime. Once people get into that cycle, it is very hard to break. From both a social and economic point of view, this will have ongoing consequences for our society.

There has been a reduction in the staffing of the Aboriginal and Islander education office, which will significantly affect the education of our Indigenous population. There is no doubt if we want to close the gap—this government has talked about being involved in Closing the Gap initiatives—we have to centre on the education of our Indigenous population. The education of Indigenous students is probably the most important thing that governments can do to try to close the gap. There is nothing in this educational package of cuts that seeks to enhance the education of Indigenous students. It makes it harder. It seems absurd. How will the government that I believe has a commitment to closing the gap, close the gap when it is reducing its ability to close the gap with the most fundamental measure—the education of our Indigenous students?

One of the major reductions is in the number of education assistants. People need to realise that education assistants are not just there to assist children with special needs. That is the major reason for them, and they are there for that reason, but they also allow students with special needs to be educated in mainstream education if they wish to and their parents make that decision. Education assistants also allow the teacher to cope with that situation. Education assistants do not always just stay by the side of the child with a special need. Education assistants allow the teacher to have a one on one with the child with a special need, because the education assistant assists with the other students in the class. We have been told that no child with a special need will have their EA taken away from them. We will wait to see whether that is the case. I doubt that it will be the case because nothing that the Minister for Education has said so far in his portfolio can really be believed, so it is highly unlikely that this will be followed through.

A teacher recently told me—I have not been able to verify this—that the Department of Education spends about \$52 million a year on occupational health and safety issues. This teacher also told me that the education cuts will make it harder to get very necessary maintenance carried out at schools. Some of that maintenance is necessary for the safe work and education environment of schools. If the safety standards of a work environment are not maintained, there is an increased chance of workplace accidents. What would that mean? That would mean more compensation will need to be paid to teachers and the possibility of greater litigation, which will have a greater consequence on the budget. The government has introduced these cuts as a budgetary measure but it has not looked at the consequences in other areas of the budget. I refer to the possibility of occupational health and safety problems within the education system, the health consequences for our state and the ability for students to

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be properly prepared to obtain meaningful employment, which, of course, has an effect on the wealth of the state, and issues regarding the juvenile and adult justice systems that were so rightly pointed out by the president of the WA Police Union.

That was just a summary of the cuts—and they are absolutely alarming. If the Premier had gone to the election with this as his public education package, one wonders how the electorate would have responded. What is even more absurd is that a budget was handed down and then approximately four days later the minister announced significant job losses. He was either directed or mandated by the Premier and the Treasurer to come up with those cuts or he deliberately misled or withheld that information during the budgetary process. It is absurd that the Minister for Education announced a significant reduction in the number of employees in the education system four days after the budget.

We also have the Gonski reforms and the national level debate between the Gillard government and then the Rudd government and the Abbott opposition in which the Abbott opposition did not agree to the Gonski report, and then at the eleventh hour came on board. The Prime Minister—elect now but opposition leader at the time, Tony Abbott, a day after Christopher Pyne had rubbished the Gonski reforms, stated that he now supported the Gonski reforms but only for four years rather than six years, which has its own problems as the major funding comes in the fifth and sixth years. What is the situation in Western Australia? I do not think anyone would disagree that the initial offer by the then federal Labor government was significantly inadequate. That was boosted with nearly \$600 million more than the initial offer, but we are still holding out. Why are we holding out? The Premier stated that one of the major reasons to hold out was that he did not want Canberra to have control over our educational system. From my reading of the Gonski package, it seeks to reproduce some aspects of the independent public schools scheme that the Barnett government has been proud to showcase to the Western Australian public and the rest of Australia. That is what much of the Gonski reforms are about. They are actually to give schools a greater degree of autonomy, but they are also about an incredible injection of funding into the education system. But of course if the state of Western Australia agreed to the Gonski package, it would have to commit also to a significant increase in funding. I wonder whether that is the real reason that the state government has refused to sign on to the Gonski package. Is it because it does not want to significantly inject funding into the education system? That sounds quite obvious.

Ms A.R. Mitchell: We have and we continue to do so.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Not at the rate that is necessary to keep up with the increase in the student population. I have just read through a series of cuts. Was the member for Kingsley not listening? There is a 30 per cent reduction in the school support program resource allocation. A 30 per cent reduction in SSPRA is a significant increase in funding, is it?

Ms A.R. Mitchell: Member, that is what I'm talking about. I am talking about what we have done, and our track record is definitely that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The government's track record in the second Barnett government, because members opposite try to delineate between the first government —

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, mark 1 and mark 2. The second mark has been absurd. The cuts are significant.

Mr J. Norberger: Would you sign up to Gonski and hand education over to the federal government?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Joondalup was not listening. It is not handing over control of education.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Read the bill! That is exactly what it does. You don't know what you're talking about.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So the Premier thinks that Premier O'Farrell and Premier Napthine —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Members! Member for Armadale, if you just direct your comments to me, you probably will not attract as many comments.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I was. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

The member for Joondalup talks about shame. Yes, shame on him for not going out and supporting his local schools. Shame on him for supporting the reduction in funding for his local schools.

Mr J. Norberger: Shame on you for not sticking up for WA.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Shame on him! Shame on him! Shame, shame, shame, shame!

Several members interjected.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: I know that the member for Joondalup is very new —

Mr J. Norberger: The last time I checked on Saturday, the voters had a chance to make their point known.

Mr D.J. Kelly: This is a job application for the front bench.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, there will be a few spots. There is no doubt there will be a spot for the education minister. It is interesting to note that some of the people who have interjected, of course, owe their political futures to the Minister for Education. The current Minister for Education holds the fate of some of these backbenchers. He is probably watching up there in the other place deciding whether his disciples are protecting his honour and protecting his reputation. It is interesting to note that the loudest people in the chorus to support the education minister are obviously from the northern suburbs, which they are, the two people —

Mr P.B. Watson: The Premier has no control over him, otherwise he would have sacked him.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As we know, member for Albany, the Premier has a low opinion of the education minister. I think the Premier should be applauded for having that view. As we all know, Minister Collier desperately wanted the education portfolio. To the credit of the Premier, he did not appoint him as he knew what a disaster he would be in an incredibly important portfolio. He appointed the former member for Churchlands.

Mr D.J. Kelly: He stuffed up the energy portfolio instead.

Dr A.D. BUTI: He stuffed up the energy portfolio instead, and unfortunately now he is stuffing up the education portfolio.

As I said, I applaud the Premier for not appointing the education minister in his first term of government until later in the term, and I will applaud him even more when he finally decides to sack him. I am sure he has no control over the Premier. He is a second-term Premier, he has won two elections, and surely it is in his power to stand up for the children of our state and to sack the education minister because he is incompetent. But I suppose the problem is for the poor person who takes his place. As we know from the current Minister for Energy, although many of the problems were self-inflicted, he is having to mop up the damage that was inflicted on the energy portfolio by the current powerbroker of the northern suburbs in the Liberal Party.

So we have the Gonski reform recommendations. We are not only making significant cuts in education, but also denying this state a significant injection of commonwealth funding, which, of course, would also trigger an increase in funding from the state government. We are also robbing our students of the benefits that would come from the Gonski reforms.

The Premier in the previous term of government might have said that the Gillard government will have central control et cetera, but now he has a Prime Minister-elect of his own political persuasion; he has an education minister of his own political persuasion and I wonder what the Premier's concerns are now with the Gonski reforms. I must say that in the estimates committee hearings, I thought that the Minister for Planning, who represented the education minister in this house, intimated, "Watch this space after the election if the adverts" —

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is right; Gonski's gone.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not think Gonski has gone in New South Wales or in Victoria.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's gone—a change of government!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the Prime Minister-elect going to be like the Premier and not honour his promises? Tony Abbott went to the election saying, "I'm committed to Gonski."

Mr W.J. Johnston: "I'm on a unity ticket if I'm Prime Minister." That's what he said.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right. So the Premier wants the Prime Minister-elect to be like him: to go to the election saying one thing and then after the election saying another thing. The Prime Minister-elect went to the election—it was as clear as clear could be—and said, "I am now on a unity ticket with the government when it comes to Gonski." The only difference was four-year funding rather than six-year funding.

Ms A.R. Mitchell: He changed the name of it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So, the government changed the name of it and that changes the whole thing, does it? Gee, the member for Kingsley has learnt a lot from her mentor the Minister for Education if she thinks changing the name changes the substance. If it does change the substance, shame on the new Prime Minister-elect. But he went to the election saying, "I'm on a unity ticket with Gonski." He could not have been any clearer. He says he has a mandate on carbon tax; fair enough, he has a mandate on carbon tax. He also has a mandate in respect of Gonski. He said, "I'm supportive of Gonski." Does this government believe that mandates apply only to policies that it

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implements after an election? We went to the election. The government cannot deny that Gonski was not an issue at the election.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It wasn't.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was a major issue. The Prime Minister-elect, the Leader of the Opposition at the time, at the eleventh hour came on board because he knew there was popular support for the Gonski reforms—very strong support. He thought, “I don't want this to jeopardise my likely victory”, so he agreed to it. But the Premier believes that it does not matter now. The Premier believes he can go to the election with any promise he wishes, but after he wins the election he can implement whatever he wants. If Gonski has gone, Premier, that means that Prime Minister-elect, Tony Abbott, has reneged on a fundamental promise with which he went to the election. I would be interested to know whether he has communicated with the Premier and told him that Gonski has gone. Has there been any public statement since the victory last Saturday in which the Prime Minister-elect has said that Gonski has gone?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No. I said it's gone.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier said it has gone; okay.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You can't expect to believe everything he says in the Parliament is literally true.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Where do you think Gonski's debated? It is in one forum, and that is the Council of Australian Governments. That is the one forum in which Gonski is determined.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Gonski is not dead in New South Wales and Victoria. Those states have signed up to it, so how is it dead? WA may not sign up; that is the problem. That is why we are criticising the state of Western Australia for not signing up to Gonski. But to say that Gonski is dead because the Premier is not signing it —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are just willing to hand over control to Canberra.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier may not sign up to it and it may be dead in WA but it is not dead nationally.

Mr C.J. Barnett: How do you know? What forum have you participated in?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Tony Abbott promised it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Which COAG meetings have you attended? None.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Tony Abbott promised it, but the point is that it has already been signed up.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Which ministerial forum on education have you attended? None.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Does the Premier not believe in contractual obligations?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You have not participated in any national forum on education. You are just spruiking rubbish!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Actually, I have participated in national forums.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Have you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Which one was that?

Dr A.D. BUTI: At the tertiary level; so get your facts right, Premier!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Tertiary level!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Get your facts straight.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We're not talking about university, we're talking about secondary education and intergovernmental agreements, and you played no role. I tell you what, what'll be interesting with you my friend, is, will you play a positive role in the revamping of Armadale education? Will you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier is not my friend.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Member for Armadale, I have suggested that you direct your comments directly to me and not take interjections —

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you.

The ACTING SPEAKER: — because it gradually gets worse.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier just asked me a question, that is, would I —

Point of Order

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
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Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Can I just ask you, Mr Acting Speaker, whether it is unruly for people sitting to your right for them to actually constantly interject; and if so, why do you not call them to order?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I will do so from now on, member for Midland.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier just asked me: would I take a positive role in education in Armadale? Yesterday, he said that he would not meet me in Armadale in regard to education. I would gladly meet with the Premier in Armadale to discuss education.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You never raised it with me.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier should remember that within my first two weeks in this house, when I was just elected, I invited him to come on a tour of Armadale. He said he would not come on a tour with me in Armadale.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I was there last week, without you, yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But I am going back to visit the school shortly.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But the Premier said yesterday in this house that he would not meet with me in Armadale in regard to education.

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

Dr A.D. BUTI: But then the Premier just asked me would I join with him in —

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I didn't. I said: do you think —

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I say to the Premier, how can I —

Mr C.J. Barnett: I didn't ask you to join with me!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Premier, how can I make a positive contribution —

Mr C.J. Barnett: I said: do you think you'll be able to play a positive role?

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You play penny partisan politics!

Dr A.D. BUTI: I say to the Premier that it might be a good idea that if he wants to —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You take my opponent out there and say that he's a local resident when he's not! Take him on a tour of the school but don't even invite me to occasions. That's the record of your government!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Of course I go to schools as the Premier.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is interesting that the Premier asked me —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I would really like to hear the member for Armadale talk specifically about this funding issue in the schools and direct his comments to me.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you. The Premier asked me whether I would contribute positively to educational reform in Armadale.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Whether you think you can.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will gladly contribute to that, but it would be hard if he will not engage in dialogue with me in Armadale. Whether the Premier agrees with my views or not, that is up to him. But the fact is that I am the local member, I am on the school board or school committee of four or five schools in my electorate. Therefore, it might be a good idea for the Premier to sit down and discuss the issue with me. But I leave that to him; it will be a test of his character. The Premier put the challenge to me. I said I would gladly meet with him and I would work with him —

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I didn't talk about meeting with you.

Dr A.D. BUTI: — in regard to education reform in Armadale. But if the Premier does not have the character to sit down with me and discuss the issue, well then, that says a lot about him. The Premier just wants to play politics, politics, politics!

Point of Order

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Mr Chris Hatton

Mr C.D. HATTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I have a point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: A point of order, member for Balcatta.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What is the point of order?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Members, I cannot hear the member.

Mr C.D. HATTON: I have a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, please.

The ACTING SPEAKER: A point of order, member for Balcatta.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Thank you very much, Mr Acting Speaker. I believe the speech by the member for Armadale is totally irrelevant, and this is precious time that he is taking. I call upon the need for relevance, Mr Acting Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, will you stay relevant, please.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay. There are other speakers to this motion, but the Premier made the offer; it was not a challenge.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it wasn't.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was an offer. I hope Hansard has it, but the Premier said, "Are you prepared to make a contribution to education reform in Armadale?" That was the invitation. I gladly accept that invitation. Now it will be up to the character of the Premier to see whether he wants to play politics or whether he cares about the students and the future generations that live within my electorate.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I did a great job in Albany; a fantastic job in education in Albany.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [4.44 pm]: I rise to address the motion that this house condemns the Barnett government for its attacks on public education; in particular, cuts to the school support program resource allocation; cuts to teaching and education staff; loss of Gonski —

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I am interested in listening to the member for Warnbro, but the Premier is constantly interjecting. He is actually interjecting across the chamber to the member for Albany about matters unrelated to the debate that we are having. That may interest the Premier, but it does not interest anybody else in Western Australia. I would ask you to either call him to order or at least direct him to comply with the standing orders. The Premier has been in this chamber for a long time and I would imagine he knows the standing orders and I cannot understand why he does not follow them.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cannington. Yes, I would ask the Premier and the member for Albany not to hold a conversation across the chamber. Carry on, member for Warnbro.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: Loss of Gonski Better Schools funding, and finally, a failure to adequately fund the moving of year 7s to high schools. Is that the motion?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You had to ask what the motion was!

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I will just draw your attention again to the fact that the Premier was interjecting across the chamber unrelated to the issue being debated, and this constant and inane behaviour by the Premier contravenes the standing orders. I would request that you ensure the Premier complies with the standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Premier, could you cease interjecting, please? Thank you. The member for Warnbro.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been participating in debate, and frequently, I will admit in the last week, interjecting across the chamber with this issue of education cuts. Some members have been subjected to that; I will apologise

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 September 2013]

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Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

for interrupting them, but I will say there is a reason for my concern and response that these cuts have elicited. In particular, I am sensitive to, firstly, the impact these cuts will have on schools in the electorate that I represent; and secondly, I am very sensitive to the nature of the spin that has been put about with these cuts. Whether we believe Professor Richard Teese's review will ultimately result in a better funding model for schools in Western Australia or not is unrelated to the cuts being imposed on schools in Western Australia next year. That is a fact. I say to the Premier that he needs to get on top of this because the Premier's responses to the media and this place about this matter are inaccurate.

The Teese review recommendations do not come into play until 2015. The cuts are to every single school in every one of the government's electorates. I am looking across the chamber to government backbenchers, and every one of the state schools in every one of their electorates are being cut. If government members are not aware of the extent of the cuts, I would urge them to go and ask the principals in their schools to tell them the truth. They should have by now informed their parents and citizens associations, presidents, boards or school councils. If they have not, it is my opinion they are not performing their duties as public servants in a proper fashion. I want to place on the record that I am critical of the pressure that is being imparted and placed on the principals of this state by everyone from the Premier down, including the director general of the Department of Education, in an effort to quiet and gag the right-thinking and honest principals of this state. That started with the president of the Primary Principals' Association, Stephen Breen, when he indicated honestly and forthrightly that these were the most savage cuts to education in his entire 39 years as an educator in Western Australia, and he was told by the Premier to "lighten up".

It includes the unheralded, unprecedented and bullying tactics of the Premier to attack the president of the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations—a volunteer, a mother of children in a state school—because she had the temerity to suggest that it was more important to get education funding right than to worry about the radios in the toilets at the stadium! I say to the Premier that is what she meant by that analogy! If he did not get it, we all got it. The Premier needs to think a little more before he bullies people; it was appalling. It is essential that every single backbencher on the government side of the house does their duty. If they have not yet found the exact amount by which their schools are being cut, they are failing in their duty to the children in the state schools of Western Australia.

Giggle on, Leader of the Nationals! Does the Leader of the National Party know how much funding has been cut in each one of the schools in his electorate? I know, and it is not a pretty picture in my electorate. The Premier gets on radio and spins a smokescreen to suggest that what is going on this year is reform and that these cuts are okay because some schools will miss out and some schools will gain. It is not true. Not one single school in the electorate of Warnbro will receive additional money next year. They are all losing—at the very least \$130 000 from their annual budget, and at the most \$600 000 from their annual budget. They are the facts. It does not matter that the Premier says some schools will win, because if schools are not winning in the electorate of Warnbro, which includes some of the most disadvantaged communities in the metropolitan area, then where are they winning? I ask this of members opposite. I am not making this up; it is true. I found this out. I am concerned. Earlier this year the Australian Early Development Index was released; this was prior to the Premier making clear he was breaking his promise to the people of Western Australia by cutting education funding, which he did not tell them prior to the election, and by sacking public servants. The AEDI looked at children in Warnbro, amongst other children around the nation. A report in my local paper drew my attention, because the headline read "Survey reveals alarming results for Warnbro, good news for Baldivis". That is great, because some of Baldivis is in my electorate, but I was attracted to the article because of the idea that perhaps there was a problem in Warnbro and that maybe I should look at it. I will read an article from the *Sound Telegraph* of 10 May this year by a good reporter, Brian Oliver. He says —

The Australian Early Development Index 2012 results, which surveyed nearly 300,000 children, revealed children in Warnbro were two-and-a-half times more vulnerable with their physical and wellbeing development than other children in WA.

That got my attention! There were a lot of things to be concerned about in that article, but that got my attention. What did I do? I wrote to the Minister for Education to draw his attention to the content of that report and to see whether he had noticed it and had any actions in place to address the problem. Clearly, if children are vulnerable to that extent, as identified by a report, I would think a well-meaning and thoughtful government would respond in an appropriate fashion. The appropriate person to do this in this area of early childhood may in many respects be the education minister. I wrote to the current Minister for Education and drew the article to his attention. I asked what he was doing to address the issues raised in that AEDI report. He thanked me for doing that, and he then went on to say a number of things. He was pleased to advise me that in the case of Warnbro he had a partnership with the City of Rockingham; he called them AEDI local champions. He said this would enable them

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to strengthen partnerships between schools, early childhood services and local agencies, which was nice. The minister then went on to say —

I am also advised that Warnbro Primary School has commenced school-wide actions to improve literacy and numeracy and school attendance. The Department of Education has advised that early childhood experts have been consulted to improve consistency in teaching reading and oral language, with a stronger emphasis on the teaching of phonics.

In addition, efforts to improve attendance are proving effective and, in 2010/11, the school received \$30,000 as a reward payment for achieving the highest attendance of Aboriginal students in the region, which comprises over 280 schools.

I have been informed that the school has also established an early childhood education program for children prior to school entry, which involves a supported playgroup. The program operates twice a week for two hours, providing families with a friendly environment where their children can learn social, language and thinking skills that will help them to succeed at school, as well as empower parents to support their children's learning at home.

There is a problem with that. I am fully aware of all those programs at Warnbro because I have a lot to do with the Warnbro Primary School. I can tell members where the funding for all of those programs comes from. One of the key people involved in those programs is a bloke called Rocky. He is a mentor, who is funded out of the school support programs resource allocation fund. All of those programs are funded out of SSPRA. Early literacy and numeracy funding has been cut by 30 per cent. As all government members should know the most disadvantaged schools receive a greater quantity of SSPRA funding, which is about early literacy, numeracy, attendance and behaviour. Those disadvantaged schools will be the worst hit. Taking 30 per cent away from a bigger amount will have a greater impact; it will hurt more! In this case, all of those programs and initiatives that resulted in the award that this government gave to my school in Warnbro will be completely compromised as a result of cuts to education. Do members opposite know how much funding Warnbro Primary School will lose next year? It will lose \$230 000 out of its annual budget.

Mr B.J. Grylls: How much is the budget?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It does not matter!

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Minister, this is a serious matter and I am seriously concerned. The SSPRA budget is being cut.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The debate was progressing quite well until the interruption of the Minister for Regional Development.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I thought so myself.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I wonder if you can draw the minister's attention to the standing orders, so the debate can continue in the good way that it continued after you stopped the Premier's interjections.

Mr B.J. Grylls: My apology.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is the overall budget. The principal does not have the flexibility to use the overall budget in the manner that he uses SSPRA money. The point is that the SSPRA money and other funds have been cut because of this government's budget cuts—for no other reason than this government's mismanagement! In five years of government, members opposite have so mismanaged the state's budget that we have to pay off a billion dollars of debt annually in interest. That is why schools like Warnbro are having their programs compromised. That is why I respond in a negative fashion when I hear the Premier say it is okay because some schools will win. I want to know which schools are winning, because I am still trying to find one in my electorate. I am contacted by parents in the community who care. I will read a letter into *Hansard* that I received this afternoon, because I promised that I would. Many members may be aware that another school in the electorate of Warnbro very quickly identified the cuts it was going to suffer. Settlers Primary School in Baldvis will have \$280 000 taken out of next year's budget. This school does not confront the same challenges as Warnbro in many respects, but it is a big school with over 1 000 kids. I have two primary schools with student populations of over 1 000 children in my electorate. Comet Bay Primary School, the biggest primary school in my electorate, will lose \$419 270. There are 1 100 children at that school. Settlers Primary School has over 1 000

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kids and will lose \$330 000. The school very quickly identified that and the parents, teachers, education assistants and the whole community are concerned. I received a letter this afternoon from Mrs Leeanne Antulov, which is self-explanatory. It reads —

I am writing this letter as a concerned individual who is a parent of children in the public education system and who also acts in the role of Chairperson on an Independent Public School Board.

The recent announcement by the State Government to impose a new funding model that will result in significant cuts to many schools across the state has prompted great discussion and fear within the community. I have had several conversations with parents, board members and the general community that have highlighted two of the strongest concerns below:-

A perceived reduction in the quality of public education, particularly at a primary school level

With many schools in line to receive massive cuts in their budgets, it will be necessary to make savings in other areas. This seems likely to lead to a school being unable to purchase additional or replace existing resources in order to achieve educational outcomes.

I will break in on the Minister for Regional Development's conversation because I am having trouble hearing myself with the noise over there. The minister asked how much was in the school's budget. This is the explanation for why that does not matter and that what matters is the extent of the cuts. I will go back to the letter, which continues —

It has become clear in my own locality of Baldivis, staffing levels at primary schools will be affected. Parents perceive that this will result in larger class sizes, fewer support programs for students with specific challenges or goals, reduction in the ability of teaching staff to adequately tailor programs for individual student needs and reduced professional development opportunities that would have had a direct positive flow on effect to classroom teaching standards.

My involvement in my children's school has afforded me first hand exposure to the hard work and efforts of the administrative and teaching staff attempting to deliver excellence in educational outcomes for every student. Schools are expected to deal with not only the education of students, but also the peripheral issues inherent in society today. Examples of these issues include mental illness, family breakdown and associated emotional effects on children, behavioural management, cultural awareness and inclusiveness. Sadly, with less money in school budgets to spend, it would seem that managing these issues may detract from the education systems core business of education itself.

At a time when the new Australian Curriculum is in its infancy of implementation, schools will be expected to find other money to ensure that teacher curriculum leaders are able to phase it in smoothly. If this money cannot be found, how can we expect this process to occur with minimal transitional issues or "hiccups"?

Perceived instability in public education

Many individuals have expressed fear that the planned education cuts "are the beginning of the end" of public education. A number are indeed questioning the State Government's commitment to public education. Is the intention to drive more students into the private education system? In removing resources, teaching support and "capping" teacher numbers in the face of a growing population, it seems to be eroding the confidence of the community in their children obtaining a quality education at their local public school. A huge amount of uncertainty surrounds these recent funding announcements, however many are convinced there will be some schools affected in an overwhelmingly negative manner.

I noted the State Government focused on reserves held in the bank accounts of some schools.

The minister might want to pay attention because she is going to his point —

These are in the main, modest reserves held aside to enable schools to handle projects or teaching priorities that may arise. Asking schools to "dip into" their reserves to top up funding shortfalls seems a short sighted and ill conceived response to the financial problems schools will be up against. These reserves will not sustain a school in the medium to long term.

I am just going to break off there; I think she should be Treasurer! She is a hell of a lot better and she has a lot more awareness of managing budgets than our current Treasurer has.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The letter continues —

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Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

My local primary school has estimated the new funding model to result in a reduction of approximately \$280,000 to its 2014 one line budget. As a school board Chair, I have an excellent understanding of how funds are allocated in our school. Further I affixed my signature to the Delivery and Performance Agreement signed as an Independent Public School in good faith, based on the resources and support promised by the Education Department at the time our strategic and operational goals and outcomes were formulated. As an individual, I am disappointed and fearful that our school, despite its best efforts and the dedication of the parents, administrative and teaching staff is in real danger of being unable to achieve these targets.

In closing this letter, I share feedback from local parents who were genuinely excited by the recent opening of a Secondary College in the area. This educational facility has been built to the highest standards and is anticipated by many to provide the definition of excellence in public education at a secondary level. Though seemingly adequately resourced in this establishment phase, many are beginning to doubt its ability to maintain high standards in an area identified as one of the fastest growing populations in the southern metropolitan corridor. I feel this would be a terrible shame with the potential to further diminish the quality of education available in the public system to those who choose it or cannot afford private education.

I welcome your detailed response to the above points and am available for further discussion at a mutually convenient time.

Leeanne asked me in an email covering that letter whether I could bring it to the attention of Parliament or the government to see whether we could have some response to their concerns. I have done that. I acknowledge the effort made by Leeanne and appreciate her concern and the passion that she clearly has for public education. I think her fears represent the fears of parents of children in the public education system across this state. I reiterate my call to members on the other side of the house. If they have not yet sought from schools in their electorates information about the extent of cuts in each and every one of their primary and high schools, they have been remiss in the performance of their duties as members of Parliament and they should be ashamed of themselves. I ask that they go do that now.

I will tell the house the extent of the cuts that I know of in schools in my electorate. I have responses from 10 of the 12 state schools in my electorate. There are two schools that I have not confirmed the amounts with. I have a pretty good idea of the extent of the cuts in those two schools, but I fear that their principals are inhibited in their ability to speak more publicly because of their fears as a direct result of the threats—I think not very veiled threats—by both the government and some public servants at a higher level towards principals in suggesting that they should not convey this information to parents. It is their duty. I repeat: my view is that it is the duty of every principal in this state to make sure that every single parent of children in their school knows the extent of the cuts next year. If they do not do that, they are failing in their job as well. Warnbro Primary School is being cut by \$230 000 next year; Port Kennedy Primary School, \$162 000; Endeavour Primary School, \$100 000; Secret Harbour Primary School, \$314 733; Comet Bay Primary School, as I said, \$419 270; Singleton Primary School, \$236 000; and Settlers Primary School, \$280 000. Makybe Rise Primary School, a new school that is growing by hundreds of students a year, has been cut by \$145 590.

The secondary schools cop it in the neck the most; they are being hurt the worst. Remember what I said earlier about the Australian Early Development Index report about the likelihood of children in Warnbro to suffer challenges as they grow up. That comprehensive Australian Early Development Index study showed that these children were two and a half times more vulnerable in their physical and wellbeing development than other children in WA. Warnbro Community High School is slap-bang in the middle of the Warnbro community and is fed into from four different primary schools—namely, Warnbro Primary School, Koorana Primary School over the other side of Warnbro Sound Avenue, Port Kennedy Primary School and Rockingham Lakes Primary School. Some of the kids from that area go to other schools, but predominantly they go to Warnbro Community High School. It is a challenging area. Warnbro Community High School has more than 10 per cent Maori population. Many of those Maori children come from New Zealand unaccompanied; they have been sent from New Zealand to stay with uncles, aunts and grandparents in an effort to avoid gang warfare and other challenges that they encountered in New Zealand. Therefore, 110 kids at Warnbro Community High School are Maori and 60-plus students are Aboriginal. It is a disadvantaged school. It is multicultural and there are a lot of benefits from that, but it faces a lot of challenges. I had an update today and that high school is confronted with losing \$498 000-plus from its budget next year. It might be witty, cheeky, clever and get the minister a few chuckles on the backbench to ask, “What’s their budget?” But I can tell the minister that the answer to that is, “Not enough”. The answer to the question about the budget of Warnbro Community High School is that it is not enough. It certainly is not enough to absorb a half-million-dollar cut by this government that is based on no

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evidence. That cut is based on absolute ignorance of the challenges associated with that community and the difficulties encompassed in dealing with the diversity and the disadvantage within that community. It is based on no analysis and there is no structure to the process; it is nothing other than a blanket cut based on a formula that I guarantee was calculated well in advance of the last state election.

If members have talked to principals in their electorates, they will have been told about the complexity of the spreadsheets they have been provided, that the detail of where the cuts are to come from is so great that easily six months or more work had been done on this before the announcement and that they are certain that that knowledge would have resided within the Department of Education and the minister's office prior to the March election. This is absolute dishonesty and it is compounded by the government's effort to spin its way out of what is clearly a cut. If it were not a cut; if it were a reform, the government would not be taking money from schools in some of the most disadvantaged metropolitan areas. If it were a system, as the Premier has suggested in the media on numerous occasions, in which some schools would miss out and some would gain, Churchlands Senior High School would not be getting any extra money or extra staff. We might think Warnbro Community High School, Balga Senior High School, Armadale Senior High School, Cannington Community College, Safety Bay Senior High School, Gilmore College or any number of schools in disadvantaged areas would receive additional funding and that they would have been told by now: "It's okay; this is reform, it's not a cut, and you'll be the beneficiary because the Teese review is about moving money and resources to where they are needed." I have read the Teese review. The Premier is right about one thing in trying to link it to Gonski; it identified that we have a serious problem with disadvantage in our system. But this is not the Teese review. What is going on this year is a budget cut.

Mr M. McGowan: Exactly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reform might come sometime in the future but it is not here now, it will not be here in 2014 and I fear it will not be around in 2015. Members opposite are using a thin veneer of—a word I cannot use because it is unparliamentary; a tissue of —

Mr M. McGowan: Deceit.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — deceit to try to divert the attention of the public of Western Australia away from, in the words of a very respected educator, the president of the Primary Principals Association of Western Australia, "The most savage cuts to education in 39 years". It is undeniable. Members opposite will stand up and defend this, and I admire and respect the loyalty of the member for Forrestfield and the member for Balcatta to their government, but they should go to each of their schools and, without trying to intimidate them, find out what their cuts are, and try to reconcile for themselves how they cut funding from every single school in the entire electorate and make it better. Not just their school will be affected, but also mine and schools right across the state.

The Premier denigrated people who chose to travel long distances a couple of weeks ago at their own great expense to protest at the front of Parliament House. I heard a teacher from an eastern goldfields primary school talk about the challenges associated with these cuts. If funding to the schools in the lands is being cut, who will get the benefit from the other side of the cuts? This is not reform. Members opposite are being spun just like the rest of us. They should not buy it. They should stand up to the Premier. I know he is scary; I know he wields a degree of power in the party room to the extent that he gets his way almost all the time.

Dr A.D. Buti: But not over the Minister for Education.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We know that he has been rolled on occasion. We know he walked into a cabinet meeting thinking he would cut the solar tariff rebate, but he got rolled. If members opposite can roll him for something as simple as solar rebates because some genuine people would have been hard done by and the government would have been breaking a promise and a contractual obligation, at least morally, if not legally, why can they not roll him in favour of the education of the children of Western Australia? What the member for Armadale said earlier is correct in his reference to the WA Police union. It is obvious. Members opposite know that if they cut education today, they had better start building a lot of prisons tomorrow, because education is the most effective weapon we have for ensuring people make a positive contribution, avoid getting into trouble and stay out of harm's way, out of prison and away from crime and do not cause harm to other people in society. That is undeniable. Every bit of research that has ever been done links that outcome. As teachers will be aware, if children do not learn to read by about grade 4 so they have literacy behind them, they will be very exposed to slipping through the cracks and becoming behavioural problems for all of us.

I am asking members opposite, on behalf of the children and parents and state schools of Western Australia, to not be partisan on this. They should go to their schools and ask by how much their funding is being cut. What the

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Premier did resonated at the election. We had 10 of these posters at every single booth in Brand, and you bet it made a difference. Every single one was tailor made, telling people as they went to vote exactly how that school's funding was being cut by the Barnett government and warning them that Tony Abbott might do the same. If they think they are popular now, I have a message for them. If they do not turn back these education cuts, many of them will have a very short career and it will be the end of the Barnett–Grylls government.

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is extraordinary. This is the most savage cut to education funding in 39 years.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.15 pm]: I rise to support the motion. I could not have put the contribution from the member for Warnbro better about the importance of education for not only our economic wellbeing but also our social cohesion and for providing kids with the best possible start in life. As we have made it patently clear to the other side, we are not talking about the Teese reforms in 2015. By and large, they look fairly positive. We are not talking about the education budget growth being driven as it is by population growth. We are talking about the cuts members opposite are making to funding for individual schools right across our electorates in 2014, not from the Teese reforms in 2015 and not the global growth in the budget overall. We are talking about the cuts the government is making to our school funding, which are hurting our schools and our kids' education. Like the member for Warnbro, my electorate faces a lot of challenging issues in respect of education and the role schools play in that area. That is no more evident than at schools such as Leda Primary School, which has a special education unit, and Medina Primary School, which has a very high Aboriginal and low socioeconomic student population. It is very evident at schools such as Gilmore College, previously Kwinana Senior High School. These schools are getting hurt by these cuts. Education plays an important role in our community —

Ms A.R. Mitchell: Member, will you take an interjection?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member! The member is not taking interjections.

Mr R.H. COOK: — so much so that the Kwinana Industries Council, which represents industry groups right across the Kwinana area, plays an active role. Indeed, the chief executive officer of the Kwinana Industries Council is on the board of Gilmore College because the council understands the important role education plays not only in the economic performance of the Kwinana industrial strip but also in giving these kids the best possible start in life and making sure they get the opportunities in life to make a contribution to their society. These cuts are having a real impact on the needs of individual schools. I cannot praise more the work of the principal, Carolyn Cooke, and the staff of Gilmore College and the role they play in making sure they put together a comprehensive education package for the kids of that school. The \$279 000 school support programs resource allocation funding alone will see a cut of around 30 per cent. What does that sort of funding go towards? That funding and the reserve funding goes towards things such as the literacy program to ensure that students can participate in the students at risk program and to ensure that those kids who are really struggling have the opportunity to step out of classes for 20 minutes a day so they get the intensive literacy supervision that they need to progress. That program is now in danger. We also have the teen mum program, where the school allocates an education assistant to the crèche in the school to make sure that those mothers can continue their education. That is now under threat. We have a range of pastoral care programs, with psychologists and year coordinators who make sure that the students stay engaged in their education, they continue their education and they go on to rewarding careers and lives. These programs, all funded out of the educational assistant program, the SSPRA program or the reserve funds, which this government has laughingly told schools to raid, are now under threat. That is the reality of this government's cuts to school funding. We are also seeing cuts to the Aboriginal and islander education officers. FTEs are being cut. This will punish schools such as Gilmore College and Medina Primary School, which have a high Indigenous population, because they will not have the funding that they need to provide that extra level of supervision and care to keep those kids engaged in the education program.

The long service leave levy will be \$52 000. The school grant is \$41 000. Again, there will be a drain on those reserves, which will come out of those programs that are directly funded by the school to provide that extra level of assistance to students to ensure that they continue their education. An estimation of the cuts, as far as we know them to be, right across my area means that around \$2 million will be taken out of schools in the Kwinana area, including: Baldivis Primary School, with cuts of \$223 000; Baldivis Secondary College, \$114 000; and Bertram Primary School, \$227 000. The member for Warnbro held up one of those signs that we had on the school grounds. One of the people at that booth handing out how-to-vote cards for the Liberal Party, resplendently dressed in blue, was a teacher. She said to me that if she could have withdrawn her vote and changed it on the weekend, she would have done so, having understood the impact that these cuts will have on

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education. Calista Primary School will have cuts of about \$130 000; East Waikiki Primary School, about \$150 000; Gilmore College, about \$440 000; Hillman Primary School, about \$125 000; Leda Primary School, about \$155 000; Medina Primary School, about \$60 000; North Parmelia Primary School, about \$100 000; Orelia Primary School, about \$105 000; and Waikiki Primary School, about \$150 000. These cuts will directly impact the students in the Kwinana area. These cuts are the reality that the teachers and education assistants working in our system will now have to cope with. These are the cuts that Ben New, an education assistant from the Kwinana Beach education support centre, said at the rally would be so damaging to our education system. These are the cuts that are being brought on by the Barnett government. They were not mentioned in the budget. They were trickled out in the aftermath of the budget, under the disguise of a federal election campaign, with the government hoping it could get away with these cuts, but it will not. We will continue to campaign on these issues and make sure that people are aware of the impact of the Barnett government on schools.

The government will not get away with these cuts. It will not get away with the spin around the global growth in its budgets, it will not get away with the spin around the Teese reforms, which will not come into play until 2015, and it will not get away with these damaging cuts that will impact on our kids' education. Kids in Kwinana deserve the best possible chances in life. We heard the Premier talk about the growth in staff numbers at Churchlands. We heard the Premier talk about the growth in staff numbers at Mount Lawley Primary School. I hazard a guess that the needs of the kids in Kwinana are a little greater than the kids who attend those schools. I hazard a guess that we need to see growth and more support for our schools, not these continuing cuts from the Barnett government. These cuts have been imposed on the people of Western Australia simply because the government has mismanaged the budget. In its first term of government, it spent like a drunken sailor, and in the second term of government, the parents and kids of Western Australia will pay through the cuts to primary and secondary schools in Western Australia.

The extraordinary thing about this whole process is that this government made a fair amount of progress or gains in the independent public schools program. That program provides schools with the flexibility to manage their budgets and to ensure that they can make discretionary expenditure on the basis of their needs. It is somewhat ironic that the same government is now ripping the guts out of those budgets, putting in place programs and funding formulas, which means that we will see the IPS program effectively eradicated in this state. We will see these schools operating to tight funding formulas. These schools will struggle simply because the Barnett government has not managed its budget. As we have seen time and again, it has the wrong priorities for the people of Western Australia. As I said, we will continue to campaign on this issue. We will continue to demonstrate to the people of Western Australia the impact of this government on education. We will continue to show the parents in Western Australia just what these cuts will mean to their kids' education. We will make sure that we hold this government to account. As we know, the Barnett government is not standing up for the interests of education in Western Australia. The Barnett government is continuing to cut education in this state and the kids and parents in Western Australia will pay the price.

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [5.27 pm]: I rise to speak against the private member's motion that the house condemns the Barnett government for its attacks on public education. It feels a little like groundhog day, given that yesterday I was in this place trying to talk and a bit of truth and a bit of sense into members about the real state of funding in public education in Western Australia. I have been sitting here for the past hour and a half listening to members opposite talk about cuts, cuts and cuts. I am more than happy to unpack that a bit further as my speech progresses today.

I wanted to start by talking about a newsletter that I received from a principal of one of the schools in my electorate today. We have heard all the negativity from members opposite. They continue to strike fear and doom into the hearts of Western Australian families and children, preying on the most vulnerable in our community—those who need the most assistance in our schools. That is what this Liberal–National government is seeking to achieve, yet we see negativity from members opposite. I will read this newsletter entitled “From the Principal” into *Hansard*. It comes direct from a principal of one of the local schools in my electorate, and states —

Changes to Public School Funding

There has been much recent publicity about the announced changes to funding for public schools. I thought it appropriate to provide you with some further information at this point in time.

Thank god someone is willing to speak to their community without the negativity of the Labor Party. The principal writes —

What is the new model?

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire;; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

The student-centred funding model is a new way of distributing resources to students in public schools in Western Australia. The model provides —

Several members interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: They do not like it; of course, they yell out. The newsletter continues —

The student-centred funding model is a new way of distributing resources to students in public schools in Western Australia. The model provides funding for each student enrolled in a school. There is also additional funding —

We have heard commentary from the member for Armadale that the government is neglecting Aboriginal education. However, the model provides additional funding for Aboriginal students.

Dr A.D. Buti: How dare you! Shame on you, member for Forrestfield!

Mr N.W. MORTON: The member for Armadale is very cranky.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Forrestfield, resume your seat.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, you have been called twice already today. I have asked you to refrain from interjections.

Dr A.D. Buti: He directly mentioned me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, but you have continued to call across the chamber when I asked you to desist. Please allow the member for Forrestfield to continue.

Point of Order

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Clearly, we all heard the member for Forrestfield canvass the member for Armadale and directly attack him. Therefore, he should expect the full force of the opposition in defence of the member for Armadale and the shameless attack on his character.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am still making my point of order. Am I not entitled to make my point of order?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, but you have made your point of order.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Are you going to call him, Madam Deputy Speaker?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I heard your point of order.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Call him!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please resume your seat. The reason that I called the member for Armadale is that it is impossible for the Hansard reporter to record what is going on in the chamber if everyone is speaking at the same time. The member for Forrestfield should stick to his speech and not engage in cross-chamber conversations. I hope that we can now continue and hear the member for Forrestfield.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. You are such a voice of reason.

I will return to that second subheading because a few interjections were made and what I said may have been lost in the transcript. The principal writes —

What is the new model?

The student-centred funding model is a new way of distributing resources to students in public schools in Western Australia. The model provides funding for each student enrolled in a school. There is also additional funding for Aboriginal students, students facing social disadvantage, students —

Ms J.M. Freeman: How much?

Mr N.W. MORTON: We will get to real cuts shortly. The Labor Party's record speaks for itself!

Point of Order

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire;; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: We were asked by members of the opposition not to interject. There is no way the member for Forrestfield is seeking interjections through what he is saying and we are getting a constant barrage. We respectfully sat and listened to them throughout their speeches and I would ask you to ask them to sit quietly.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! You cannot interject on a point of order. Allow the member to put his point while you remain silent. I had been listening to this debate before I came into the house. I noticed that opposition members asked to make their points without interjection and it would be good if they afforded the same respect to other members of the house.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I allowed members opposite to speak without interjection. I was getting to the point —

There is also additional funding for Aboriginal students, students facing social disadvantage, students with English as an additional language/dialect and students with disability. There is also additional funding for students in small schools, and schools in isolated and remote parts of the State.

Why is the new model being introduced?

The new model is based on equity of funding for individual students and will help ensure that every child in a Western Australian public school receives the opportunity for high quality education.

Yet we continue to hear negativity from members opposite —

When will the new model start?

The new model will start in 2015 with funding distributed to each school through a one line budget.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: Let me finish —

In 2014 a number of school funding areas and processes will change in readiness for the new model.

Who will benefit from this new model?

Students will benefit from the new model.

Funny that —

Instead of funding primarily being based on school types, school programs and class structures (as is the case under the current model), funding under the new model will be based on the needs of students —

That is revolutionary —

By having one line budgets, principals will also have much more flexibility in how they use their budgets to deliver the education programs and support that their students need.

That is written by a principal from a school in my electorate.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: The next point —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! He is not taking the interjection.

Mr N.W. MORTON: This is my favourite part to this.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Jelly back!

Mr N.W. MORTON: This is my favourite part to this.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Madam Deputy Speaker, your predecessor from the last Parliament clearly determined and ruled that “jelly back” is totally unparliamentary. The member for Willagee just called the member for Forrestfield a jelly back. It was crystal-clear and I ask you to instruct him to stand and withdraw the comment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member. I do not have the privilege of being aware of what the previous Speaker said or ruled on. However, I think we need to be careful of our language and at this point I ask the member for Forrestfield to continue.

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I am getting lots of exercise this afternoon. My favourite part of the motion is “cuts to teaching and education staff”. This government remains committed to ensuring that teaching levels are maintained in 2014. I imagine that with student growth in 2015 we will see a slight rise in that. But I will go back to the graph that I tabled yesterday in this chamber. I am not sure whether there is a need to table it again as I am sure members opposite already have a copy.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member referred to tabling a document. I am not quite sure what he is referring to because he is unable to table a document. Could he please clarify what document he is referring to?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the member delivered his speech yesterday, he made a document available to the house.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is that document available in the chamber, because a tabled document is, of course, available to the opposition? My understanding is that the document the member refers to is not available to the opposition. This is quite a critical issue because we want to hold this member to account for his speech. It is impossible for us to do that if he does not provide us with that information.

Mr N.W. MORTON: That is fine.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, the member for Forrestfield offered to make the document available again today and I think if you request that, I am sure he will be able to do that. He mentioned it was the same document as yesterday. I am sure he can make it available for the duration of the day.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Are you directing him to make the document available or are you making a suggestion?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, he offered. It is up to the member for Forrestfield.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I will happily lay it on the table for the remainder of today’s proceedings. The only reason I paused on that is that it has my personal notes scribbled on it, to which I need to refer. If I can proceed, it was made available to members yesterday.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, it was not!

Mr N.W. MORTON: Yes, it was. It is exactly the same document.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Let us continue with the debate.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I will proceed if that is okay. I was getting to my favourite part. My favourite part of the motion is “cuts to teaching and education staff”. Yesterday, when I started my speech in this chamber, I made this point extremely clear. I feel as though it is groundhog day because we are going around in circles. It is evidently clear that this Liberal–National government has committed a further \$300 million—that is a critical figure in this budget—for public education spending in Western Australia, which takes public education spending to \$4.4 billion. That is \$4 400 million spent on education. The graph to which I refer shows that if we go back to the 2005–06 budget, when the now Leader of the Opposition was a minister, we see a nearly 7.5 per cent cut. When I use the word “cut”, I actually mean cut. It means a reduction. It means a cut in spending—a real cut in spending of about 7.5 per cent, or around \$200 million, on public education in Western Australia. Under whose stewardship was that cut made? It was under the stewardship of the now Leader of the Opposition.

I move on to the next year, 2006–07, when there was a further 1.9 per cent reduction in the 2004–05 figures. We have therefore moved on two years.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I believe the member may have misled the house about the member for Rockingham, in that the member for Rockingham was not the Minister for Education in 2005–06.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I did not say that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me! Members do not debate a point of order. I am listening to the member for Cannington, if you can just hold your peace, thank you, member for Forrestfield.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 September 2013]

p3891c-3920a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: My understanding of what the member said was that the member for Rockingham was the Minister for Education in 2005–06. That is patently not true. The member can tell us what he said. But if that is what he said, he needs to correct the record.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the member for Forrestfield make clear what he was meaning in his comments, please?

Mr N.W. MORTON: Sure.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I apologise if there was any confusion, member for Cannington. I was referring to 2006–07. The now Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Education, I believe, from December 2006 to September 2008. That was the year I was referring to when, based on the 2004–05 budget, there was a 1.9 per cent cut in spending.

Withdrawal of Remark

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Forrestfield is misleading the house again, because he is saying that while the Leader of the Opposition was the minister, there was a reduction in spending on education. That is clearly not the case, so I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr N.W. Morton interjected.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Either it is true or it is not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not a point of order, and we should not be using a point of order to debate the topic. Please allow the member for Forrestfield to continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I am basing this on the graph I tabled yesterday, so members have access to that.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You didn't table anything.

Mr N.W. MORTON: If the member for Cannington missed out on it, that is his problem.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member continually refers to a document that he tabled yesterday.

Mr N.W. MORTON: That is right.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Every time the member says that, he is misleading the house, because yesterday he did not table any document. Please, Madam Deputy Speaker, direct the member to tell the truth in this chamber. He cannot come into the chamber and mislead the house. I do not know whether he is deliberately misleading the house and I am not alleging that he is deliberately misleading the house; I am just raising the fact that he is misleading the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cannington. You have made your point of order. Member for Forrestfield, you made the document available to the house for the duration of the day; you did not table it. So, can you just be careful with the language that you use? Continue with your speech.

Mr N.W. MORTON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker; I will continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr N.W. MORTON: I think I have established that there were cuts under the former Labor government. Let us move on. I think the cuts equated in real terms to roughly \$250 million. This Liberal–National government will invest a further \$300 million in this budget. That is a stark contrast between where our priorities lie and where the priorities of members opposite lie.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: The member for West Swan says tomato; I say tomato—whatever!

The member for Warnbro believes that cuts in education will lead to increased incarceration. If that is the case, I very much thank the former Labor government, given the cuts it made, for creating today's criminal population. I will move on to the third point.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Warnbro!

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire;; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

Mr N.W. MORTON: The third point —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Mr N.W. MORTON: The third point is the loss of Gonski's Better Schools funding.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you. And the member for Butler, I call you!

Mr N.W. MORTON: Let us get to this Gonski Better Schools plan. We have never argued against the principles of Gonski. In fact, the student-centred funding model that we are moving towards is similar in principle to a lot of things in Gonski, taking into account the various reasons for disadvantage. The issue we have, and of course the member for Armadale would have us sign up to this, is that even with the increased funding that the then federal government offered —

Dr A.D. Buti: The offer of \$900 million, yes.

Mr N.W. MORTON: It was \$620 million. That would have given us in 2014—wait for it—an additional \$14 million. That is \$14 million from a budget of \$4 400 million.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you for the third time. So you are now on notice and you need to watch your interjections.

Mr N.W. MORTON: In a \$4 400 million budget, the opposition would have had us sign away to Canberra on a silver platter the power to oversee public schools in Western Australia for \$14 million in 2014. It is just as well we held fast. It is just as well.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: This state government looks forward to negotiating with the new federal coalition government and getting good outcomes for Western Australia, and outcomes that will not mean that we move to a centralist model in which power is decreed by Canberra.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Even though we've finally got a good government in Canberra!

Mr N.W. MORTON: Hear, hear!

The final part of this motion refers to a failure to adequately fund the moving of year 7s to high school. There is currently a budget of \$230 million to upgrade approximately 29 schools. I can report that as of 6 August this year, eight of the 29 secondary schools identified for additional accommodation are under construction; 10 are at tender; six are in contract documentation in readiness for tender; and a further five are under assessment. These schools will therefore receive extra classrooms, specialist facilities where required, and associated staff rooms et cetera. This government has a plan for the transition of year 7s into high school. There is also a comprehensive list of schools being monitored. The department is looking at enrolments in several schools across the state to make sure that the schools themselves are best placed to receive the year 7s when they move into high school.

In summary, this government is investing in education, not cutting like the previous Labor government. When I use the word “cutting”, of course I mean actually removing money. This government is expending more money on public education. It is not cutting the number of teachers; it is maintaining teacher numbers in 2014.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! There are too many conversations happening in the chamber. If members need to have a conversation, could they please leave the chamber; thank you.

Mr N.W. MORTON: We are already heavily investing in education per student in Western Australia, although members opposite would have us sign up to a program that would penalise us for our heavy investment in education in Western Australia. We have a plan afoot to deal with the transition of year 7s into high school. In finishing, I just say that I wish members opposite would move away from the negativity and fearmongering they are spreading throughout the community and focus on the positives that this Liberal–National government is moving towards with a student-centred funding model and further spending in education in Western Australia.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [5.48 pm]: I rise to support this motion put forward by the member for Armadale. I want to begin by discussing this issue of funding for the move of year 7s from primary school to

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secondary school. If we consult the budget for 2012, we can see a budget allocation of \$265 million for the upgrade of some 28 high schools to ensure that there will be enough room for those year 7s going into high school. If we look at the 2013 budget, we can see that the figure has dropped to \$229.5 million. Straightaway, in response to comments made by the member for Forrestfield, we can see that in just that one area there is a substantial cut of \$35.5 million and straightaway we can see substantial cuts to our education budget just in that area of funding the transition of year 7s into secondary school from primary school.

I will discuss another couple of areas, including the issue of the one-line budgeting approach with independent public schools. We have heard a lot about independent public schools, which have been the subject of reviews. A review put out by the University of Melbourne—not to be confused with the Teese Report, as I know Professor Teese is from the University of Melbourne—looked at the success or otherwise of the independent public schools initiative. This report states —

The evaluation suggests that there has been limited change to outcomes for students including achievement, enrolment, attendance and exclusions and suspensions.

There is an important line from a report looking at the success of the independent public schools initiative. That tells us that there has not been the progress that we have been hearing about with independent public schools. There are some serious concerns about the success of that program.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I interrupt you briefly to advise the house that the member for Forrestfield will make the document he referred to available for the rest of the day.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I will also talk about the missed opportunity for funding when the Gonski Better Schools funding was available to us. I now turn to how these cuts and the decisions around the Gonski Better Schools funding and the subsequent cuts are affecting my schools. I noticed that the member for Forrestfield cited an example of a newsletter from a school in his electorate. I have a number of quotes from schools in my electorate and I will demonstrate that these schools are suffering and are aware of substantial cuts. I will present that in a moment. This missed opportunity with the Gonski Better Schools funding is really sad. Huge amounts have been forgone because of the Barnett government decision. Thornlie Primary School has missed out on \$1.4 million. That was the amount that would have been injected into the school from 2013 to 2019. South Thornlie Primary School missed out on nearly \$1.9 million; Thornlie Senior High School, \$13.7 million; Yale Primary School, \$2.1 million; Gosnells Primary School, \$1.3 million; Southern River College, \$7.8 million; Huntingdale Primary School, \$2.8 million; Seaforth Primary School, \$1.2 million; Ashburton Drive Primary School, \$1.8 million; and Wirrabirra Primary School, \$1.7 million. These are huge injections of funding that this government was not interested in—all based on some vague idea that Canberra would take control of primary schools in my electorate. What an absurd idea. That is just ridiculous. The fact is that the government decided against substantial increases coming into my schools.

I now turn to some of those issues that teachers, and principals in particular, have raised with me about these cuts. I look firstly at the newsletter from Thornlie Senior High School and the principal, Paul Billing. He has put in his newsletter—under a heading like the member for Forrestfield quoted—the following —

Changes to school funding 2014 & beyond

There has been a lot of publicity about changes to funding for schools. Presently, I am aware that Thornlie Senior High School will be affected in the following ways in 2014:

1. We have lost 30% of a key source of funds—the School Support Resource Allocation. The reduction is approximately \$87 000;
2. Each school will now have to pay the Department of Education a new levy for long service leave of \$600 per teacher and \$400 for each non-teaching staff member. This new cost to our school is \$47 000.
3. We estimate that we will have \$5 000 withheld from our computer funding; and
4. Our staffing allocation will be reduced by the equivalent of 2.75 full time teachers. This represents about \$305 441.
5. There is a reduction of allocation of 0.25 of a full time Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer. This cost is \$15 655.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 September 2013]

p3891c-3920a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

6. A number of other funds provided to us for a variety of purposes has been withdrawn and totals \$22 553.

These are substantial reductions that, as the principal says, would not normally have been anticipated. Excluding salaries, the loss is about \$161 553. With salary losses, the total is \$482 649. These are clearly cold-hearted cuts by the Minister for Education, Hon Peter Collier. Thornlie Senior High School is suffering to the tune of \$482 649 from these cold-hearted cuts—a massive cut in anyone's language.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for West Swan, your voice is just a little too loud.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: We can compare the investment that the Labor Party was going to make should we have won government in March. This was \$30 million for Thornlie Senior High School, compared with the \$13.7 million that would have come through if we had in place a government enlightened enough to sign up to the Better Schools program. What a massive difference that would have made to the wellbeing and quality of education at Thornlie Senior High School.

I now turn to Southern River College, another school in my electorate. I quote the principal, Ms Everal Pearse, who points out in a nutshell the following —

Loss of 0.8 FTE salary = \$100,000.00. (we were looking at 4 staff cut but have had to increase classes size etc and cut other classes to accommodate this—and now have it down to .8 cut.

Budget cut of \$78,000.00—leave loading levy and SSPRA

- SSPRA = \$20,000.00
- Leave loading = \$40,000.00
- Youth Allowance Worker \$10,000.00
- Performance Management \$8,000.00

The list goes on. The thought was that there were some reserves that the school could apply for, but that is a myth. Those reserves are earmarked for important maintenance, projects and upkeep of the school that need to be done. Bear in mind that there was an election commitment for schools built prior to 1980, as is the case with Southern River College, to get upgrades. What is happening with that? Where has that gone? We are looking at a situation in which the school's infrastructure needs to grow, yet, as the principal says, the quality of the infrastructure is getting into a deplorable state. The school's needs are growing because we have projected school population numbers growing dramatically. There is an anticipated projected student population of 675 in 2014 and over 1 000 in 2015. These are dramatic changes.

I now come back to the sorts of things at which the school support programs resource is directed. I occasionally get along to the Thornlie Primary School breakfast club where I see students who are often from refugee backgrounds or people who are in need of education in English as a second language. Thornlie Primary School has an intensive English centre that delivers remarkable outcomes, but it needs extra support and resources to deliver those outcomes. We need to ensure that the students are getting that extra tuition. Remarkable results are being achieved. A student who arrives with very limited or sometimes no English language skills goes into the intensive English centre, gets that necessary support and coaching, and then after two years in the IEC is able to go into the main part of Thornlie Primary School.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Before the dinner break, I was providing evidence to the house of the impact of the feared cuts that are going to beset schools in the Gosnells electorate. I provided examples from Thornlie Senior High School and Southern River College, including the notes that I will be discussing with the principal of Southern River College at the next school council meeting when I attend as a school councillor. I have another example of a school in my electorate that has calculated the impact of these cuts. Forest Crescent Primary School, another excellent school in my electorate, has in its latest newsletter a word from the principal, that outlines —

- 2013 school grant – a reduction of \$56 000 (Long Service Leave Liability, reduced SSPRA funding and reduction in support to Deputies.)
- Staffing: A reduction of 2.1 Teachers and 1.2 Education Assistants. (Dollar value - \$307 000)

Total Cost: \$363 000

The principal then comments —

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley;
Mr Chris Hatton

Whilst I believe that the much awaited Teese Reform will be good for education in general, those changes will not take effect until 2015. The reductions for next year, however, are the result of Budget implications from Government.

Those words are from the principal of Forest Crescent Primary School.

The cuts are being felt in my electorate. I want to give an individual example as well of the situation faced by a young student in my electorate, Tayla Crabtree, who thought she had a scholarship to Canning Vale College as a student in its music program. She thought that she had been given a provisional out-of-catchment place. She has a sibling who already has an out-of-catchment placement in the specialist music program at the school, and Tayla thought she was going there as well. She received a letter saying that she had provisional acceptance. But it turns out that the school is now saying no, there is no room because the school does not have adequate funding. The school cannot fund a place for Tayla. This is a real human example of the sorts of things that these cuts in funding are doing to individual students. The situation faced by Tayla is really unfair. When I look at the timing of this, I see that in June she did an instrumental test to see whether she was suitable and that her musical skills were up to standard to meet the requirements of the course. She got positive recommendations from her test, but then on 8 August she was told that there were not enough places at the school. How unfair is that, building up the hopes of a young child and the expectations of her family and then suddenly dashing them in this way? There is no opportunity of any substance to appeal. There was an opportunity to write to the regional director but that seems to have gone by the wayside. The very valid reasons raised by the family were ignored and their fine hopes have been dashed. These cuts are real. I have presented evidence to the house to show how badly schools in the Gosnells electorate are going to be affected. Things could have been so much better. I think that is the real tragedy here. Our schools could have been well funded but instead they are going to be facing such difficult circumstances.

I will conclude with another insight into what is going on at Thornlie Senior High School, where I met with the senior management team a little while ago. They talked about some of the problems with the school's infrastructure. They said that because of cracked building infrastructure, there were health and safety implications. The school has two flagship catering and hospitality courses but they have to play tick-tack using one kitchen for a flagship catering and hospitality course. The refurbishment needs to be to commercial kitchen standards and that equipment is absolutely critical when the school is offering a certificate course close to industry standard.. The training must have credibility. That is not being provided. So many students at the school are so enthusiastic and passionate about getting a career in catering and hospitality, but their opportunities are limited because of the inadequate quality of the materials that they have to work with at the school. Similarly, when it comes to students wanting to do manual arts—woodwork, metalwork, auto maintenance, plastics, engineering, jewellery craft—the equipment is very old. Some of it is 41 years old—as old as the school. Obviously, that equipment is not going to meet industry standards. I quote from someone on the senior management team —

You can't just buy a lathe—it's massive. Fortunately the design and technology staff have enormous skills and can fix things up to keep working. And the fact is that much new equipment often wouldn't even fit into the existing rooms.

There is a real problem in making sure that we provide adequate materials for our students to work with. We should be honouring that. When the state Labor team went to the March election, we proposed allocating the funding necessary to get this school up to scratch. Our federal colleagues went to the election with the Gonski Better Schools program to provide the funding. But I am afraid we are not seeing that funding from the Liberal side; we are seeing the exact opposite—cuts. I will conclude my remarks there, but I am appalled by these cuts; they are a real deception and a disappointment for students in the electorate of Gosnells.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [7.08 pm]: I do not intend to speak for terribly long but I want to make some remarks about these cuts. Firstly, I want to talk about the Cannington Community Education Support Centre. Cannington Community Education Support Centre is a large education support centre, co-located with Cannington Community College, that also uses the facilities of the nearby Sevenoaks Senior College. At the moment it has 20 teachers. These changes mean that two of those teachers will no longer have a position. The school, which is supporting some of the most disadvantaged people in Western Australia, will go from 20 teachers to 18, with no reduction in student numbers. The member for Forrestfield says that the government is spending extra on education and that extra money is delivering a 10 per cent reduction in teacher numbers at Cannington Community Education Support Centre. That is the reality for the people of my electorate who use that very important service. I am very proud to support the education support centre. There are some great programs at the school including a horticultural program; in fact, I rent my own office plants from the education support centre and they do a great job.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 September 2013]

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Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Deputy Speaker; Mr C.J. Tallentire.; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Hatton

Next door, Canning Community College, which I said co-locates the Cannington intensive English centre, is also losing teachers. Cannington Community College is a K–10 school. The cuts fall principally on high schools and not so much on primary schools, although there are cuts in primary schools. Therefore, the cuts fall heavily on that K–10 school. On average, it is not as badly affected as is the case with other high schools, but it is still losing teachers and leading category 3 advanced teachers. In fact, I understand that Cannington Community College will lose one of its advanced teachers out of that school.

Next door to Cannington Community College is Sevenoaks Senior College. I point out that Sevenoaks Senior College was Western Australia's first independent public school; it has been an independent public school since it was created. I have referred to Sevenoaks Senior College in this chamber before because it was the Premier, when he was Minister for Education in the 1990s, who created Sevenoaks Senior College. I have previously commented that I imagine the Premier would be very proud of that establishment, because it is a very good, unique school that caters for years 11 and 12 students only. It has a very large student population for those two years taking on some of the hardest to educate students. Sevenoaks Senior College provides these students with a world-class educational opportunity right across the spectrum, from vocational education training courses, including Cannington Community Education Support Centre students in years 11 and 12, right through to advanced maths and physics programs.

It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 928; that is the index on the My School website about the social status of the school population, remembering that an index of 1 000 is average; therefore, an index of 928 is significantly below average for its community. It is a school that takes students from a demonstrated social disadvantage. The principal always talks to me at the start of the year about the number of students who are sofa surfing—who do not even have anywhere to live. The college takes on these students.

However, Sevenoaks Senior College is losing five per cent of its budget—that is, some \$450 000 out of a current budget of \$9 million. That is what these cuts mean to the college, but it is actually worse than that. The government's reform states that classes will need to have 27 students. Sevenoaks Senior College has only a small number of people doing advanced maths and physics. As it needs to have 27 students in a class, it will not be able to continue with advanced maths and science. I will talk about Lynwood Senior High School in a second. One of the senior high schools in my electorate, Sevenoaks Senior College, will not be able to proceed with advanced maths and science because of the government's cuts.

It is actually worse than that, too, because a very large industry-standard vocational education and training centre at that school is funded by the commonwealth government. As Sevenoaks Senior College formed a cooperation with a number of other high schools in the immediate vicinity, it pooled all the federal government money and built one high-quality VET centre at the school. This centre does motor mechanics, it has a very good relationship with a number of businesses and has industry standard teaching. It does not involve some sort of old red motor that people pull out of a car and put back again. This is industry-standard training. Contemporary motor vehicles are being used by the students for training. Next door is an industry-standard metal workshop where students use current industry relevant equipment to learn their metal working skills. Again, I return to this question about the expected number of students to be 27 in a class. For occupational health and safety reasons, the VET centre cannot have more than 16 students in a class. That is just not allowed. To fund that program, the school will need to have extra kids in other classes; therefore, there is a double disadvantage. Children in my electorate will lose the opportunity to do advanced maths and science, and at the same time it will have a negative impact on other students because of the problems with the need for so many students in the VET area. That is the effect of these budget cuts. Anybody who says it is not a budget cut needs to come with me to the schools in my electorate and talk to the principals, the students, the parents and the school community.

As I said, a second government senior high school serves my electorate—Lynwood Senior High School. Lynwood is in my electorate, but the school is actually across the road in Parkwood, even though it is called Lynwood. Parkwood is in the member for Riverton's electorate, but obviously it is a government senior high school that serves the southern part of my electorate. The My School website indicates that its budget is \$12 899; its ICSEA value is 979—again that is below the national average. This school is losing over seven per cent of its recurrent funding—that is, \$951 807. It may well be that Lynwood will have to lose advanced maths and physics classes because, again, it does not have enough students to fill 27 places in a physics class or an advanced maths class. Lynwood has done a fabulous job of getting a 100 per cent graduation rate over the last four years, which is a remarkable achievement for a school like that.

One of the alternatives to cancelling advanced maths and physics classes at that school is to accept extra students into the classroom. It will keep the 27 kids in the class, but that means accepting kids into the class who we know will not succeed. That will then destroy the 100 per cent graduation rate that the school has worked so hard to create. That is the effect. The most probable outcome will be that no government high school that serves the

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electorate I represent will provide advanced maths and science classes. How can that be fair? My electorate is one of the most disadvantaged electorates in the state. How is it fair to not allow those students who are bright and hardworking to succeed? That is the effect of the budget cuts proposed by the Liberal Party. I remember back in the 1990s, when I was living in the northern suburbs, Balga Senior High School stopped doing the Tertiary Entrance Examination—that was when the current Premier was Minister for Education. Fortunately, my kids were not even at school then; they were still in pre-school. People who were living in the northern suburbs at the time said, “Students can go to Morley Senior High School because it does TEE there.” But that is a very long trip and is not reasonable. An inevitable result of removing advanced maths and physics classes from these two senior high schools in my electorate is that parents will put their children into low-fee Catholic schools and low-fee Christian schools. That will have a negative impact on public schools and make public education weaker. It is the responsibility of government to make sure that students have proper opportunities. It is ridiculous that these two schools, which are both quite large, have a funding formula that will not provide advanced maths and physics classes to its students.

I just want to finish on this issue. Both those schools were listed by the Premier as being rich schools. Both those schools were listed in that document that was given out to *The West Australian* as being rich schools because they had reserves. I think it was \$2.4 million in reserves at Sevenoaks Senior College. Both those schools were saving money for when the half-cohort was in year 12, which is next year, allowing them to use their reserves to continue to provide a full range of options to those half-year cohorts. They had planned for that since the half-year cohort was announced 13 years ago. We should remember that both schools have been independent public schools for that entire period. Of that \$2.4 million, \$800 000 was for a specific maintenance project. In fact, \$2 million of that \$2.4 million was allocated to specific tasks. It is the same at Lynwood Senior High School. I could go on in some detail—I will not, because I do not want to unnecessarily delay the house—and look at every dollar of reserves that that school has built up by its clever management and hard work. It is bizarre for that school, which as I have said is disadvantaged compared with the national average, is doing good work to make sure that every student is given an opportunity, and has had a 100 per cent graduation rate, to be told it is a rich school. The same applies to Sevenoaks Senior College. It had 30 students at the start of the year who were without a home. That school is also being told that it is a rich school. The ICSEA index for Sevenoaks is 928. That puts that school into, I think, the lowest 20 per cent of schools in Australia for its social index. Therefore, it is also bizarre for that school to be called a rich school.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [7.21 pm]: I rise tonight to speak against the motion, because I am concerned that the intent of the reform process is getting lost in translation in this debate. I have heard a number of members opposite talk with a fair degree of passion about some of their local schools and focus in on the dollar value and on the fact that they think this will drastically impact on outcomes. However, I am concerned that this might amount to nothing more than scaremongering and that it might create a sense of anxiety among teachers and parents in many of our schools.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I am not going to tolerate any interjections. I did protect members who have spoken on this motion, and they were heard in silence. If members are going to call, and I hear them, I will call them. Thank you.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I would like to refer members to page v of the Teese report. The last two paragraphs on that page state —

For many years, government in Western Australia has sought to deliver equitable resourcing across a large and very diverse jurisdiction. Adjustments to staffing formula and many special purpose lines of funding have tackled problems of low performance and educational disadvantage. Many piecemeal changes have been made to a system of resource allocation which is now excessively complex and has exhausted its capacity.

It is very doubtful whether the big achievement challenges that Western Australia faces can be effectively addressed without significant reform, firstly to school management and autonomy (such as is currently taking place through the Independent Public Schools initiative), and secondly to the funding model itself, which should be designed to support autonomy.

As the parent of a five-year-old child in pre-primary at one of our government schools, I am acutely aware of the concerns that teachers and parents currently have. However, a lot of those concerns are born out of confusion and misunderstanding. I would like to focus tonight on what this reform agenda is all about. First, the Minister for Education has said that an extra \$300 million has been allocated to the education budget this year. So, on the

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one hand, we have been told that there is an increase of \$300 million in funding. However, teachers and parents are concerned that there may be some cuts to their schools. I will address that issue in a moment.

I want to focus now on the drivers for change. The drivers for change take two agendas into account. The first is to enable greater equity in the delivery of education for children in Western Australia. The second is to apply a more responsible budget allocation approach to the funding of education in Western Australia. So, it is twofold. I will focus first on the equity agenda. I have drawn out of the Teese review three key recommendations. The first is that funding should be used more effectively to improve student outcomes. The second is that a new funding model should consider each student according to his or her educational needs. The third is that a new funding model should provide schools with more flexibility in planning and using resources. These three key recommendations lead to the development of a new student-centred funding model. That funding model is the basis of this state government's reform agenda. The funding that is distributed to schools should be based on the needs of each individual child. That is pretty clear.

I enjoyed listening to the member for Armadale. He made mention of the importance of literacy and numeracy. I agree with that 100 per cent. It is critical that we do not throw the baby out with the bathwater with regard to literacy and numeracy. Another essential element is information and communications technology. But a number of other members have drawn our attention to a child's unique aptitudes and abilities. We should, wherever possible, try to enhance each child's unique aptitudes and abilities, and focus on the learning style of each child so that each child's particular strengths can help that child to learn and grow. Educational theorist Gardner has coined this focus on aptitudes and abilities as "multiple intelligence types"; that is, looking at the multiple intelligence types and strengths of each individual child. This covers things such as spatial awareness, linguistics, interpersonal skills, music ability, bodily kinesthetic—those great athletes that we all know—interpersonal and self-awareness skills, and logical and mathematical thought. With a student-centred funding model, a school will receive its total allocation of funds through what is known as a one-line budget. There will be a salaries component, as members know, and there will be a cash component. It will be entirely up to the school to apply this funding on a student-needs basis.

I draw members' attention to the following comment on page vi of the Teese report —

The most efficient and equitable use of resources is made when performance differences between schools at any given stage of schooling are minimized referred to in this report as *horizontal efficiency* and when the readiness of students to progress across stages of schooling is maximized (*vertical efficiency*).

It is with this in mind that we want to make sure that schools are empowered through the funding model to allocate funds to where they are most needed for students at any particular point in time.

I turn now to the second aspect of the reform agenda as I see it. That is the responsible allocation of budget funds. We understand that the education budget has increased by 54 per cent since 2007–08. That represents a budget of \$2.8 billion, increasing to \$4.4 billion. That has exceeded student growth of 8.6 per cent over the same period. Gareth Parker, in an article in *The West Australian* on 5 September, made the following observation —

While student numbers have grown 9–12 per cent since 2008, full-time staff have grown 16 per cent in the same period.

He observed also —

In 2009–10, 68 per cent of all education spending went on staff costs. This year it will rise to nearly 76 per cent.

He observed also —

Essentially, the Government has employed more staff per student on more expensive salaries. That's a plainly unsustainable mix.

That is why we need to be very, very careful in how we apply our funding, because while individual schools will need to adapt to the reform agenda and change some of their programs to focus on individual student needs, we as a government must continue to be fiscally responsible. That is still in the context, of course, of recognising that we are increasing the budget this year by \$300 million. I draw the attention of members back to the fearmongering, which some members opposite are participating in to manipulate public opinion that is both inappropriate and politically self-serving. Instead of focussing on their own political pointscoring, I suggest that members opposite work with the government to help reform the education sector so that it is better for all children in Western Australia and so that the guidance given by the Teese report can be followed. Members

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opposite also talk a lot about winners and losers in the reform process, and they focused a lot on the dollar figures being allocated to Western Australian schools. Throwing money at the wrong program in the wrong place at the wrong time is not an effective reform. This reform is about making sure that money is invested in the right program, at the right place and the right time. Yes, some schools will have funding redirected. Why? It is so that it goes to where it is most needed. That is also highlighted in the Teese report on page ix, which states —

The current funding model is focused on equitable provision of resources: this emphasis needs to change if schools are to deliver better and more equitable outcomes to students.

Many different facts and figures linked around this reform program have created some concern in the community and must be looked at in the context of this reform program. There has been an issue around education assistants, but the fact is that education assistants will be allocated to classes as they are now—one per every 15 kids—and if there are fewer than 15 kids, it will be a percentage, which is more than is currently the case. Every child who needs general education assistant support will receive it. No permanent education assistant will lose their job and some will move to nearby schools or into other positions if required.

On the teachers' side, this government has delivered on its commitment to make WA teachers the best paid in the nation. Salaries have increased between 23.6 per cent and 30.5 per cent since 2008, with a further increase of 4.25 per cent in December this year. Although teacher levels in 2013 will be maintained in 2014, there will be variations on a school-by-school basis, which is again linked to the reform process of making sure that the teachers are where they need to be based on student needs.

I will also highlight some points made by Bethany Hiatt in *The West Australian* on 5 September. She reported that level 3 teachers —

... also receive an extra time allowance of 0.1 full-time equivalent, or about one half-day a week, to allow them to share their expertise with others.

The Education Department has told schools that time allocation will be withdrawn next year ... Some schools had as many as 14 level 3 teachers.

The same article continues —

Education Department director-general Sharyn O'Neil said ... "Level 3 ... teachers are among our best and highest paid teachers, so I think most parents will be happy to know they will be in the classrooms full-time from next year, working directly with students where they can have the biggest impact on their learning," ...

Clearly, this government is working towards an agenda. As I said from the outset, it is focused on making sure that we reform the education sector—the schools—so that there is greater equity in the delivery of education to our kids and a more responsible allocation of budget funds to schools—and I caveat that with the fact that there is still a \$300 million increase in the budget this year.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [7.34 pm]: I will make some brief comments on this motion. Members on the other side must be aware that this is not some sort of Labor Party scaremongering campaign. This campaign is being driven by the teachers, the principals and the parents of children at our schools. It is not something that we have manufactured. There are real concerns, and the principals and teachers have been told of the real cuts they will experience in future years. This government has tried to portray it as some sort of party political campaign. It is not. This campaign is being driven by the mums and dads, the teachers and the principals throughout our school system who are deeply concerned about what will happen in their schools next year and the following years. I have been contacted, as have my colleagues, by people who have real concerns about the cuts to the number of education assistants, and the cuts to additional but vital net funding—the school support programs resource allocation funding. These are serious issues. Some schools in my electorate are performing very well. Some were granted independent public school status and are now having their bank accounts raided by the government that has lost its way with this reform. The Premier has labelled this as some sort of party political campaign. It is not. The more that members on the government side try to portray it as such and not listen to the real concerns of people within our schools, the more they will be disconnected from the people who put them in their seats. We on this side of the house have a real concern about the quality of education that can be delivered to our schools. Many of my colleagues, particularly those from regional WA, know that their schools are under enormous pressure to cope with the stresses that modern classes bring to our school environment, and to take resources and additional funding away from that classroom at this point in time is the wrong thing to do. I urge all members to listen to parents, teachers and principals because they are the people dealing with these issues on a day-to-day basis. We are not manufacturing this concern. Those people have come to us because they are deeply concerned, and they want us to raise these issues because they want them fixed before next year. The

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good things happening in our schools will be undone by the proposals being put forward and the budget cuts being implemented by the Barnett government.

I will talk about a couple of other issues in relation to the reform process. I am deeply disappointed that this government failed to sign up to the Better Schools funding program. This government has rejected federal funding for our kids because it wanted to play a significant political game before the election. This government rejected the money put on the table by the former federal government because it was planning to cut funding. It rejected the money on the table for a reform very similar to what is now being proposed by the Barnett government, and the idea that the other states will not get their money is wrong. The new federal government has already committed to additional funding to the other states that signed up to the Gonski funding, otherwise known as the Better Schools package. We have given up \$600 million of federal funding because of the position taken by this government to undertake reforms, which now this government says are great. I remember when the Better Schools or Gonski package was on the table. The Premier said we were doing okay and that our school system was the best in the nation. Now we hear that our school system is not delivering the outcomes that the government wants to achieve. Six months ago our school system was the best in the nation and the government rejected \$600 million. Today it is not giving the outcomes that are wanted. The story keeps changing; that is why people do not believe it. That is why principals, parents and teachers are coming to us, just as the community came to us about the solar feed-in tariff. People come to us when the government has made a monumental mistake and they ask us to raise it in the public arena. As the opposition, and as the Labor Party, that is what we will do. To discount this campaign as a political issue and not as an education issue is wrong. More and more government members will be disconnected from the people who elected them. They want their government members to raise these issues just as they want us to raise these issues.

I will not spend time going through each school, but we have some very well performing schools in my electorate. One in particular has managed to get on the front page of both state and national newspapers because of the turnaround in some of its performances. These schools need to be encouraged; they do not need to be penalised. I turn to the pressures faced by Ellenbrook Secondary College with enrolment numbers. The government committed to building a new high school in north Ellenbrook by 2017 to relieve some of the capacity issues at Ellenbrook Secondary College. That project has been pushed back, which will create more pressure and capacity issues at the current college. I urge the government to look at enrolment numbers, particularly at some of our bigger secondary colleges, and see what can be done to honour the promise it made at the state election nearly six months ago. The government promised to open a new Ellenbrook high school in north Ellenbrook by 2017. As I said, that is a major issue.

My concluding comments go to the graph tabled in this place by the member for Forrestfield. If the member for Forrestfield is watching this debate somewhere, I urge him to come back to the chamber, because he has misled the Parliament. He said that the Labor government had cut education funding. First of all, yesterday he said that the now Leader of the Opposition had cut funding for education. He was wrong about that; he did not even get the years right. He also said that the Labor government had cut education funding by \$200 million or \$300 million in one year. That had me scratching around because I just could not remember a \$300 million cut in education funding over those eight years.

Dr A.D. Buti: You would remember that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think we would remember it—a 10 per cent cut in education funding would have been memorable for everybody involved.

Mr P. Papalia: I think someone might have noticed!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Someone might have remembered a 10 per cent cut in education funding! Over the dinner break I sought to go over those figures.

Mr P.C. Tinley: You did homework!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I did some homework because I wanted to know why the member for Forrestfield came into this place with this graph. I wanted to know where he got it from and who produced it, so I checked it, as any good opposition member should, against the budget papers. Now I know what he has done and what is wrong. This explanation is a bit technical, so I ask members to bear with me. I first go to the budget papers for 2006–07. At the time the relevant agency was the Department of Education and Training and there were three service areas: primary education, service 1; secondary education, service 2; and vocational education and training services, service 3. The total actual budget for 2004–05 was \$3.17 billion—total expenses. We take away the figure for TAFE because we want consistency and get the figure of \$2.6 billion, which is pretty much the figure the member for Forrestfield got for 2004–05. Therefore, I knew I was working with the same sorts of figures that he had been working with. Then I went to the figures for 2005–06, the time the member for Forrestfield was

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talking about when he said we cut the budget by \$300 million, and I still could not remember a Labor government cutting the budget by 10 per cent in one year. I looked at his figures of \$1.642 billion for service 1, \$999 million for service 2—secondary education—and I came up with the figure of \$2.461 billion that he put on his graph. But there is a key problem with it: those numbers were adjusted for the deletion of a capital user charge. For all those people who do not know what a capital user charge is, it is an accrual accounting treatment that the former Labor government used in the early part of the decade. In Western Australia the capital user charge was a levy currently set at eight per cent on the net assets of budget funded agencies, as was expressed in the statement of financial position. For the figures that relate up to 2006–07, the capital user charge of the net assets of the agency was applied so that expenses were overinflated by eight per cent of total net assets. That meant that it was very hard to get consistency across those years. To get consistency, the capital user charge had to be taken away from all the numbers. The member for Forrestfield, or whoever did those numbers for him, took the figure for 2005–06 and said that there had been a cut. Looking at the same table from the 2007–08 budget papers that the member for Forrestfield must have used, I saw footnote (a), which reads —

Following the enactment of the *Financial Management Act 2006*, agencies are no longer required to pay the Capital User Charge. In order to make the above table meaningful for comparative purposes, the impact of the Capital User Charge has been removed from the 2005–06 Actuals and both the 2006–07 Budget and Estimated Actual. A reconciliation identifying the impact of this adjustment has been inserted after the financial statements.

Let us go through this again. The figure for 2005–06 that the member for Forrestfield used did not include a capital user charge, but the 2004–05 figure he used did include a capital user charge. How much do members think the capital user charge was for 2005–06? It was about \$300 million to \$400 million and so that is the explanation for the minister for Forrestfield's claim. I urge him—or whoever did this graph—to come into the chamber, apologise and go through it. As I said, I think we would have all remembered if we had cut \$300 million. I think the Liberals would have remembered. I think many of the former ministers of the government would have remembered and I think many people working in the community at the time would probably have remembered the massive rallies that would have occurred in the streets. It did not happen. There was a change in the accounting treatment and the capital user charge at the time. I was never keen on the capital user charge because I thought it was not relevant to public sector accounting, and it was removed in 2006.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Treasury liked it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Treasury liked it, but I did not like it.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You remember it do you?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister remembers it; I thank him.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I remember it from back when we were in government before.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I never liked it because I thought it artificially inflated numbers and made comparisons difficult, as has been proven in this case. It is very hard to look at figures in comparison because the capital user charge artificially inflated expense numbers. The figure for 2005–06 being used to drive the member for Forrestfield's graph did not have the capital user charge, but the figure for 2004–05 did. I worked that out over the dinner break. I want the member for Forrestfield to apologise. It was a legitimate mistake. I do not know who produced the graph, but to say that we cut education funding by \$300 million when we were in government—that the now Leader of the Opposition cut education funding by \$300 million—is clearly wrong. The member for Forrestfield has a duty to apologise. As I said, the capital user charge was very confusing for everybody involved; I always hated it and the minister probably hated it too. It was set at eight per cent of the net assets of an agency. It should never have been introduced by, I think, a Liberal government. It was taken out, but it does affect comparisons, and for a couple of budgets it was quite difficult to compare the numbers, so that is why we have to go to the detailed income statement at the back—there is actually reconciliation too.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You actually have to know what you're talking about.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Exactly. Seriously, making the claims that we cut education funding by \$300 million—just yelling and saying that the now Leader of the Opposition did it—is very, very bad form, because really, we would all remember it. Even someone who was in primary school at the time—none of us were in primary school at the time!—and everyone who was out there in the community —

Mr F.A. Alban: The whole graph is wrong, is it?

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am not saying it in an attacking way; it is just a mistake.

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire;
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Mr Chris Hatton

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is a good line about that, but I will not use it! As I said, it was wrong and I urge the member for Forrestfield to apologise. We did not cut the budget by \$300 million.

Let us get back to the substance of what we are discussing. The Liberal government is making significant cuts to our education system.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The budget has gone up by \$300 million this financial year.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government is making significant cuts to our education system and to our schools. People are very concerned; the community is concerned. We are not making this up; people are contacting us. They are contacting us asking us to raise these issues because they impact directly on the education of children and young people throughout Western Australia.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [7.51 pm]: In the small amount of time left, it would not hurt for me to add a little contribution to this motion. I thank the member for West Swan for her contribution. She was a little kind on the member for Forrestfield. She did a bit of homework over dinner; imagine what she could do over lunch! She has done over the member for Forrestfield. She has unpacked, unpicked and slapped him down in one clean, clear, fell swoop. She has not only exposed a rookie error, she has also exposed the complete veneer that is the conservative side of the house. The veneer is that this government thinks some tardy little bit of tricky bookkeeping and accounting can somehow assuage the ayes, the integrity and the investigative capacity of this side of the house to keep it to account, to ensure it runs an honest and appropriate government for the delivery of services to the people of Western Australia. This is nothing short of an intellectual rort. Over the last couple of hours we have heard inane interjections and pithy, useless and facile contributions by members who somehow apply a veneer of credibility to what this government calls reform. It is simply nothing more than cuts—cuts straight to the heart of the communities that we all represent, including members on the government side; and members opposite know it. Unless they are a member of a leafy green electorate in the western suburbs that has had an increase in the number of teachers in its schools, they are all culpable, and are responsible to this house, as the highest sovereign body of this state, to actually stand up to their own government, in their own party room and to the minister, to hold them to account for the cuts that have riven every electorate in this state.

There are things going on in the suburbs of our electorates that government members must know about. Members opposite cannot get to their feet and say that we are running some sort of scare campaign and causing a loss of confidence in the education system of this state. That is completely disingenuous. Quite frankly, I think it is completely offensive to look the opposition in the eye and say, "It's not your job to talk to principals, it's not your job to talk to parents and citizens associations and it's not your job to talk to the communities that you represent." That is exactly what our job is. The behaviour of this government in gagging the Department of Education through the district directors right down to the principals—yes, to gag them!—from talking to their elected local member, who has the innate right to garner information and deliver it to this house for the purposes of keeping this government to account, is absolutely risible. Members opposite should hang their heads in shame for their behaviour, for their dishonest practices, and for their total apathy in the way they have approached this.

These cuts for 2014 will put a dent in our schools' capacities, particularly in the older schools. It will leave them gasping for fiscal air come 2015 when the half-cohort comes in. Government members are responsible for it. Melville Senior High School will lose 13 teachers by the end of this year. At Hamilton Senior High School, eight teachers will be gone by the end of this year. There has been a 30 per cent drop in school support program resource allocation funding for Hamilton Senior High School. How many Indigenous kids go to Hamilton Senior High School? What is the impact of that? It will immediately lose its attendance officer. Sixty-two kids in Hamilton Senior High School are under truant watch. That school works with 62 kids to get them to school every day. They need additional help. Where is that coming from? It is not coming from a mean and nasty Barnett government that has this idea of cuts disguised as reform. It has nothing to do with that. This has everything to do with a choice of priorities. The priorities of this government have been about stadiums, waterfronts and trying to reboot a coal-fired power station—please! That is \$330 million down the tube right there, exposed by the member for Cannington.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Have you expressed that view to the member for Collie–Preston?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I have expressed a lot of views to the member for Collie–Preston. The one thing I get from the member for Collie–Preston is how his community is being assaulted by this government from one side to the

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next. As the Minister for Planning knows, the most important aspect of jobs is education and training. This government has no intention whatsoever of putting in pathways for our young people to find an opportunity. In a state as rich as Western Australia, we should be doing better. In a state as rich as Western Australia, this government's priorities should have been the delivery of services. The Minister for Planning of all people knew about the population increases. I have been in this place when it has been mentioned. The Western Australian Planning Commission puts a bulletin out every year, or even more frequently, about population increases in this state. It has been trending up. The Minister for Planning cannot come into this place and feign some amazed surprise at a huge leap in enrolments in our school system. The government knew it was coming, yet it still made the choice about where to put the stadium. It still made the choice to try to reboot an antiquated power system. It still made the choice to build a lagoon off the river. It still made all those choices. It made the choice to sink the railway line and it made the choice to sink the bus stop that goes with it. These are choices. It continues to make them. It made choices at Scarborough and Albany, and in the Pilbara and the wheatbelt.

Mr J.H.D. Day: If we did not do City Link, you would have been all over us. It was planned for and announced by the previous Labor government, as I said today—not actually delivered but totally supported by Labor in government and then in opposition.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Did we plan for and pay for the sinking of the bus station? No.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It is part of the whole project.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Minister, be accurate—it was never part of it. Be accurate.

We were the ones who planned and delivered a \$1 billion rail line. Not one inch of rail line has ever been built by a Liberal government.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The member for Swan Hills should be the last one to talk. He promises railways like he is on a Monopoly board! He promises railways like they are his own utilities! The member for Swan Hills promised things to his electorate like he owned the community chest.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Member, no interjections, please.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for your protection. One would wonder whether they could truly be classed as interjections or inane prattle! This government needs to be real. If members want to come into this place and talk about education reform, no problem—bring it on. That is a worthy debate to have. The government should not come in here and say it is caught in a budget black hole. The only place it lives is in an intellectual cul de sac that it simply cannot find a way out of, except to cut, cut, cut and make poor choices!

MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta) [7.59 pm]: I do not have much time so I will talk quickly. I rise to speak on the motion on education reform. I have spoken about the issue previously. Gonski was mentioned today. I do not want to relive Gonski, but the opposition brought up Gonski again today so I will read a quote from Gonski that relates to why we are doing this important reform.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.