

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 12 November on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [3.19 pm]: It is customary on these occasions to speak about developments and achievements in one's electorate; an inspection of *Hansard* indicates that I have done so on many occasions. There have been times when I have had to persistently repeat the necessity for a specific project for my electorate in more than one Premier's Statement address. As I had no opportunity to speak in 2023, I have a bit of ground to cover today. I will briefly chronicle what has transpired in the Landsdale electorate over the recent past. This being my penultimate speech, I am largely able to say, in the words of George W. Bush, "Mission accomplished."

Landsdale Gardens Primary School has almost completed its second year under the leadership of its principal, Natasha Doyle. Landsdale Primary School finally has a brand new canteen that can meet the needs of a large school in a growing area. At the school's recent thankyou morning tea for volunteers, Sue and her team at the canteen produced a table groaning with an endless array of delicious goodies. No doubt the renovated canteen facilitated their efforts. The CCTV system installed at Landsdale Primary School has seemingly minimised the incidence of theft, which is vital given the increasing use of technology at such schools.

I am delighted that the Pearsall Primary School therapy hub is up and running, with 16 different programs for students and parents to improve outcomes through early intervention. The state government's contribution of \$176 000 has enabled this to occur. It is much appreciated by all, including chaplain Lisa Ingram, who has capitalised on the opportunity of a separate, safe and welcoming space for therapy programs. It is used by both students and parents alike. The expansion of the Warradale Community Centre and Clubrooms—it was, I have to say, a 2016 election promise—is at last finished and includes umpire rooms, change rooms and tables. Despite the presence of Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex nearby, it is difficult to keep up with demand for sporting facilities in the electorate, especially for junior sport. The Northern Suburbs Men's Shed, which is currently located in suboptimal rental premises in Wangara, will move to land near Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex. The plans, which were a long time in gestation, as well as the need to create an access road, have finally received planning approval and construction should be finished next year. The premise is funded by a \$1 million contribution by the state government.

I am also excited about the Cook Labor government's major cash injection of \$6 million for the City of Wanneroo Landsdale library. The contribution to Dordaak Kepup—the place of living waters—funds part of a larger building as a youth hub within the facility. The Minister for Culture and the Arts, David Templeman, recently visited the site, where construction is full steam ahead. There has been lengthy consultation with neighbouring schools, so completion is eagerly anticipated by young prospective users.

The Wanneroo Cricket Club can now put runs on the board with an electronic scoreboard. Planning is well in hand for major renovations at the clubhouse.

The McGowan government's \$2.6 million towards world-class lighting at Kingsway Olympic Sports Club's ground enabled the ground to be used as a home base for the Danish team during the FIFA Women's World Cup tournament in July last year. More importantly, in the longer term those improvements will be a legacy for the whole community because they will enable more night matches and training to occur. Kingsway Olympic Sports Club recently hosted an Australia Cup match under lights. Kingsway Olympic successfully and historically made it to the quarter finals of the competition, which comprises more than 700 feeder clubs from all over Australia. Alas, they lost to Adelaide Football Club. Unfortunately, the lights highlighted the own goal! Had they been dimmer, it would not have been so upsetting to us all. More importantly, the clear TV broadcast was enabled by the lighting.

Most exciting—I should not have left it to last—is the government's \$40 million injection to support major upgrades at Ashdale Secondary College in Darch. Construction will commence early next year. The project includes a new two-storey specialist teaching block, a STEM lab training place and digital design learning and science labs. An adjacent single-storey building will house design and technology workshops. I thank the Minister for Education, Dr Tony Buti, his staff and the department for giving this project the priority it so richly deserves. As they say in the classics, good things come to those who wait and wait and wait!

In my remaining time, I turn to several issues with which, sadly, I have had little success.

The first concerns the ability of pedestrians to safely cross Mirrabooka Avenue between Darch and Landsdale, particularly during peak periods. Mirrabooka Avenue, which is one of the busiest roads in my electorate, is a four-lane distributor road with a speed limit of 70 kilometres an hour. Given that Mirrabooka Avenue connects with the Landsdale industrial precinct and Ocean Reef Road, it is used by a variety of vehicles, including heavy haulage trucks. The speed and volume of traffic activity has always presented a challenge for safe pedestrian activity on Mirrabooka Avenue; however, the issue became more serious and acute after the Department of Education

approved the construction of Landsdale Gardens Primary School. The school opened in 2023 with a catchment area that is bisected by Mirrabooka Avenue and includes parts of Landsdale and Darch. Students from Darch who attempt to walk to school are expected to cross four lanes of traffic without the assistance of a warden or infrastructure that deters speeding or calms traffic. The City of the Wanneroo has installed u-rails and adjusted the footpath and kerbing to facilitate pedestrian crossing; however, this does not improve the safety experience of students.

Walking and riding to school is an initiative that the Cook Labor government has firmly endorsed, particularly through its support of the Your Move campaign in schools across WA. Safe transport routes within a school's catchment area, access to footpaths, traffic wardens and traffic-calming measures are necessary to ensure that participation in the program continues to increase. My advocacy and correspondence to the City of Wanneroo, the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Road Safety and the Department of Education began even before the school opened. I pleaded for a sensible traffic treatment that recognises the unique circumstances of pedestrian activity across Mirrabooka Avenue. Regrettably, the exchanges to date can be described as creating a catch 22. The school's enrolment numbers, which is a little over 200 students, cannot justify an application to the Western Australia Police Force for a staffed school crossing; however, student numbers from the Darch side of the catchment area are unlikely to increase without improved pedestrian access.

Earlier this year, I received a letter from Landsdale Primary School co-signed by the board chair and president of the school P&C. The principal, Ms Natasha Doyle, has also spoken to me about safety concerns during my numerous pastoral visits to the school. The letter includes traffic data provided by the City of Wanneroo, and reads in part —

We are advised recent daily measurements indicate that between 7:30 am–9:00 am, the volume of traffic is 1088 vehicles northbound and 1398 southbound. Between 2:30 pm–4:00 pm, there are 1241 northbound and 1567 southbound.

The operating speed of Mirrabooka Avenue is between 77–78km/h.

The board chair and school parents and citizens president say —

We consider that even if an illuminated school crossing sign were installed (without a crossing guard) given the nature of the site, this would be insufficient to mandate timely driver compliance. There needs to be the highest level of road safety infrastructure on this busy major road.

We note that in other similar sites, Hepburn Avenue, Kingsley; Canning Highway; and Cambridge Street, West Leederville with similar conditions red and white poles with flashing lights have been erected in addition to standard measures.

We have been made aware of "near miss" incidents. We feel duty bound to advocate for all appropriate measures to be implemented to avert the possibility of a tragic outcome.

The City of Wanneroo has repeatedly advised that Main Roads Western Australia is the responsible authority for approving and installing traffic treatments such as red and white poles. Given that the red and white poles were approved at the other locations I referred to with similar or better traffic conditions and road structures, I am at a loss to know why such infrastructure has been ruled out of hand in this instance.

While I am on the subject of traffic congestion and safety concerns, I note the intersection of Kingsway and Hartman Drive, Darch. The intersection is in close proximity to the Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex, Ashdale Secondary College, Kingsway Christian College and Ashdale Primary School. As of semester 2 last year, Ashdale Secondary College had 1 826 students, Kingsway Christian College had 1 325 students and Ashdale Primary School had 727 students. Therefore, close to 4 000 students are travelling to and from those three schools on weekdays. The congestion is significant and the issue is exacerbated by the road structure and the number of people in the school community driving to pick up and drop off children. The area is relatively close to my electorate office and I have observed several incidences of delays to navigate the roundabout along Kingsway and Hartman Drive exceeding 15 minutes during the congested periods. Transperth buses, cyclists, cars and pedestrians all try to navigate those busy transport networks. The situation appears to be getting worse as student enrolments continues to increase. Main Roads Western Australia, the Western Australia Police Force and the City of Wanneroo must continue to work together in collaboration with local schools to ensure that the safe and efficient road use is the top priority around that intersection. Despite this acute congestion, I have ironically noted on several occasions a police presence to enforce speed limits in close proximity but nothing is done to ensure that cars do not queue across the roundabout intersection, thereby compounding the problems. The issue of speed is laughable given that everyone is at a standstill.

I have raised with the Minister for Transport and successive energy ministers the lack of expedition in completing the planned Alexander Drive shared-path project that is to provide pedestrian access along Alexander Drive between Hepburn Avenue and Gngarara Road. The project was planned several years ago by the City of Wanneroo and is funded by cell 9 developer contribution plans. I understand that the project was delayed by more than two years as the local government awaited approval from Western Power for the relocation of underground power assets. I have been advised that on both occasions, Western Power was experiencing resourcing issues that impacted the

approval and project completion timeframes. Given the Cook Labor government's commitment to active transport, including cycling and pedestrian activity in the metropolitan area, this project needs to receive the necessary approvals to facilitate the expeditious construction of the project.

While I am reflecting on traffic, recently there have been legitimate concerns about the level of road trauma in Western Australia. It takes a terrible toll on families, loved ones, witnesses, first responders and survivors. Some years ago in opposition, I advocated for the creation of a road trauma victim counselling service and drafted an amendment to legislation to permit funds from the road trauma trust fund to create such a service. The impetus for the creation of the service began in February 1999 when Alan and Glenda Maloney found themselves on a journey no-one would wish to take. Their 17-year-old daughter, Skye, and her friend died suddenly in a road crash. Alan and Glenda Maloney became increasingly aware about the lack of support available while trying to cope with their trauma and negotiate all the post-crash procedures whilst in this state. They delivered school presentations, advocated for a 50 kilometre-an-hour urban speed limit and petitioned for a car manufacturers' code of conduct against using speed to advertise vehicles. Being contacted by other grieving families seeking support during that time reinforced their belief in the enormous gap in support services. Their own research showed that the existing agencies were severely stretched. Time delays and excessive costs to access suitable help led to people feeling isolated and unsupported. The Maloneys' lobbying was tenacious and, after many years, their determined persistence was ultimately fruitful.

Supported by the road trauma trust account through the Road Safety Council, the Office of Road Safety and the Department of Health, the vision of many became a reality and Road Trauma Support WA was launched on 17 November 2013 on the annual World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. Dr Sudhakar Rao, a trauma surgeon at Royal Perth Hospital, is its patron. That was great news, but unlike the equivalent service in Victoria, the Western Australian service does not assist with victim impact statements in court.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Most significantly, it does not coordinate volunteer emergency service personnel to provide road trauma awareness seminars that are given to persons who have been before the courts on low-level driving offences and are referred as part of their sentence to better appreciate the impact of road trauma. My research in the context of this is that it is beneficial for volunteers to provide those training seminars because they get to speak personally about the impact road trauma has had on them and it acts as a very significant deterrent for the offenders. I recommend that we consider extending the service here with the attendant increase in resourcing to include these elements that work so well in Victoria. We know that offending behaviour quite often occurs because there is a lack of empathy on behalf of the offenders. By ensuring that offenders have a firsthand account of the impact their offending has on others, I believe this may impress upon them the need to take care when on the roads in future. It would also expand the options of sentencing authorities, which I know would garner community support.

On the final issue I will raise, I need to declare an interest as an apartment dweller, an electric vehicle driver and a resident ratepayer in Perth. I refer to the lack of expedition by some metropolitan local governments to expeditiously facilitate public EV charging infrastructure. That applies to my electorate in the City of Wanneroo where there is perhaps a surprisingly high penetration of EVs. Despite my representations, the availability of state government grants and the mayor driving an EV, the response could best be described as tepid and has not translated into action. The City of Perth is a member of the World Energy Cities Partnership and boasts that it is committed to fostering the transition to a more sustainable energy future and is leading initiatives to build a lower carbon source to power the world today and into tomorrow. In Perth there are many apartments, but there are legislative constraints on retrofitting chargers within apartment complexes. This creates a very real problem. This is compounded by the lack of expedition and enthusiasm by the City of Perth to ensure adequate publicly available on-street or pole-charging infrastructure for the needs of visitors and residents alike.

I might just digress here. There was recently a by-election in the City of Perth and I wrote to all the candidates about this issue. I got some quite perplexing responses. The person who ultimately won that election sent me a very glossy email that was his vision for the City of Perth, but referred to bike paths, so I remain a little perplexed.

As of June 2023, there were only 39 electric vehicle charging points in the car park operated by the City of Perth. That represents 0.37 per cent of the total number of bays available. Given that the proportion of EVs sold each year is tracking above 10 per cent, there are major concerns about the lack of charging infrastructure. As an aside, I am shortly to retire, and I am looking forward to pursuing this issue with some vigour and making a pest of myself. The response to my correspondence to the City of Perth asking whether it had a policy or management procedure for EV charging stations at established facilities acknowledged that the city's planning scheme 2 was not retrospective and therefore did not apply to existing buildings. When pressed about plans for retrospective installation, the City of Perth advised that a number of issues needed to be considered such as having large volumes of electric vehicles in car parks, weight distribution and concerns over safety, with short-term use of lithium batteries and closed-space fires. This kind of ill-informed Luddite reaction is not only frustrating but also at odds with public pronouncements about the City of Perth being at the forefront of sustainability.

Sydney and numerous other cities accept that not everyone in the community has access to private parking. Measures are adopted to help meet the challenge of providing on-street charging capacity without intrusive infrastructure taking up precious road and footpath space. For example, in Sydney, Mayor Clover Moore recently announced collaboration with the private company, EVX, to install pole-mounted charges. This augmented a number of other initiatives and trials already in place.

The Cook government, through its excellent Charge Up grants program, encourages local governments, not-for-profits and small businesses to install EV infrastructure for ratepayers, residents, clients and customers. However, there is a failure of many local governments to expeditiously respond to the requirements of electric vehicles. This is despite \$7 million being made available in the latest round.

With many cheaper EVs now entering the Australian market, and escalating petrol prices, we can predict an exponential rise in the number of EVs and hybrid vehicles on the roads. EVs will no longer be seen as a luxury for a select few; in fact, there has been a range of affordable and smaller EV models arriving on our shores in recent months. Fast-charging infrastructure would be convenient in many circumstances, such as a family charging an EV at a local cricket oval while the child is playing a match or during a day trip to the aquatic centre, a playground or recreation centre. That is what the City of Bayswater has done, taking advantage of the Charge Up grants to install two charging stations at the Morley Sport and Recreation Centre.

Spending millions of dollars on an obscure and ineffectual advertising campaign of cavorting ballerinas to attract visitors to the city is risible. The provision of streetside EV charging stations would be more effective in attracting visitors from the burbs who would then patronise Perth retail businesses, cafes and restaurants. I stress that EV drivers are prepared to pay their way. They are not expecting a free ride. They are unhappy about the failure of local governments such as that of the City of Perth to facilitate installation of sufficient and accessible charging stations in existing structures in community facilities and on the roadside and to actively collaborate with private providers. I think this point is very significant because it is not as if the council needs to run and maintain the charging stations. It can make spaces available for a private provider such as Chargefox, which does an excellent job.

Public policies down the track will need formulation to ensure that EV users pay for road usage in the same way as those fuelling their cars with petrol with excise money used to make road improvements. However, at this stage we need the more fundamental step of providing infrastructure in the first place and having progressive governments that understand the transitioning energy needs of the community.

The final matter I want to briefly mention is a recent award that was given to Brother “Ollie” Pickett, AM. He has taken out Senior Australian of the Year for Western Australia for co-founding Wheelchairs for Kids Australia, which operates out of my electorate. Since the 83-year-old started the charity in 1996, more than 60 000 custom wheelchairs have been gifted to children in over 80 countries. These wheelchairs are particularly robust and can be adapted as a child grows. They are extremely welcome and do a lot for our comity, especially with Pacific and Asian nations where the wheelchairs are sent. I must say that it is one of the few organisations I have encountered that has a waiting list for volunteers. Not only that, but Wheelchairs for Kids has one of WA’s largest charities, with an average volunteer age of 74 years. It is one of the oldest volunteer-led charities in the state. Congratulations Brother Ollie. The award is well deserved. Successive Premiers have visited the site, as did the Leader of the Liberal Party recently. They will all attest to the fact that the work being done by Wheelchairs for Kids is exceptional and the award is very much well deserved.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [3.47 pm]: It is always pleasing to be able to speak in the last spot on a Thursday, with one’s contribution standing between the adjournment. I want to make what will be my last ever contribution to the Premier’s Statement general debate. As members will know, it is not often we can speak about our own electorates. I will talk about a few of the things, but I start by talking about a few things in the electorate of Cannington. I will talk about this next sitting, but 51 per cent of people in Cannington were born overseas. We have now moved ahead of the seat of Mirrabooka. We used to be second, only to Mirrabooka, in multiculturalism and now we are first.

On Monday I had a seniors afternoon tea celebrating WA Seniors Week. A total of 360 seniors attended, along with the Minister for Seniors and Ageing. It was a great event. My electorate has always had a very large seniors population, and I was very pleased to host all of them in what will be my last ever Seniors Week as the member for Cannington. I particularly want to acknowledge Margaret Adams, who lives in Ferndale, and is the president of the Ferndale Residents Association. She is a very active senior. Last year, she was richly celebrated at Parkwood Primary School for her years of service. She is still there as a lollipop lady every morning. She is a stalwart of the Ferndale, Lynwood and Parkwood areas.

I also want to acknowledge Bannister Creek Primary School, which won the excellence in cultural responsiveness award at the most recent WA Education Awards that were held on Monday of this week. I want to read the citation. It is a remarkably good school. It reads —

Bannister Creek Primary School staff are committed to building culturally safe and engaging learning environments through a range of practical initiatives. Among them is the school's Aboriginal parent liaison group called Baldja Waangkiny (Talking Strong Together) where parents and Aboriginal leaders guide important cultural learning opportunities, projects, celebrations, and activities. Cultural education also flows out on to school grounds, with an outdoor classroom and Aboriginal six seasons trail where students learn about caring for Country, Aboriginal perspectives, language, plants, and animals. The school's Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer ... is also instrumental in leading cultural projects and supporting students to achieve their best.

I was recently able to attend when the school launched its reconciliation action plan last month. The fact that an independent public school such as Bannister Creek has its own RAP is a genuine credit to it. The school was amalgamated out of three primary schools just when I was elected, so it was created in 2008. It has been at its current site for about 10 years. It is performing in a really outstanding way.

I have also been going through all my different election commitments. All of them except for one have now been implemented. This year I was able to attend the opening of the \$23 million refurbishment of Lynwood Senior High School, which was greatly needed. The infrastructure of the school now matches the quality of the teaching.

The Metronet level crossing removal, which is something that I have been campaigning for almost since I got into Parliament, is fast nearing completion. The engineering infrastructure is in place. I was away on the day the engineering completion was celebrated so I was not with the member for Victoria Park when that little event took place, but it is certainly very exciting. Interestingly, I do not get complaints about the disruption to services. I know that the media likes to talk about disruption. I get compliments for the fact that such a massive investment is going into our community. Everyone says, "Yeah, there is disruption, but gee it will be good when it is done." Already, Wharf Street functions. There are still disruptions to traffic all over the place while the construction work is going on but the fact is that we do not get stuck at Wharf Street when trying to go north and the people who live on Wharf Street on the north side of the rail line can get out of their driveways in the mornings.

The one 2021 election commitment that was fully funded in the 2021 budget is the Metcalfe Road and Nicholson Road intersection treatment. The amount of \$2.5 million was in the 2021 budget. Instead of doing the project itself, Main Roads Western Australia decided to give the money to the council so it could get the project. The council and Main Roads could not agree on the treatment, which I thought was a bit odd because I always thought the treatment of that site had been agreed. However, I have now been advised by the council that it has approval to proceed with the works, which will start before Christmas. That is very welcome news.

I want to pivot to the airport. It recently put out a press release celebrating its decision to come to a deal with Qantas. It can now proceed with its second runway. That is a challenge for the people in my electorate. The electorate of Cannington is the most-affected electorate in the state. It is more noise affected than the electorates on the northern side of the runway because Queens Park is only 2.5 kilometres from the end of the runway. The residents of Queens Park are the closest to the airport compared with any other constituents in the area. Obviously, the people in Redcliffe are closer but the planes do not come right over them; they fly next to them. I wish to make it clear that I understand that, but they are directly under the path.

The problem with the second runway is that the cross runway will be used less so there will be more north-south take-offs and landings. The people of Beckenham, which is also 2.5 kilometres from where the new runway will end, will be subject to a significant increase in noise flow. I have been making submissions to the airport master plan process over the 16 years that I have been the member, setting out exactly how I think the problem should be solved—that is, the airport should be a good neighbour and work with constituents to provide noise amelioration works for them in their homes. Given that billions of dollars are being spent on that project—the airport tells us that on its website—and that \$850 million was spent on the Gateway project, the Tonkin Highway works that happened a number of years ago, half funded by the Labor federal government at the time, a lot of public infrastructure supports the airport, and a bit of help from the local residents.

Jason Waters used to be the CEO of Synergy and then the CEO of the Gold Corporation. He is now the CEO of Perth Airport. He and I get on very well. He will read my speech and probably send me a text message or something. I cannot finish as the member for Cannington without putting that on the record. I have talked about these things in the past. I talked to him only recently. Rob Cole, who used to be the chairman of Synergy, is now the chairman of Perth Airport, so he will probably give me a ring as well. One way or another, there needs to be a good outcome.

The Canning Show was recently held at the Cannington Exhibition Centre and Showgrounds. It is the only metropolitan show in which the show society owns the grounds. The Canning Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society actually owns the land on which the show takes place. It is not council land. A lot of people think—from Kelmscott or Wanneroo or whatever—that the Canning Show is held on council land but that is not the case; it is independently owned. It has had very good leadership over a long period of time. Maxine Jamieson is

currently the president and Diane Beggs has retired from the role of chief executive officer. I wish her well. She used to live in Beckenham and now she lives up in the hills, so she cannot vote in Cannington anymore. She has been a great servant of CAHRS, the Cannington Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society, of which I am a member, and it does a wonderful job. One of its tenants is the Station Street Men's Shed, which is not only the only men's shed in Cannington, but also the only one in the immediate vicinity. The problem is that the Station Street Men's Shed is full. It has a waiting list of people who would like to join because the area does not have enough space. Because it is a tenant of the agricultural society, it cannot apply for infrastructure grants. One of its problems is that the cost of doing commercial work is so much higher than doing other work. It needs to meet industrial standards if it wants to expand but it does not own the land. It would have to get approval from its landlord, which could certainly be arranged, but it is hard for it to apply for a grant. One of the challenges is that the City of Canning will not support a men's shed that is not on City of Canning property. That challenge needs to be resolved. The government of Western Australia is happy to support institutions and give a grant, so the money leaves us. The City of Cannington is saying that it will only support something when it can keep the asset. That is unfortunate. The City of Canning, the government of Western Australia, the Canning Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society and the Station Street Men's Shed should be able to do something together to resolve this problem.

I spoke to the Minister for Lands the other day about the challenge of parking on Marriamup Street, which runs along the Canning River Regional Park. A bike path runs along the edge of the road and sometimes cars park on the bike path because the road is quite narrow. There is not enough room for car parking embayments, but we could take the land that is currently used as a bike path and use it for car parking embayments as it is a very popular park and a lot of people want to use it. We would then have to take a sliver of land off the regional park for a new bike path, which I understand could be done under the Land Administration Act with the help of the Minister for Lands. We would not normally want to take land off a park to build a bike path, but because this would allow even more people to use the Canning River Regional Park, it is probably a good idea.

I also visited the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare, or SERCUL, the other day. SERCUL is one of the most important environmental groups in the metropolitan area and is based in Beckenham in my electorate, where it leases a property off the Western Australian Planning Commission. It finally has a proper lease with the Planning Commission; I was very pleased to be able to work with SERCUL on that. I did not have to directly intervene, but I made sure that the relevant minister, the Minister for Lands at the time, was aware of the challenge. In the end, they were able to resolve all the issues. I was very pleased to see that. SERCUL does a magnificent job not just in what it does itself, which is extraordinary, but also through its support for all the other friends groups in the area. It provides administrative support so that those groups, including the Canning River Regional Park Volunteers, Friends of Queens Park Bushland, Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands over in the electorate of the member for Forrestfield and the Wilson Wetlands Action Group, can acquire their grants. All the different volunteer groups in the area can get support from SERCUL. It is important work.

One of my 2017 election commitments included funding for SERCUL to build an all-access toilet onsite. It hosts a lot of groups at that site—volunteers and others—but it did not have sufficient toilet facilities. An environmentally sensitive toilet has been built that will not impact the Canning River, because obviously SERCUL is surrounded by the park. That is really good. Stephen Johnston was the chair of SERCUL; he stepped down at the AGM. Interestingly enough, he has the same name as my brother, he spells his surname the same way that I do, and his daughter has the same name as my daughter Zoe. The member for Victoria Park will probably know Stephen's daughter because she works for the member for Swan. That is not my daughter; that is his daughter. I wish Stephen well. SERCUL is an important contributor to our local area.

I want to pivot and talk about a few policy areas. We have an election coming up in 122 days or something like that. It will be a choice between a strong, stable government that puts the interests of Western Australians first and the chaos and dysfunction of the other side. I note that there are 14 shadow ministers and that seven will not be in the next Parliament. Half the current shadow cabinet will not be in the next Parliament. Six are retiring and the member for North West Central and the member for Moore are running against each other in the same seat, so half of the shadow cabinet will not be in the next Parliament. They pretend that they are an alternative government, but who will take those roles? They will need 17 cabinet ministers. Who will be in cabinet? Why are they hiding these things? Can anybody tell me the name of the shadow Treasurer? Does anybody in Western Australia know the name of the shadow Treasurer? I do not know their name. Perhaps the member for Roe, who is here with us, can tell us the last time anybody on the opposition bench in this chamber asked the Treasurer a question. In the eight and a half years that we were in opposition, I do not remember a day going past that we did not ask the Treasurer a question. Member for Roe, have any of you asked the Treasurer a question this year?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of the six opposition members on that side of the chamber, has anybody asked the Treasurer a question about any matter? They complain that our budget surplus is too large and that we should have a smaller surplus, but have they ever asked her any questions about the surplus? What about our level of debt? Has there

been a single question to the Treasurer this year, over this entire 12-month period, about the level of future debt in this state? Has that happened even once? What about the level of taxation? What about the budget strategy—has there been a single question this year? That is a genuine question. I do not know; perhaps one of the journalists who read the galley copies of *Hansard* so thoroughly could ask the opposition to tell us the date on which a Treasury question was last asked of the Treasurer in question time in this chamber. Are you so disinterested in financial and economic management that you do not care about it? You ask obscure questions about technical aspects of government reports but you do not ask about the number one issue of government. If you cannot understand the finances, how can you govern?

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: Or they get it wrong when they ask, like today.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Or they get it wrong. That member did not ask the Treasurer the question about the budget; she asked the Minister for Health about the budget. That is the whole point. I keep making the point that there have been no questions to the Treasurer. The shadow Treasurer is in the other house and nobody knows who he is. I mean, seriously; this is not a genuine opposition. I know what it is like to be in opposition. I was in opposition for eight and a half years. I know how much work both the Treasurer and I put in when we were in opposition. You would think that they would ask one question a day, a week, a year! What is it? Are they just so scared? I know that they are scared of her. Of course, they ask her questions about Metronet, although they normally ask the Premier about Metronet and not the responsible minister. I know they are scared of her and that is why they do not like asking her questions.

Let me make it clear: you can do nothing in government unless you control Treasury. In fact, that was one of the big problems of the Court Liberal–National government. It sold the tier 3 rail lines to a private owner who then shut them down. We cannot get them back. Even though the private owner does not use those rail lines, we cannot use them ourselves. They get no income from them, but we cannot use them either. That is how bizarre and terrible that deal was. A National Party member was Minister for Transport at the time and they sold it. It is just bizarre. I was told by senior people who worked in the Premier’s office that what used to happen was that their Expenditure Review Committee process would say no to things and then ministers would go and see Richard Court—Richard Court is a nice bloke; I get on well with him—and would say to him that there would be political problems, so he would give them the money anyway. In the Barnett government, there were two budget processes—one run by the National Party and one run by the government of Western Australia. It was just a mess.

Where is the plan? Here is a question that journalists could ask the Leader of the Liberal Party or the Leader of the National Party—whoever those leaders are—about their budget deficit limit: how much borrowings are you going to allow over the next four years if you win government? These are not minor questions; these are fundamental questions that are asked of every opposition before an election, but here we are, four months out from an election and with three days of Parliament to go, and we do not know the answer to these questions. We cannot have an election until the opposition answers these questions. It cannot hide forever. It has to front up. We do not know who the ministers will be if the opposition were to form government. No wonder members opposite are in danger. They are a mess.

Mr J.N. Carey: They’re hiding.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely, they are hiding.

The rumour in political media circles is that the Leader of the Liberal Party will be replaced by the candidate for Churchlands, who is not a member of Parliament, and that he will take over once Parliament is prorogued. Mr Zempilas is the man with the glass jaw. Every time he is criticised, he goes and whinges to the media.

Mr J.N. Carey: He’s attacked you!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He has attacked me; it is just ridiculous how childish his behaviour is. Mr Zempilas referred to the member for Cockburn as “unknown”. Mr Zempilas got 3 264 votes at the last City of Perth election, and that included corporate votes, not people. The member for Cockburn got 17 714 first preference votes, never mind his two-party preferred result. The member for Cockburn got five times the number of votes, and probably six or seven times more people voting for him, than did the Lord Mayor with the glass jaw. I mean, it is bizarre.

The Lord Mayor says he wants to build a cable car from Elizabeth Quay to the top of Mt Eliza in Kings Park. I want to know how much that will cost. Which route will it go on? These are not minor questions. These are the sorts of questions that politicians should answer before an election, not after. How much will that project cost? We have in the forward estimates a projection of what the state debt will be for the next four years. If the Lord Mayor does not want to borrow more money, something we are currently planning to do will need to be cancelled. I ask Mr Zempilas whether he is going to cancel a project in the forward estimates or increase debt to build the cable car to Kings Park? That is not a difficult question. It is a very, very simple question. How much will it cost? Where will it run? Which project will he cancel, or will he increase debt? These are not complex questions.

I know that not every journalist wants to be a tough journalist who asks difficult questions, so I am not criticising radio journalists for being soft on Mr Zempilas. Journalists should choose the questions they want to ask. I am not telling anybody to do anything, but if anyone wanted to be a tough journalist, these would be the questions to ask. Mr Zempilas says that he wants Western Australia to be like Dubai. Dubai is a dictatorship run by a royal family! It does not have democracy, and nearly 90 per cent of the people who live there are not citizens of that country.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: Just like Qatar!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Correct! People from the Indian subcontinent do most of the day labour there—the sort of work the Deputy Speaker did before he came to this place. Their rates of pay are those of the subcontinent; they are not paid Western Australian rates of pay. Is the Lord Mayor saying that he wants to bring foreign labour in to live in barracks, as they do in Dubai, to build infrastructure like his cable car from Elizabeth Quay to Kings Park? Or was that just some nonsense that he went on about because he wanted to say something he thought was smart?

Many cities around the world are suffering the same problem that the City of Perth is suffering—the decline of office space utilisation and retail trade in the CBD. That does not just happen in Perth; all around the world, we see the same problems. Many cities around the world are providing incentives to convert office buildings into apartments. What incentives is the City of Perth providing? None. It complains about other levels of government, but it takes no action of its own. Why does it not provide a rates holiday for empty office buildings that are converted to apartment blocks? The City of Perth can borrow on the guarantee of the state government. Why does it not borrow money through that process and lend it to developers at low interest rates to develop those buildings?

These are all things that the City of Perth could do, unless the Lord Mayor has no idea how to do his job. Maybe that is why he does not come up with anything innovative and just talks about other people and other things. Maybe that is the answer; I do not know. Maybe that is something that a tough journalist could ask him. As I said, I am not telling journalists what to do; they should do exactly what they want. I had my fights with journalists when I was state secretary and I am not getting back into that again. Journalists should ask only the questions they want to ask, but these are questions that the community needs to know the answers to. Even if journalists are not going to ask Mr Zempilas these questions, I am asking him. If he is too scared to debate me, it says more about him than it does about me.

Mr Zempilas also says that he wants to raise standards, but he still has not apologised for the racist comments he made about the Minister for Education and the Treasurer. He never apologised for that. He said, “Oh, it was just a bit of fun.” That is what all racists say. I made this point the last time I talked about these issues. Mr Megalogenis wrote that great book in which he referred to the challenges of the Greek community here, the racist attitudes and all the other things that struck the Greek community back in the 1970s and 1980s. I am surprised that Mr Zempilas has not fronted up and apologised; perhaps he is not man enough. Perhaps that is the reason he will not apologise to the Treasurer and the Minister for Education—he is not man enough to admit when he is wrong. That is up to him. It says more about him. I could not trip over his standards, they are so low, but that is up to him. If he does not want to debate me, he can be as scared of me as he wants. I am departing; he wants to arrive. It will be interesting on election night to see how the Churchlands seat goes. The great thing about the current member for Churchlands is that she is interested in the community.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.