

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2012–13 BILL 2012
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2012–13 BILL 2012

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

The SPEAKER: Members, I have given the call to the member for Cannington. I have not given the call to anybody else. If you have business in this chamber, I would insist that you keep your conversations to a bare minimum. If you have other things that you need to do in this place, members, I would suggest that you take them outside the chamber.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [3.04 pm]: We can see once again the Premier's thought-bubble process to state development. The Premier does not have a plan. He does not have an idea. He just has a press release. Occasionally the Premier is lucky and he puts out these thought bubbles and he gets a bit of a run in the media. But what has the Premier done? How has the Premier pulled up his sleeves to do some work? What is the Premier going to do? Does the Premier actually care whether there will be any outcome from these thought bubbles that he announces? The Premier laughs at the idea that somebody in the Department of State Development might be allocated to do some work to implement his grand vision of the joint listing of companies between Australia and Singapore. This is the typical approach of this man, who has failed as Premier, in the same way that he failed as Minister for Education and he failed as state development minister in the past. People forget that in the year 2000, the economy of Western Australia went backwards. It shrank. It was smaller at the end of the year than it was at the start. That fact is one of the big reasons the Labor Party was able to win the 2001 election.

The other day, a comment was made in this chamber about the level of unemployment in this state. The level of unemployment is now two-thirds higher than it was when the Labor Party lost office. We had three per cent unemployment, and now it is over five per cent. That is the sort of behaviour that this Premier has.

One of the Premier's thought bubbles is that we should tranship liquefied petroleum gas to the east coast. Is there a business possibility of that? No, there is not, because gas on the west coast is more expensive than gas on the east coast. Another thought bubble is the joint listing of companies between Australia and Singapore. What work has the Premier actually done to deliver that vision of his? Nothing. A couple of weeks ago, I mentioned the Premier's great vision for the Kimberley canal. The Premier said that it is the only way to provide a secure water supply for this state. What has the Premier done in government about that plan? Nothing.

Another thought bubble is the Maitland industrial estate, a 4 000-hectare industrial park with gas processing plants. What is there? There is only one liquefied natural gas plant for a company that is supplying trucked LNG to the Kimberley, and there is the possibility of a biofuels site. Where is this man's actual delivery? It is nowhere in state development, nowhere at all. That is because the Premier does not have a clue about how to develop this state. The Premier has a vision that somehow he is the commissar, making decisions on behalf of the investors in this state. That is not the way it happens. I am a Labor politician, but I am happy to point out to the Premier that we have a free enterprise system in Western Australia, and it will be the free enterprise companies that make investment decisions about what they doing. We can regulate and we can facilitate, but we cannot control. This Premier is happy to walk into the odd media conference and throw away a couple of lines. But ask him to do some work! That is too much trouble—it is always too much trouble.

The Premier has scurried out of the chamber, embarrassed—well, if he is not embarrassed, he certainly should be. A question was asked on 21 March, and here we are, at the end of May, and there is still no answer. The Premier said that he did not have a clue that the question had even been asked, and he then said that he has done no work on this vision that he went to Singapore to announce. Why was the Premier in Singapore if he was not going to do any work? Was it just to have a nice holiday, or something? Why do these things, Premier? That is a good question. Why go to Singapore, put out a media release, stand next to somebody at a press conference, and then do nothing about it? This Premier is causing this state loss every day that he stays in the job. That is because he is fixated on things that do not matter, and he does not value the important things.

I must say that I was very pleased to see the Premier last night outside at the pro-life rally. Every year that I have been a member of this chamber, I have been pleased to go outside and speak at the pro-life rally; and that does not necessarily get me votes from people in my own party or in my community. I was pleased to see the Premier out there—in fact, I was shocked, actually, given that the Premier voted in favour of abortion in this state, and, so far as I understand, that continues to be his position. So I was surprised. That might explain why the Premier did not speak at the rally last night, because he does not agree with the position being put by the people at that rally. But I am more satisfied with those members who support abortion and who did not go to the rally, than I am with the Premier, if his actual view is that he does not support the pro-life position on that issue, yet he

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still attended the rally. The Premier walked around and spoke to people at the rally and came up on the steps at the end of the rally. Madam Acting Speaker, there is a word for a person who does one thing and says another. Apparently, because of the rules of the chamber, I cannot explain what that word is. But it is disgraceful, in my view, that a pro-abortion person would attend an anti-abortion rally.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have been listening very carefully to what the member said, and he just said “a person”—referring to me—“pro-abortion”; “a person who voted in favour of abortion”. I do not think any fair-minded, civilised Christian person would ever say that they were in favour of or pro abortion. Yes, I did vote in favour of choice—and I did. But to make an accusation—a false accusation—that I was pro abortion I find offensive, and I think every woman in this state would find that offensive.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.R. Mitchell): Premier, it is not a point of order, but I take your point. Member for Cannington, can you refine your comments to the budget reply speech.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, no —

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: I also attended, and I voted much the same way as the Premier, as did many people on your side.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, of course; I have already made the point —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, we will not discuss further things around the chamber. Stick to your budget reply speech, please.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is a Premier who does not like work—he is workshy. We all understand that and we are happy with that. Here he is—he goes to Singapore, makes an announcement, and then I ask him, “What work have you done?” Nothing. Not only has he done no work, he thinks it is silly that somebody would ask him whether he had done any work. He laughs at the idea that we would actually suggest that he would carry through his statements with his grand visions and his grand plans. Even if the Perth Waterfront project comes off in the way that the government says it will, I will be 60 years old before it is finished. A waterfront project with coffee shops and places of interest could be done very easily.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: How old are you now?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am nearly 50 years old. That project will not work in the way it is being described.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Some inane interjections are coming from the other side, but I have made the point about the foreshore project.

The Labor Party was going to do only one project at a time because the City of Perth cannot handle the amount of land that the government is trying to sell into the private sector. It is not a \$2.6 billion project, as the government talks about; it is a \$440 million project, and that will blow out—we all know that. The \$2.6 billion is the building of office buildings. The government says that 140 000 square metres of office space will be built on that site, which is about an 11 or 12 per cent increase in the amount of office space in this central business district. That is on top of the space that the government says will go in as part of the Northbridge Link, on top of the space that will be part of the Riverside project down in East Perth. The budget papers show that already the Riverside project is not able to meet its sales targets, and they have not been able to sell one of the blocks that is part of the Northbridge Link. This government will not deliver those projects, but it does not matter to the member for Cottesloe because he will be long gone before any of these things come back to haunt the state.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Don't count on it!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier will be; we all know that.

I make a couple of other points. The Liberal Party stuffed up its promise on the solar feed-in tariff made during the last election. I have gone through that and explained the fact that it never understood what it was promising; it made a \$23 million promise that will cost \$450 million. It also promised to have a commercial feed-in tariff report released, and we are three and a half, nearly four, years into this term of government and it still has not achieved that. All it needed to do was issue a report, and it cannot even issue a report, much less make a decision.

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Then we have the state energy initiative. In 2009, the responsible minister attended the WA energy conference and announced that on 29 August the government was going to introduce a strategic energy initiative. At that time it was called “Energy 2030”. By 2011, when the project was still not complete, during the discussion forums at that time the discussion paper was called “Energy 2031”. Now, here we are, halfway through 2012, and we still have not seen the strategic energy initiative. When will the strategic energy initiative be complete? We have no idea. The minister will not tell us. Is it going to be called “Energy 2032”? Maybe we should call it “Energy 2033” because it will not be released until next year. That is another example of the way this government works.

Let us not forget re-amalgamation. The government knows it will not save one cent by re-amalgamating Verve and Synergy. In fact, the government has the Oates report that shows that it will require \$10 billion of additional government investment if Verve and Synergy are re-merged. It knows that, and that is why cabinet in 2009 rejected the merger of Verve and Synergy—the government rejected it—and that is still the government’s position. I have asked a number of questions on that issue, and the Minister for Energy and the Premier have made it clear that there has been no new decision on that matter.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That’s correct.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I thank the Premier; it is true.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But cabinet did not reject a merger.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The government’s policy position is not to do it, so why does the Premier keep talking about it? Why does the government keep saying it will make a difference to energy prices? I have asked what difference it will make, and the government states that it does not know; there is no plan for saving one cent.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [3.16 pm]: It is certainly not my pleasure to stand and reply to this budget that is probably a true reflection on how out of touch with common people the Barnett government really is. People out there are doing it very tough. From talking to my colleagues, the amount of counter traffic in electorate offices has increased with people coming in and asking, “How do I get help to pay these bills? How can I get help? I am going to lose my home.” There was a repossession just this week down in Balingup, which is an area where, previously, no-one would have thought that would happen. Those are the sort of things that are coming through the door at a very, very regular rate, much more than the previous situation. The budget has not helped any of those people whatsoever.

In 2008, the average Western Australian household was facing government fees and charges of around \$3 686 per annum; since the Barnett government came to power, those fees and charges have risen to \$4 748 per annum—slugging people an extra \$1 050. To some people that may not seem a lot of money, but to people on a mid-range income with maybe two children at school and a mortgage and car, it is a lot. People on a wage of around \$50 000 are becoming the working poor. They are working, they are out there doing their best, and they are good, honest Australians. They are people who really wish to get on in life and have taken the risk or punt of buying a house and are doing everything right, but they are now seeing that dream evaporate. To some, these extra costs might not seem like a lot, but to them it is the world. They have to cut back on things like school excursions, and they may not be able to send their children to the school ball or country week, which are some of the highlights of being at school. That really concerns me. I see no relief for those people in this budget. These people need to be able to help their children be part of the mainstream of the whole schooling concept. They will be on the outside and the other children will be saying, “Your parents are too poor; you can’t afford to do that.” They will be put in a position they will have to struggle to get out of—not because their parents are not good parents, they are wonderful parents—because the fees are so high that, although the parents are working hard, they are sliding down the wall. An increase of \$50 a year for electricity bills, again, to some is not that high in real terms, but if a person’s wages have not gone up, or have gone up only by the two per cent that the government was offering, they are certainly not keeping up with inflation or the cost-of-living charges that have been imposed by this government.

It is all well and good to offer some compensation packages to low-income earners and concession card holders, but the money offered as this so-called goodwill is a joke. It will not cover the expected costs. Is the government giving it with one hand and making people pay it back with another and offering a trinket in return? The hardship utility grant scheme has been replaced with the cost-of-living assistance payment. The problem under HUGS was that people had to go to a financial advisor. A free financial adviser turned up to Collie only two days a week, so people were waiting for weeks and weeks to get their electricity put back on. In the meantime, children were probably going to school not showered properly or not having had a decent breakfast, which was making them become some sort of social outcast, which is something that I hate and really detest; it should never happen in our great Australian life. If we do not look at that and support these people, we will have a very big class war within our schools and communities. It is not good enough to charge people while big companies get discounts along the way. Big companies receive grants and loans that are then turned into

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grants that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, yet the average person in the street cannot pay his electricity bill. It is a struggle and those people are working extra hours. They are doing everything in the realm of possibility to stay afloat. I say this from the bottom of my heart: it hurts to tell people that, quite honestly, they would be better off putting their house on the market, downsizing their car and getting rid of the bills so that they can live a reasonable life instead of living with the stresses that are placed on families that cause break-ups and other sorts of problems. They are being hit in the hip pocket and we need to do something about it.

Rest assured, however, because the change is already happening. The election is getting closer and closer and I am seeing a closing of the gap. At one stage the Labor Party was deemed to be unelectable and we were derided and ridiculed in the press. I do not see that anymore. The focus is coming back onto the Barnett government. The focus on this budget has been more enormous than any other because there are no sweeteners in it. Things are shutting down because the government has over-borrowed, overspent and overcommitted. We are watching what is happening. Believe me, when the election comes around and the people are hurting, the government is the first to get the blame. That is why we are in opposition and the Barnett government is in power. People say, "I've had enough of this." It must be remembered that the margins in this house are so slim that it will not take much to change the government, which, of course, I hope will happen. People power will show this government and successive governments that if the government is mean-spirited and does not look after the people, it will be removed from office.

The future fund is another issue. Members have explained that it is like using a credit card to try to pay off the bills. We are paying 18 per cent interest on the money we have in the bank. It does not make sense to get just four or six per cent in return, depending on where the money is deposited. That is a lose-lose situation. There have been some great letters sent to the paper and I will read one that was sent to me this week from someone in my electorate. The letter states —

Hi Mick, some of my thoughts on the budget. What a great future we have to look forward to—if we live that long! Roll on 2032. All I have to do is live that long. But surely it won't be hard? Who needs affordable electricity and water, a health care system that works, an education system that will equip our children to be ready to spend all that money waiting for them at the end of the rainbow, a community protected by an adequate police force, ambulances which are not ramped, an environment which hasn't been raped in the name of the Future Fund! Will the Government be in hot water? If so, it will be a lonely place as the rest of us won't be able to afford either the heating or the water! While we wait for this pot of gold, it will be evaporating with inflation—but not to worry, fewer of us will survive the winter of austerity which is to come, fewer of us will be alive. Fewer of our children will be trained to make up the work force. But we can always bring in some skilled workers from overseas, can't we!

Cheers

That is the common view of the people across the electorate. I have heard fly in, fly out workers, who are paid reasonable money—some are high-income earners—say that their bills are hurting them and are far higher than they had budgeted for. We all budget for a slight increase each year, but when they look at some of the previous increases and there is a double-dip in increases again this year, those people are wondering where they will end up and whether they can keep the Australian dream alive by keeping their house. Saving for a rainy day is all well and good but the unfortunate part is that it is raining now and we need to look after those people. How can the government decide that squirrelling away money for 20 years to help future generations of Western Australians is warranted when, as I have said, we need that help now? It is typical of the Liberal Party to put profits before people. People are being left behind in this boom-bust economy.

Of great annoyance to me is the stripping away of money from royalties for regions to go into this fund. There was never any suggestion that any of that royalties for regions money would be taken out to prop up the Barnett government. That is what it is about. It is not going to go to regions anymore, where it should go. Money is being stripped away while funding for roads has been deleted from the budget and some schools have not been funded properly. Dalyellup College needs a gymnasium but it is not in the budget. The government has stripped \$10 million from the budget for South Western Highway and \$20 million has gone missing from the railway line. In one very short breath, \$30 million or \$40 million worth of work will not be done. We need to work very hard on our side to make sure that the government is honest and accountable and does not just make promises that are never funded. I will talk about a list of them later.

Infrastructure is needed right across the state. The Leader of the Opposition spoke today about the money that is being withdrawn from road funding. The one thing that has always come first in Western Australia is roads. The Minister for Police knows what happens when we do not have good roads. We know that the cost comes back to the community indirectly through road crashes and people not being able to get to work because their car is smashed because the roads are not up to standard. There are many of those types of things.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will not take an interjection because I do not have enough time. It is a pity that the minister did not answer some of those concerns.

I agree with Wayne Swan's comment that Colin Barnett is consistently complaining about how WA misses out on funding. How can the government put away \$1 billion and claim at the same time that it cannot balance the budget and argue that the state is really struggling? It can take money out of the mainstream projects to put into the so-called future fund to be used when many of us will not be here anyway. It is the old story: should we pay for other people's future or use the money now so that everyone can make use of it leading into the future? That is the big difference between this government and the opposition. I do not hear the government complaining about the \$680 million the federal government is giving the state to bankroll the Gateway WA project near the airport. This week we heard about the scheme by the Minister for Transport to keep away members of the state opposition and others who were not invited to the announcement of that scheme. That shows how underhanded this government is.

I am no economist and will never think that way or be able to count as well as others, but this budget offers \$196 million in surplus and tucks away \$1 billion for the future, yet we have a debt crisis. How does that work? In June 2008 we owed \$6.3 billion and in just three years that has spiralled to \$18.6 billion—that is a 416 per cent increase. What do we have to show for it? Nothing, other than cutbacks to necessities in everyday life. We do not have extra funding for roads or for many future schools. All the schools that are being funded were previously announced. There are a heap of half-finished projects or projects that were started by the previous Labor government. Earlier this week I read a media statement by the Minister for Transport saying how fantastic it is that there will be 59 new floating boat pens at Fremantle and how ideal the location is for easy access to the Swan River and Rottnest Island. The berths will be available for larger recreational vessels. The member for Vasse should get his head out of the clouds and stop looking after his rich mates by ensuring that the yearly ritual to sail to Rottnest is made easier. How dare he make that sort of announcement when ordinary people are struggling to find affordable housing, pay their bills and feed the kids? He has his priorities wrong. Let us get back to the fundamentals: policing, schools, health, ambulances and those sorts of things. It is really remarkable that we can go down that line and claim that we are nearly broke while the rich get larger boat pens. What a joke this government has been.

Having been a tradie, I am very interested in maintaining trade numbers and training numbers, yet there is only \$100 million in the budget for that. This government finds it easier to allow people to fly in on 457 visas to take over our jobs, when it should be providing training and work to put people into those jobs. There is no compulsion on many of the companies under state agreement acts to put on traineeships, and I think that is totally wrong. I believe that any state agreement act worth more than \$2 million should include a mandatory youth training package. I think that is essential if we are going to force some of these companies to lift their hand. Instead of just looking overseas for tradesmen, they should train people within our country and make sure that youth unemployment is reduced and we are able to supply our own tradesmen in this area.

It is really difficult for people to get that start if there is no assistance package available. Again, a lot of the apprentices who start now end up dropping out because of very low wages; they are unable to match their mates' wages, and it becomes very frustrating when their mates have a car and they are still using a pushbike or public transport to get to work. They find that very difficult. We must look at ways of helping young people in Western Australia to access the traineeships and apprenticeships that should be there in the future, so that we do not have to rely on overseas labour. I think that is one of the worst things that could happen—that we could think that it is easier to put up a company overseas that has been sponsored along the way. Minister Collier has said it is a primary priority for the government to address the looming skills shortage. The government says it wants to train Western Australians, but there are no details, no fine print, and nothing to say how it is going to do that and no compulsion on companies. The part that made me laugh was that Minister Collier also said that some of these initiatives would make it easier for regional migration schemes and setting up overseas websites for migrants and their families. That is where I believe the system is totally wrong and where it should be changed. We should be training our own first.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.P. MURRAY: There are younger people who have not had quite a full education, for various different reasons; let us give them the opportunity to go back to school and move into apprenticeship schemes and move forward. That is something that is dear to my heart. We need to really understand that if we do not do that, we will be relying on migrant labour, and the balance will be totally out of kilter in the future.

An amount of \$529.6 million was promised to the south west region, particularly to my electorate, by this government, and it has not been honoured. That is half a billion dollars worth of work that has not been done. I will start from the top: \$1.6 million was promised for a drag strip, but once the government was elected, it

Extract from Hansard

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changed the rules. An amount of \$10 million has been deferred for the South Western Highway from Greenbushes to Bunbury, while \$20 million has been removed from previous budgets for the Greenbushes to Bunbury railway line. There has been \$6 million removed from the coal futures fund, and \$17 million of state money for the salinity diversion program that was identified for the Collie River. Along with that, we lost \$15 million of matching federal money. That is a huge amount of money that is not going into the environment out there. There was also \$10 million removed from the budget for the Logue Brook Dam; it was originally put into the budget because Logue Brook was going to be closed to skiing, but the sting in this tale is that it has not been closed to skiing, but they lower the water level very early in the year so that people cannot ski there. The government took the \$10 million out, and put it back into the budget, and I know that the member for Murray–Wellington is very angry about that because the first dam that is too low to ski on is the Logue Brook Dam, but he also lost \$10 million that was supposed to go to the community to make up for that. To throw in the latest one, \$450 million has been removed from the budget that was earmarked for the Bunbury to Albany gas pipeline, and in some ways I am quite happy about that. But here is the rub: the Premier and the Leader of the National Party, Brendon Grylls, have gone out saying to the Collie community that they support Collie strongly—SuperTown, regional hub, all those sorts of things. They have been saying, “Put your programs forward and we’ll fund them into the future”. But behind this, they were working away to make sure that the Collie coal industry was stripped of a customer for something like 500 000 tonnes of coal into the future. They went out there and worked very hard to make sure that Grange Resources would use gas to power its plant. At the same time, they were in Collie, smiling like crocodiles, saying, “We’re looking after you”.

I will take a couple of quotes from an article that appeared in today’s *West Australian*, under the heading, “Grange wins fight over gas pipeline”. It states, in part —

The Government, especially through Nationals’ leader Brendon Grylls, put pressure on the company last year by saying it was its “strong preference” for Grange to be the base-load customer of the proposed pipeline project.

Mr Grylls went as far as saying Grange should prove itself a “good corporate citizen” and back the project, arguing the pipeline would be unlikely to come to fruition without a significant customer, such as Southdown, to underpin it.

The Government has only set aside \$20 million under the Royalty for Regions program for planning.

That really proves that, while they were in Collie saying one thing, they were going down into the Albany region, pushing Grange around and saying, “You should be taking gas at the expense of coal”. A positive about this is that the company has said, “No, the Collie coalfields and Collie generators, Verve and Bluewaters, have the cheapest electricity in WA”, which is something that has not been recognised around the place. Unfortunately, due to the system that is there, those two companies have to wind down at night time and not utilise all their power, while the expensive power is being pumped out of the gas-fired power stations. When we have the Minister for Regional Development saying one thing and doing another, along with the Premier doing exactly the same, it is absolutely disgraceful that they could even show their faces in Collie. In fact, the Premier never does, to give him his due. It has been well known since 2000 that he wants the coal industry right out of power generation. He wants his gas pipeline coming down and shooting out each way. He was able to say, “You bring the gas to the regions, put your generator on the end of that, and it will be cheaper”. That has been proven wrong every time, but it has been Liberal Party policy to get rid of Labor as a political force in the Collie region. Nevertheless, he failed miserably. If we look at the last election, 80 per cent of the people in Collie voted Labor.

The Minister for Regional Development was not offering a SuperTown, but compensation for trying to take away jobs. If he had succeeded, we would not have any work in our region. In fact, every day people are coming into my office, asking whether I know of any jobs. They say, “Perdaman Industries has not started; we’re not going forward. Where do I get jobs?” The only direction I can point them in is fly in, fly out jobs. Again, that does not help any community at all. I do not see the government working very hard, even though I see that Perdaman Industries paid \$25 000 to be on the executive list of the government—I suppose that is how I could put it. It paid \$25 000 to sit around a table making decisions for the government that the government could not make itself. It is unfortunate for Perdaman, as it looks like it wasted \$25 000 along that line.

We are working away. We have a town that I still believe has a great future. We have two new mine owners there: Yancoal, which bought out Wesfarmers group, the previous owner; and Lanco, which is having teething problems but is certainly getting on top of them. I welcome the new management group into the Lanco company. They are young, enthusiastic people with their feet on the ground and are as honest as the day is long. I think we will see some improvements in that area and some increase in the number of jobs. It is my understanding that over the next 18 months there will be around 200 more jobs between the two companies in the coal industry.

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That will give a great boost to the town. I do not see any other industries being put forward by this government. Previously the Coal Futures Group went out looking for jobs that could be relocated to Collie. It identified industries such as the geosequestration industry, the mine offshoot and the marron farm that is run by the Nyoongah group. It also included gasification at the Perdaman group and looking at proving that coal could be carted from Collie to India, which people said previously could not be done. All those projects were identified through the Coal Futures Group. When this government came into power, it took away the group's funding. It took \$6 million out like that! That group was very well managed and was producing results. However, the government cancelled its funding because it was a Labor initiative. This is how much this government dislikes Collie. Because the group was a Labor initiative, it took it away. I have seen the Premier storm out of the Shire of Collie offices saying, "I don't have to worry about Collie. I govern for all Western Australians." Some of the Liberal-leaning people there were disgusted at that attitude. It has not changed. The Premier has done nothing for the Collie region. However, down along the coast, as I said, the people of Donnybrook–Boyup Brook will be very angry, as people there have missed out on \$30 million worth of infrastructure projects. If we move across the coastal area, we can see that the only money approved there is for the Treendale school. The funding for Dalyellup College was previously announced, so there is just no new money in the south west. In the south west, probably from Mandurah south to Albany, the royalties for regions advertisement flashes up on our TVs—in green and gold, of course—with lots of squares and then gold coins.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes, it is on the GWN7 TV channel down south. All these gold coins fill in all the gaps, bar the south west. I think the ad itself says that members are out there pushing their barrow. We see \$170 million—odd going to the Pilbara for infrastructure, which it deserves, but then it comes down to \$38 million for the south west. How much is it for Mandurah; is it \$18 million?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: There is \$18 million for the Peel area. We can see the bias for that money. The midwest got around \$43 million. Every dog in that country area must have a gold collar, because the government could not spend that much money out there. They probably even have a gold chain to be led on around there!

It is very disappointing that money has been thrown up in the air and has fallen down and put into areas that are probably battling to spend it. I know that people in some shires are saying, "It is fine to get the money, but how in the future will we pay for the upkeep of the buildings that have been promised to us?" It means that in the future some of those councils and shires will be struggling not to pay for new buildings, but just to pay for maintenance. When members go for a drive through the wheatbelt, they can see that every place has a new something in there—a big shed or a community centre. However, the government should bear in mind that those buildings have to be maintained into the future.

Lastly, perhaps the sting is in the tail. In forcing amalgamations on these shires, the government may say "Look, if we amalgamate you, we will fund you for the next few years." That will be the issue in the debate on amalgamations. I have debated that on radio with John Castrilli. He will not commit to saying that there will be no forced amalgamations after the next election. That does concern me, it concerns the people working in the shires and it concerns the people living in the shires. Amalgamations for 95 per cent of the south west are a no-go. I just cannot understand and I do not think it is the case that bigger is better. It is about shires managing what they have and about people in their local area being able to put their position and working from there.

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [3.45 pm]: I take this opportunity for debate on the 2012–13 state budget to reflect on the past four years of our government, especially in relationship to Swan Hills. A very important day for Ellenbrook was 6 September 2008. The biggest issue at that time was the Ellenbrook covenant. Ellenbrook had lost its confidence and Ellenbrook had as much excitement at that stage as a funeral parlour. As a legacy of two terms of a Labor government, there was a covenant throughout Ellenbrook that virtually stifled everything that was ever going to happen in Ellenbrook. There were no shops, no competition and no choice, and shoppers were paying the price for that. What were Labor members doing about it? They were not interested. They were asked for their help repeatedly and did nothing. It was a government that had no compassion whatsoever. I can tell members that the people of Ellenbrook have not forgotten that. With an election coming up, they have not forgotten the way the Labor government treated them in its previous two terms. They asked for help from Labor members, who did nothing. As a result of the Liberal–National government intervention, there are now 60 new shops in stage 2 of The Shops at Ellenbrook; the commercial precinct is full and overflowing; and even though we did not build a train line, we have the very best bus service in Ellenbrook and Aveley, and it is reputed to be the very best in the metropolitan area. I can therefore say that Labor certainly failed Ellenbrook at that stage.

Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Joe Francis; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Abetz

Any time Labor members venture to try to win over Ellenbrook as a Labor electorate, they had better have a story about what they are going to do with a train line.

Mr D.A. Templeman: We won't lie to them like you did.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Yes, we failed. What are Labor members going to do? The member for Mandurah has had a lot of passion and a lot to say.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Madam Acting Speaker, the member for Mandurah clearly accused my colleague standing next to me of lying. It is unparliamentary and I would ask you to ask him to withdraw.

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, no. I said we won't lie to them like you did.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.R. Mitchell): Members! I am adjudicating here, not someone else. Member for Mandurah, I did not hear it if you did use unparliamentary language. If you did, I would ask you to withdraw it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I withdraw, Madam Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Mandurah.

Debate Resumed

Mr F.A. ALBAN: As I said earlier —

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Willagee!

Mr F.A. ALBAN: — the electorate and the people of Ellenbrook have not forgotten all that. The Labor Party, of course, is hoping that it is all forgotten. However, I think there will be a lovely send-off party for any Labor member trying to win the seat of Ellenbrook.

On a state basis, our state has undertaken a massive \$26.4 billion investment program, and nowhere is that more evident than in my electorate of Swan Hills. There are two new primary schools, Aveyley Primary School and Malvern Springs School; Ellenbrook Secondary College is at the second stage of development; a huge upgrade is underway to Bullsbrook District High School; and there is a brand-new high school predicted for Ellenbrook north. One of the biggest projects in my electorate was at Bullsbrook District High School. The school was a 1950s-built school and, as far as the state is concerned, was in an embarrassing state. I have to admire and commend the courage of the principal, Bernadette Jones, the teachers, the parents and the students for putting up with those facilities. I can still remember the principal the first time I met her saying to me, "Parents drive past our school to enrol their students in other schools. The kids, I believe, think our school is not good enough and nobody wants to come here." Not anymore. At a visit by the Premier after a budget allocation last year, he commented, "Whatever it takes for the Bullsbrook school to be the equivalent of any other."

On top of that, in my electorate of Swan Hills there has been a remarkable list of road infrastructure. I have a document here, so that I am not doing what the opposition talks about. An election brochure from the previous Labor government detailed all the biggest achievements in Ellenbrook during the last two terms of the Labor government. One of the line items, the only road infrastructure item, was \$3.8 million for overtaking lanes at Toodyay Road. That was all the road infrastructure that Labor undertook in almost two full terms of government. By contrast, the Liberal-National government has upgraded Great Northern Highway, it has finished the Reid Highway in Middle Swan, including a brand-new bridge, it has almost completed an interchange at Great Eastern Highway and Roe Highway, and a set of lights leading to Ellenbrook that had safety issues —

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.R. Mitchell): Member for Bassendean, quiet, please.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the first time today.

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Mr F.A. ALBAN: Every road leading to the proposed regional centre of Ellenbrook had a safety issue that was not dealt with by the previous government. The traffic lights on the intersection of Great Northern Highway and West Swan Road are up and running. The intersection of West Swan Road and Gngangara Road is proposed to be upgraded to a roundabout. There will be the dualling of Pinaster Parade, which is the main entry to Ellenbrook. There will be traffic lights at the intersection of Drumpellier Road and Gngangara Road—this is all heading west. There will also be an upgrade to Beechboro Road and the Gngangara Road intersection. Heading south, Reid Highway—Lord Street will have a new set of traffic lights and an interchange to the value of \$8 million, which the Minister for Transport mentioned recently. Our greatest contribution to this area and my electorate's greatest wish was not a train line; it was the Perth–Darwin highway. The Liberal–National government is doing this right now.

The Liberal–National government's extraordinary health infrastructure is well documented, so I will not go through each and every item, but this government has delivered Midland health campus to my constituents with 307 public beds as well as 60 private beds. It will double the current capacity of Swan District Hospital, and it will have all the services already provided by Swan District Hospital plus substantially expanded services.

Following last year's unprecedented \$604 million provided for the not-for-profit sector, the cost-of-living assistance payments in the 2012–13 budget are well documented. These will benefit 348 000 households; I believe that is one-third of all households in the metropolitan area. There is a seniors' living rebate and a seniors' security rebate. There are child and parent centres, including 100 child health nurses. There are 433 houses being built for vulnerable people in need under social housing.

We have a very strong commitment to law and order issues, and, in particular in my electorate, safety issues. In my electorate, the biggest success has been the LED lights. Madam Acting Speaker, I know that you have some in your electorate as well. The LED flashing lights are at schools, and we have one at Bullsbrook District High School on Chittering Road, one at Gidgegannup Primary School on Toodyay Road and one at Upper Swan Primary School on Great Northern Highway. They have been such a success that we have also put one in the Mundaring town site on Great Eastern Highway for the safety of that community. I am also proud to say that we have two more projected for my community in Ellenbrook later this year.

The 2012–13 budget is a great budget with great initiatives, and the following initiative is one my favourites—that is, the future fund. Booms do not last forever. I am from a farming background, and in the past there was a wool boom, and everyone remembers that the whole of Australia was riding on the sheep's back. When I was farming in 1986, we all know what happened. That boom collapsed and the industry has never recovered. I certainly believe that there was a lesson to be learnt in that. We now have a resources boom. I think the same factors that affected the wool market are in play at the moment. We need to bank some of our current wealth for lean years—for a rainy day. I do not think that is rocket science to anyone on this side of politics.

Mr J.M. Francis: Is Gidgegannup in your electorate?

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Yes, it is.

Mr J.M. Francis: The Gidgegannup Progress Association was trying to build a memorial to the late, great Peter Brock.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: It is up there.

Mr J.M. Francis: It is up there, is it?

Mr F.A. ALBAN: It is in Gidgegannup.

Mr J.M. Francis: Please pass on my congratulations.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I thank the member.

Last, but certainly not least, another matter is featured in the state budget. I have a letter addressed to the Premier dated 24 April 2012, which is not that long ago. It is from Brian Pallister, president of the Hills Football Association; it was copied to me as well, as that association is in my electorate. The letter reads —

Dear Premier,

I am writing this letter as support of much needed improvement of ground conditions and amenities at the Elsie Austin community recreation ground in Mt Helena.

The community groups that use the facilities have over many years formed committees and approached the Shire of Mundaring to voice their concerns over safety and conditions.

I have been involved with football in the hills since 1986 and have been a regular visitor to Elsie Austin since 1993. During this time I have seen every sporting ground and its facilities improved within the

Extract from Hansard

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Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Joe Francis; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Abetz

Mundaring shire compared to a few band aids applied to Mt Helena. With the volume of support being shown by all interested parties for improvements, the near future would be a good time to start.

The Mount Helena senior football club is the only club in the Hills Football Assoc. that has never hosted a final at their home ground.

Anyone who is a football player will understand how important that is —

The condition of the oval during winter and around finals time, along with the lack of change room and canteen facilities doesn't allow the club to be able to cope with the larger crowds that finals generate, apart from the spectacle of a final being played in mud.

The user groups at Elsie Austin constantly find themselves behind the eight ball when a parent takes their child away to another club citing the conditions as the reason.

In the just-announced budget, on page 509 of the *Budget Statements*, there is an entry that says, "Mount Helena oval upgrade grant" with a figure of \$150 000. The Mount Helena Football Club does not know this yet, and I will be very proudly announcing it shortly. This shows that this Liberal–National government does not only do the big projects, but also the small projects; we care about the small ones as well.

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [3.59 pm]: I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer on bringing down a very sound and responsible budget for our state. It strikes a great balance between making provision for families who are struggling a little, investing in much-needed infrastructure projects such as roads and hospitals, and at the same time locking away some of the benefits of the high level of mining activity in our state for future generations by means of the future fund. The constraints placed on our budget by the fact that 70 per cent of our revenue from royalties effectively disappears to Canberra under the current GST arrangements creates some major funding issues, because, for mining to go ahead, we need to provide infrastructure. For example, we have to build that \$440 million high-tension powerline into the midwest. That needs to be installed before the royalties start to flow.

The state government has certainly demonstrated that it cares about what we might call "the little people" by introducing the cost-of-living assistance payment, which will see one-third of households getting significant help with their electricity bills. An eligible family will receive \$200 towards its electricity bill and if it has two dependent children another \$307 will be added, totalling \$507. I am sure that will be warmly welcomed by low-income families and pensioners in my electorate.

I refer to the 3.5 per cent increase in the price of electricity. My research shows me that Western Australia still has the second-lowest price of electricity in the nation. We will subsidise electricity to the tune of more than \$300 million in the coming year. Also, the senior cost-of-living rebates have been increased.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 3115.]