

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF DARLING RANGE

Motion

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house highlights the impact the McGowan government is having on the people of Darling Range through massive increases to the cost of living, cuts to frontline services and its failure to fund critical infrastructure.

Darling Range is a very interesting electorate that has changed significantly over time. It used to be hill country. The member for Darling Range used to be Hon John Day. He then shifted to Kalamunda and was the member for Kalamunda. In 2008 the electorate changed significantly and expanded. It is one of the electorates that has had phenomenal population growth. Please do not quote me on this, but my memory is that between the censuses of 2011 and 2015, the electoral roll in the electorate of Darling Range increased by 26 per cent. That is phenomenal growth. It is a place that has the hills and it has the flats, with very rapidly growing communities with new homes, often owned by first home buyers. In many ways, it represents in one electorate the full gamut of activities and interests in the Perth metropolitan area. It also has four shires in its area. It is diverse. It has its needs. The seat was won by Barry Urban for the Labor Party in the 2017 election—a man who has now left this place. He would have been thrown out, and he should have been. He was put there by the Labor Party and was supported by it consistently in 2013 and 2017—indeed, he was supported by the Labor Party in this place until his deficiencies became completely obvious. The electorate was held by the Liberal Party throughout its history, but that has changed. This electorate has significant needs. Particularly in the areas of Byford, Wellard, Bedfordale, a little bit in Kalamunda and the outer suburbs of Armadale, it represents a massive increase in new housing for either people from Western Australia who have bought new houses or people from overseas. There has been massive urban growth in the area. Even though the government sees green shoots popping up everywhere, the people in that electorate, and particularly on the flats, are struggling.

Dr A.D. Buti: How often have you been there?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The member for Armadale just popped up. He knows that.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, are you taking the interjection?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. He is just trying to create noise and disruption to the detriment of the people of Darling Range. That group of people are struggling in the Western Australia of 2018. They are not the gold miners, although some might be fly in, fly out workers. They are not the people who work for the Water Corporation and get very large wage increases. They are struggling families. More than one in five mortgage holders in that area are suffering mortgage stress; that is, they are spending more than 30 per cent of their household income on the mortgage. Many of these people also have interest-only loans, so many of the people in mortgage stress are in fact spending 30 per cent of their income just to pay the interest on their mortgage. That is 20 per cent of the whole area, which is a phenomenally high number. A large number of them have negative equity—that is, the value of their home, if they could sell it, would be negative. In other words, if they could sell their home, they would lose money. Putting it in context, many of these people put almost no money down. Many of them bought their homes through Keystart—people can buy a house with about five per cent down—and a significant number of them are joint equity owners. They had very little money, but what little money they had has disappeared in the housing market over the last period of time. They are struggling to pay. The unemployment rate in the area is approximately at the state average of 6.5 per cent or thereabouts, which is, by the way, the highest in the nation. One of the achievements of the McGowan government is that it has achieved the highest unemployment rate in the nation, much higher than that in Tasmania. In fact, Tasmania is doing extremely well right now, as opposed to the job market in Western Australia. Many of these people would have seen their full-time jobs evaporate. They are looking for new jobs and operating multiple part-time jobs just to pay the interest on their mortgages, and that is it.

This government won their vote last time in large numbers. It did so on the plan it had. The plan had many aspects to it. First of all, Labor said that it would create jobs. Clearly, it has failed—there is no question about that. The evidence is clear—the Labor government has been a job-destroying machine. Secondly, Labor promised to not increase taxes and charges excessively, but to keep fees and charges to the forward estimates. The Labor Party said that over and over again. The people of Darling Range would have listened to the Premier and the Treasurer in opposition and heard them criticise the previous government for increasing electricity prices by three per cent. It was nasty. It was miserly. It was disruptive. It was disgusting. They told the community that. Indeed, they said that Labor would not do that. They have spit in the eye of the people of Darling Range and the wider community. They have done not only that, but also three times that. The government's attempts and actions to increase fees

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

and charges and to turn the Water Corporation into a taxing machine is an abrogation of everything it said to the people of Darling Range—everything. It misled them before the election and it misled them after. It is treating them like tax-paying machines.

To date, over this budget and the last, every household in Darling Range will experience, over the forward estimates, a \$1 241 a year increase in fees and charges by the McGowan government. They will receive, on average, an imposition of a \$500 increase in household fees for electricity alone if they consume the average amount of electricity. However, many people in the flats in Darling Range, in Byford, for example, are not average consumers; they are above average—they have kids and they often have grandparents and extended family members living with them—so they will be hit with much higher increases for electricity fees than \$500. Indeed, as we heard, about 60 per cent of households have solar panels. That saw the largest uptake of solar by households in Western Australia's history, encouraged by the previous government. Members opposite deride that but it is a fact. People in Byford and elsewhere took up much of that assistance to avoid fee imposts and the risk of imposts, which the McGowan government has now inflicted upon them. They bought solar panels to avoid rapid increases in electricity prices by the government. The McGowan government got around that, did it not? Despite in opposition decrying our discussion of increasing the fixed fee, which we never did beyond the overall increase in electricity prices, in the last year of our government we increased the fixed fee by three per cent, not by 100 per cent, this government has come out and said, "I saw you trying to avoid the impost of electricity price increases. I see you are trying to be more self-sufficient and do the right thing and use renewable energy but we are going to stop you." The government will grab that money by putting a fixed charge on electricity. Last year, the fixed charge went up massively. The increase in electricity prices was on average 11 per cent, and all of it went on the fixed charge.

Again, in opposition, members opposite went and knocked on people's doors in Byford, Bedforddale and Wellard and said, "We will not do this", then they turned around and that is what they did. They have tried to rationalise it and hide it as well as they could, but that is what they have done. The people in Darling Range and, indeed, in all Western Australia by 2021–22 will be hit by this government with a \$500 a year increase in electricity charges, on average, which it promised not to do.

I will leave the water debate, to a great extent, to my colleague the member for Cottesloe, but let me just say this: in opposition the Minister for Water was dogged in his criticism of us for increasing water costs, but throughout our period in government the Water Corporation, on average, putting aside rural supply, basically covered its costs. We increased some fees to bring the Water Corporation's revenue up to meeting its costs as determined by the Economic Regulation Authority. In wastewater we were above costs, but in potable water we were below. But across the whole pool of types of water and water services, we charged the cost. We knew it was becoming excessive and that is why, as Treasurer, I commissioned the Economic Regulation Authority to look at it again. We commissioned the ERA to look at it and in 2018 it found that Water Corporation would be charging 14 per cent above cost. What did this government do? It recognised it was charging above costs, but it wanted the money. The government has turned the Water Corporation into a giant revenue collection mechanism, and by the end of the forward estimates, the profit and the dividend from the Water Corporation will be \$1.2 billion. This year, according to material given to us in estimates, the rate of return for the Water Corporation is 27 per cent. It is one of the most profitable businesses in Australia based on monopoly profits. What are they doing with this money? They are creaming it into the government. We also heard—I will leave this to member Cottesloe—that there has been a sweetheart deal and some of the funds from the additional charges will go to pay off Labor's mates in the Electrical Trades Union with an above wages policy initiative. The government is saying that the people who helped Labor in the ETU can get a \$3 000 a year increase to their wages, but everybody else—teachers, nurses, doctors and police—can only get \$1 000. That is what they do; that is the Labor Party.

The real issue is that the state government promised to keep fees and charges to a minimum. Labor members looked at people—the Labor member doorknocked; it was not unique to Darling Range—and they knew then and know now that households are struggling. Labor members represent many struggling households. They know the state of play of household budgets, wages growth is flat as a tack, jobs are under stress, the cost of living is exceeding income growth and many households are struggling to pay their mortgages and additional costs. What did the government do? It hit them with monumental increases in fees and charges when it promised not to.

Members on this side of the chamber condemn the government for that. Labor members condemned us for modest increases; we condemn the government for astronomical increases. I will compare the increases in 2008–09. I might add that the 2008–09 budget was a Labor budget brought down by Hon Eric Ripper, which had 10 per cent increases in electricity prices throughout the forward estimates and a statement saying that increase would have to go on for about 10 years. We inherited a 10 per cent increase in the forward estimates, and we met that increase, but no more over the forward estimates. I remind members that at that time the unemployment rate was as close to zero as you can get, wages growth was the highest in the nation at about 4.5 per cent or five per cent and the economy was booming. Wages were plentiful and wage rates in Western Australia were 30 per cent above the

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

nation. If ever there was a time to increase electricity charges, that was the time to do it and we inherited streams of increases from the previous Labor government. But now, when households are on their knees, when the government is reliant upon households to drive the economy forward, it has hit them with a \$1 241 increase in fees. That is what the government has done and there is no denying it. The Treasurer brags about it: "That's what you do", he says. That is what the government has done and it should pay the consequences for it, mainly and primarily because it got votes in Darling Range for promising to do the opposite.

One aspect of Darling Range is that it takes over 70 minutes to drive from one end of the electorate to the other. It is a very large and diverse electorate. Transport is the key in that electorate, particularly at the flats in Byford and those areas. Trying to get from one area to the next, particularly to work—people in the electorate work everywhere—requires a diverse network of many different transport modes and roads. Of course, in the hills a large number of trucking and agricultural businesses and others require road use. The key issue, which has been known for a long time—I think for over 10 years, which the shire has advocated for—is the expansion of Tonkin Highway. A business plan on the development of the highway was put together in 2012–13 under Hon Troy Buswell and it has been promoted regularly. If members go around the Darling Range electorate, they will find that the top priority of shires, businesses and residents is the expansion of Tonkin Highway—that is it. Today, this government bragged in question time how good it is at working with the commonwealth government—the Turnbull government and Shorten opposition—to get more money for infrastructure and for WA. The Turnbull government offered a hell of a lot of money to this government, including \$252 million for the Tonkin Highway stage 3 expansion, \$145 million for the Tonkin Highway gap and \$183 million for the Tonkin Highway–Welshpool and Kelvin road interchanges, but none of it is in the budget. Members of the Labor Party are going out and telling the people of Darling Range that they are committed to the Tonkin Highway works. They are not. They had the money from the commonwealth but it has not been allocated in this budget. The Labor government has also not committed its own matching funding for it. When we asked the government, "Where is the money for Tonkin Highway?" the Treasurer said that he does not get out of bed for less than 80 per cent. In other words, they gave the old heave-ho to the people of Darling Range on the Tonkin Highway works. Government members are out there, sending propaganda telling everyone that they are committed to the Tonkin Highway works. They are not. They have the money from the commonwealth and they have a business plan. This government has a great aversion to business plans; it does not do them. It commits before it does a business plan. The business plan is an afterthought to rationalise, often, thought bubbles. We heard the story of the wave farm down in Albany—what a complete joke. Anyway, I divert. Tonkin Highway has a business plan that is ready to go right away, all gazetted and in great demand. There is population growth in the area and the Turnbull government has provided half the funding, but the government has said, "Bugger it; we won't go ahead with it." Once again, as members opposite did in the last campaign, they are telling a pack of porkies to the people of Darling Range that they are committed to the Tonkin Highway works but they are not. They have the money. They had a budget. They did not put any money into it. That is the end of the story. Please, why do they not tell the truth for a while?

Members opposite are doing the same thing in another area. A lot of people in Darling Range do not just work in that area. They go up and down on the trains. They go where the work is. They also drive all around the extensive network of metropolitan Perth, and it is a big area. They have noticed, as everybody else has, that we need an extension to the freeway north from Hester Avenue to Romeo Road. Again, that has been on the drawing board for a long time. The right-of-way is there and it is shovel ready. What did members opposite do? They talked about it regularly, they promised it, they campaigned on it—the local member, the member for Butler, still campaigns on it—and they got the money from the commonwealth but they have done nothing. They have not put it in the budget and they are not expediting it at all. We have certain words in this Parliament that we cannot utter or else we will be tossed out. One begins with an "I". I cannot utter it but, for the people of Darling Range, that is what the mob opposite does on a regular basis.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr A.D. BUTI: I seek your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker, on the clear implication of what the Leader of the Opposition said. He said that you cannot utter the word but it begins with "I". We know what that means.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is a point of order! I am asking for a ruling.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I am afraid that I was talking to the Clerk and I did not hear the comment.

Dr A.D. BUTI: If you are unable to say a word because it is unparliamentary, surely it must also be unparliamentary to impugn a clear meaning of that word.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry, I cannot rule on your point of order because, unfortunately, I was discussing something with the Clerk, but I will point out to the Leader of the Opposition that it does not really matter how loosely you refer to it, presuming I know the l-word that you are talking about. I would ask that you —

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It might be Labor; it might be loose!

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, I —

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Acting Speaker is speaking.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Just hear me out, please. I ask the Leader of the Opposition not to use that word, even in a roundabout way.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Point taken, but members know what I mean.

Dr A.D. Buti: We know you're a loser.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: But I am not Labor!

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, I am not loose with the truth!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I will start calling people soon.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I will move to another area. One of the major issues that the people of Darling Range face, like most people in Western Australia, is the need for an upgrade to transport lanes. Members of this government talk a lot and promise a lot, and they received a lot of money from the Turnbull government, but they simply do not deliver. Out there on a daily basis over the last few weeks they have been saying that they are committed to it, but they are not. It is fraud. Members opposite have committed to another area—actually, they have not committed to it; the Turnbull government has—the Byford rail line. The government has put no money into it but it has taken the commonwealth money and appropriated it over the forward estimates for the Byford line, a bit. To make it clear to the people of Darling Range, the McGowan government has put no money into the Byford line and has no skin in the action. The Byford rail line is so far entirely funded and committed to by the Turnbull government. It is a Liberal Party commitment, not a Labor commitment. Members opposite talk about it a lot and had the opportunity to put in appropriations for it, but they decided not to do it. That is how much they indicated to the people of Darling Range that they are committed to the Byford rail extension—nothing. Members opposite had the money from the commonwealth and some of it was put in the budget but they have not committed their own money, and if they do not put their own skin into the action, they have no action in the investment. It is a major issue that they have talked about for six or seven years and criticised us for not investing in it. They promised to do it, they got the money and they have flubbed it to the people of Darling Range completely. Members opposite went out there and told the story of being committed to the Byford line and the Tonkin Highway extension but they failed to deliver. That is in turn with the McGowan government; that is what it does.

I will mention a couple of other service areas. In opposition, in the run-up to the election, the McGowan government said a lot about frontline services. In a macro sense, it criticised the former government for excessive spending on frontline services. The McGowan government troops went throughout the community—both members of Parliament and their union mates—and told everybody in their various communities, particularly the seat of Darling Range, that the Liberal government had cut back viciously on frontline services, including education, police, corrective services, child protection and education assistants. According to them, we were slashing and burning everywhere. Of course, it was not true. We actually spent quite heavily. The data was obvious. Indeed, members opposite criticised us, and still do today, for excessive spending on child protection, education, police and health. The Treasurer criticises us on a regular basis and has for six years. However, government members went out to the community and said that we did the opposite, particularly in Darling Range. It is an area that has an intensive need for frontline services. In some areas, crime is high. It is an area with a large number of children who rely on public schools. It is an area that, probably no more than any other, has a high demand for health services and relies upon the Armadale–Kelmescott Memorial Hospital to a great extent.

What have we seen with the spending on frontline services from this government? In education, I will compare what was allocated in 2017–18. This is from the government's own budget. It denies its own budget and brags about its stringent control of expenditure in aggregate, but in disaggregated and individual terms, it is denying any cuts whatsoever. It is doing the same thing it did in opposition. Between 2017–18 and 2020–21, education will be cut by \$285 million. During this period, the government has forecast growing population and student demand. This is a substantial cut in real terms per student, and all schools are feeling it. The government has trimmed back

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

revenue in all schools, particularly the large schools with more than 1 200 kids, of which there are a few in Byford and Darling Range. This is a large cut, and it is not just that the government is doing it, but it is what the government promised not to do, particularly with education. It did expand the number of educational assistants, despite the fact that there was no business case for them, and the fact that we have 50 per cent more education assistants per student than other states, but so what? They are members of United Voice, and that is what is important and underlay the decision. Despite that increase, education expenditure is going down by \$285 million.

In opposition, the government went on and on about how the previous government was cutting back on health. This was a real joke, because we did the opposite. We invested over \$7 billion in infrastructure. Even the government sees this, because it is opening a number of the hospitals that we built—and the government criticises us for that. The Treasurer said that he is really proud of the government's cutbacks in the growth of the state's health expenditure. He was really proud of it, and he showed how he had done it. He has cut back not just the growth, but the overall expenditure. Of course, the Minister for Health sees no cutback. He puts out a sustainable health report that states that the priority is to reduce the spending on health, both in hospitals and elsewhere, but when we ask him what has happened, he denies any reduction. We can spin these stories in Parliament that what goes up, goes down, and goes around, but what the hell? That is the world we live in. Health expenditure over the period between 2017–18 and 2020–21 will be cut by just shy of \$200 million. Police expenditure is down by \$27 million; communities by \$216 million. Those are substantial real reductions in frontline services that affect everybody in Western Australia, particularly those in Darling Range. When the government campaigned in the last election, when it won the seat of Darling Range, it promised not to do any of this. That is a significant breach of trust, and it is having significant ramifications for the people of Darling Range.

I go back to where I started. I know that the government sees blue sky in front of us. It has heralded a new era of economic growth in Western Australia. I do not know how they did it, but members opposite say that they did it. Yes, the mining sector has picked up, thanks to us not allowing the government to throttle the gold industry, and iron ore and oil and gas prices have picked up. The mining sector is doing well, but the real sectors of the economy that focus on Darling Range—household, retail and house building sectors—are deep in the doldrums and continue to be so. I have already gone through the data for wages growth and unemployment growth, but for dwelling construction, new approvals fell by 7.5 per cent on annual average terms over the past year, and in the first quarter of this calendar year, through to April 2018, they dropped by 19.2 per cent. That is an indication of the growth in home building activity. That is incredible. House prices in Western Australia are still falling. Every quarter, Treasury comes out with a forecast that prices will improve, but they go down. We have surplus capacity in the housing market because tens of thousands of people have left the state, mainly to go to the eastern states. House building was geared for two per cent to 2.5 per cent population growth. That is what everybody thought was going to happen, but it did not. Population growth is down to its lowest level in 35 years, and there is significant overcapacity in housing stock, particularly in places such as Byford. Prices are going down; there will be no expansion, and people who bought those houses will be experiencing negative equity and mortgage stress. What has the government done to assist them and ease their burden? Absolutely nothing. The government inherited a \$5 000 first home buyers bonus, which was one of the first things it did away with. When that happened, we went through the debate, and the Treasurer said it would have no impact on first home buyer expansion. The data shows that it did.

We cannot conjure up demand by just talking about it. The real issue here is population growth. The people of Byford and the people of Perth have experienced rebuilding in the state and in their area, expecting continued high population growth. That is what we built the city for, and the state. In fact, for a large amount of the infrastructure that the government has promised, it is handing over almost all the funding requirements to the commonwealth, and therefore it will be Turnbull government infrastructure. Metronet is essentially, because the commonwealth funds the majority of it, a federal Turnbull government initiative. The state government has sold it to the feds. But we need people, and one of the first initiatives that the government undertook was to cut the incentives for people to migrate to this state. It cut the categories for state preferential immigration from 178 to 17, and it removes the City of Perth as a regional centre, making it a capital centre. Asking anybody in the industry attached to that, whether international students, TAFEs or the housing sector, they will show that it is having a crippling effect on demand for their activities. The government denies that it is an issue, but it is a profound issue.

The government went to the last election promising that it would look after the people of Darling Range. It said it would keep fees and charges to a minimum. It promised that it would not just sustain but grow the essential government services upon which people relied. It promised to deliver the infrastructure needs. What it has delivered is crippling increases in fees and charges, massive cuts to frontline services, and, even though it has the money from the commonwealth, it has failed to deliver on the Tonkin Highway in Byford, even though it is still saying that it did. The government stands, and should be, condemned for that behaviour.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I call the Minister for Transport.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [4.39 pm]: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr D.C. Nalder: It's private members' business.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have just checked with the Clerk. Whatever the practice was in the previous government, it is not carried over into this Parliament. When we were in government, we gave most of the time to the opposition. The rule is that I am expected to give both sides equal time. That is what I was talking to the Clerk about before. I am expected to give both sides equal treatment.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will give the Leader of the Opposition a lesson. If he wants to stand up and make outrageous claims about Darling Range, the people of Darling Range and our conduct, we will respond. We are very proud of our efforts in Darling Range and our commitments to those people. The patronising and condescending way you spoke about the people of Darling Range was absolutely disgusting. You have no idea about the area.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, direct your comments through me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Acting Speaker, the people of Darling Range should watch that.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, there were almost no interjections from our side when the Leader of the Opposition spoke. Indeed, when one member was interjecting, as the minister, I asked him to stop, and he went out of the chamber and did not interject further. There has been no campaign of interjection. The minister has been on her feet for fewer than 60 seconds and the usual misogynist intimidation from the men on the other side has started already.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Minister, direct your comments to me. I ask that interjections be kept to a minimum.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition stood up and made a number of claims about who we are and what we do. I intend to respond to each of those claims. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition insulted every person in Darling Range. He does not understand the different communities that represent the seat of Darling Range. He was so excited that he went to Byford. He has no understanding of that electorate. Normally, when a political party loses government 14 or 15 months ago, after having been in government for eight and a half years, members of that former government stand up and present their record in the seat of Darling Range. They usually speak about the things that they did in the seat of Darling Range during nearly nine years of government. What did we hear about their record?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Nothing.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Zero! That is why the former, former member for Darling Range, Hon Tony Simpson, walked around the corridors moping trying to dislodge the former Premier because he knew that no-one in that government cared about his electorate. He said that to us. He said that he could not get traction on any issue. Whether it be the extension of the Tonkin Highway or the Byford extension, there was no traction under them. Even when it came to sorting out Araluen, he could not get the previous government to absorb and understand that. All five members sitting opposite know that.

As I said, normally a former government that has been out of government for 14 to 16 months, after having been in government for eight and a half years, would stand up and say what they have achieved. They would outline all the things they delivered to the growing suburbs in that area—to the Kelmscott hills, the orchardists, the farmers in the area and the new home buyers. That is what people normally do. The Leader of the Opposition stood up and said nothing about the former government's level of achievement. He was patronising and condescending towards every person in that electorate. If I go back to the former Labor government—I have not even done the research on it—I can remember the commitments we delivered for that area. We started the new Kelmscott train station and the new Armadale train station.

Dr A.D. Buti: Champion Lakes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, Champion Lakes.

Dr M.D. Nahan: How about the Armadale courthouse and police station? How about the secondary college?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition had 40 minutes in which to speak. That courthouse is not there. His party was in government for nine years and it did not build it. We converted Armadale Police Station so it

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

could stay open 24 hours. Let us go through it. What did the previous Labor government do in transport? We were responsible for the first Tonkin Highway extension.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Which one?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Honestly!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Direct your comments through the Chair, please, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We have the —

Mr W.J. Johnston: The boys club.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, the boys club. Look at them. The member can stand up and tell us about his record of achievement in that seat. He can tell us what his government did in eight and a half years because I am sure that people would be very keen to hear that.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will keep going. I do not want to take interjections.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr Acting Speaker, I would ask you to stop the misogynists on the other side of the chamber interjecting on this strong woman. They have sat there and abused the minister from the moment she got up. She has been speaking for fewer than five minutes and they have been interjecting constantly, even after you directed them to stop it.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you should not be referring to those on the other side by the words you used—misogynists. You should just refer to them as “members opposite”.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If I have used an unparliamentary term, I withdraw it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: In those circumstances, I am saying that we are taking that word as being unparliamentary.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Mr Acting Speaker, I am new to this place but my understanding is that the member needs to specifically withdraw the term he used. I personally found it highly offensive.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I pointed out what the word was and he withdrew it. I am happy with that.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What I find offensive is not being able to talk about our records of achievement versus those of the opposition. I know the Leader of the Opposition’s attitude to women and I also know of his attitude to the Italian community, as has been demonstrated in the past.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Earlier, the member for Armadale insisted that the Leader of the Opposition withdraw a comment he made when he referred to a letter. Here we have the minister referring to and implying offensive behaviour and using an offensive name to describe the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite. It is unacceptable. I am offended by the minister’s behaviour.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Minister, perhaps you could address the terms of the motion.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. I just want to educate the member for Cottesloe. When the previous government cut the Italian language program and I defended it, does the member for Cottesloe know what the Leader of the Opposition said? He said, “You stick with your tribe.”

Dr A.D. Buti: And he was minister for multicultural affairs.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he was minister for multicultural affairs. I was offended by that and I continue to be offended by that—as is the Italian community.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Let us go through the former government's achievements in Darling Range. There were none. For 40 minutes, the Leader of the Opposition stood up and was unable to articulate one achievement in Darling Range. The Liberal Party was in government for eight and a half years —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the minister does not want to take interjections.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Acting Speaker, I am addressing you.

The Leader of the Opposition and his government were in office for eight and a half years. In 40 minutes, the Leader of the Opposition could not articulate one achievement of his government. He found Byford last week! He now wants to talk about Byford, because he has found it. He fell across Byford in his pathetic attempt in that seat. For 40 minutes, the Leader of the Opposition patronised the people of Darling Range, was condescending to the people of Darling Range and insulted the people of Darling Range. He was not able to articulate one positive thing that his government did. The former Labor government built train station upgrades, the Tonkin Highway extensions, and the Armadale–Kelmescott Memorial Hospital upgrade. My father is in that hospital at the moment. Those types of services in the community benefit the people of Darling Range. The Leader of the Opposition did nothing when he was in government, so for the Leader of the Opposition to now pretend to care about the people of Darling Range is an insult to everybody who lives in Darling Range.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned Byford a number of times. As I have said, he does not understand that Darling Range comprises a group of different communities. The challenges faced by the people of Byford are different from the challenges faced by people in the hills, Roleystone, Karragullen, Pickering Brook, Mundaring and the other growth areas near the freeway. Those people need to be given separate attention, because their challenges are different. We on this side understand that. The reason the former, former member for Darling Range walked around the corridors of this Parliament and tried to get rid of the previous Premier was that he knew that under the leadership of the former Premier and the Treasury management of the now Leader of the Opposition, he could not achieve anything for his community. He was frustrated. I sensed that frustration. The Leader of the Opposition was in government for eight and a half years, and 14 months later he is not able to tell the house what his government did in that time. That is absolutely criminal.

I will go through what the former Labor government did—transport, education, rail systems, expansions to the hospital —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the member for Churchlands laughing about the hospital?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: I am laughing about how much you are claiming to criticise us.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): You invited the interjection, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He was laughing.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The incredible thing was his fees and charges speech.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, we are now 10 minutes into the minister's speech, and if the member for Churchlands had been silent for two minutes, I would be surprised. I do not understand him. He has ignored your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker, for 10 minutes solid. I do not understand why he has no respect for your rulings. I would ask you to enforce your ruling on him—that he not interject any more into the speech of the Minister for Transport.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Thank you for your guidance. Minister, will you direct your comments to me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will go through the increases in household fees and charges. The justification that was given by the former Treasurer in his comments today was that his government increased fees and charges because the economy was going good and revenue was flowing in. Why—to collect more revenue? The economy was so strong

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

that he thought his government could keep ramping up fees and charges. The budget was in surplus, and the government increased fees and charges by an astronomical amount. It did not do that for budgetary reasons. It did that for ideological reasons. That is what the former Liberal government did.

Point of Order

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Mr Acting Speaker, I reiterate that the motion states —

That this house highlights the impact the McGowan government is having on the people of Darling Range through massive increases to the cost of living, cuts to frontline services and its failure to fund critical infrastructure.

The minister is going back through history, because she wants to avoid taking accountability for herself. This debate is about this government, and so far the minister has avoided any discussion of the topic.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the minister may have a reasonably free-ranging discussion in addressing the question. I cannot tell the minister what to do or what to say.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Would you ask the minister, if she is so proud of her own policies, to focus on the issue and talk about her government's own policies, rather than giving us a distorted history lesson?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. The minister may address the question in her own way.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition in his contribution to the debate said that because the economy was going strong —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition justified the massive increases in fees and charges in the early years of his government by saying that the economy was going strong and revenue was rolling in —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: — and that allowed his government to go as hard as possible on fees and charges. That is the Leader of the Opposition' economic argument. That is what the Leader of the Opposition outlined.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I will have to call you again if you keep interjecting, and that will be home time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition in his speech articulated nothing about what the Liberal Party did in government. He patronised every person in the Darling Range electorate. He then said the reason his government increased fees and charges so hard in the initial years was because the economy was going strong and revenue was rolling in. Oh—he has gone!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition claimed many things about us, and when we hold a mirror to his performance, he cannot handle it! That is an incredible performance. The Leader of the Opposition made extraordinary claims about us—claims that he knows are not true —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Like what?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will go through it. I have another 48 minutes. Now that we hold up his performance in government, he has walked out. He cannot handle not abusing us.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Acting Speaker, I seek some clarity. I believe I have been called a number of times by the member for Cannington when I have reflected on a member's movements if they are not in the chamber, and the Speaker has told me that I cannot make those reflections. I am trying to understand whether that is also the case in this instance.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I will just check with the Clerk.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It was a previous ruling; I am seeing whether that ruling still applies.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. But I would ask the minister to stick to the motion.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This motion is about increases in fees and charges. I note that when I highlight the previous government's performance, the Leader of the Opposition is not here because he does not want to hear about his performance. His justification is that the economy was going great and revenue was rolling in.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker, the minister made an inference about why the Leader of the Opposition is not in the chamber. She has no idea why the Leader of the Opposition is not here. She cannot impugn the Leader of the Opposition by saying he does not want to be here. That is simply not correct parliamentary behaviour according to the standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Minister, I did ask you to confine yourself to the motion we are talking about.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal–National government increased household fees and charges by 89 per cent over eight and a half years. It did that while having significant revenue growth. Members might remember that the Liberal government inherited the lowest net debt on record and one of the biggest surpluses on record. There were significant surpluses and low debt, and what was the first thing the Liberal–National government did? It slugged households. That government did not have to make difficult decisions because it inherited \$40 billion of inherited net debt; it did not have to do that. It inherited the best set of books in the state's history and it went in and slugged householders, as I said, not for financial reasons, but for ideological reasons. That is what the government did and now the opposition cannot hide from that. In 2009–10, households were hit with a 25.6 per cent increase in power prices. Yet, in that same year—this is just incredible—there was an \$831 million surplus and revenue growth of 13.4 per cent. They are incredible numbers for revenue growth.

Mr P.C. Tinley: What was it again?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There was 13.4 per cent revenue growth. They are incredible numbers. In 2010–11, households were hit with a 16.1 per cent increase in the price of power when there was a surplus of \$1.6 billion and revenue growth of 8.5 per cent. They are incredible numbers. As we have said, electricity charges increased by 89.9 per cent and water, sewerage and drainage by 66 per cent. There were significant increases across all fees and charges.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will not take that interjection, but I will refer to a comment made by the member for Bateman in question time today when he talked about compounding. I remember when they increased three taxes in two years, which meant astronomical increases in people's bills. Can anyone remember what tax that was? It was the land tax.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There was a 12.5 per cent increase in 2013–14, a 10 per cent increase in 2014–15 and a 20 per cent increase the next year, plus there was a change in the scales and rates. The opposition is now understanding the compound effect of cumulative increases, in particular for something like land tax, which is a progressive scale. When things keep increasing and there are also valuation impacts that move people up the scale, the compound impacts can be enormous, and they were. The Leader of the Opposition did not mention the people who pay land tax in the seat of Darling Range, but I know a lot who do, whether it be business owners down in Byford or some of the primary producers—I know there are some exemptions, but they do not apply that effectively to some of the changes across the hills. The impacts on those people were extraordinary. The compound effect of the three land tax increases in two years meant that people paid upwards of 100 per cent in increases, and sometimes there were 200 per cent increases in their land tax bills. It was absolutely incredible, yet the former government did nothing to stop it; it ignored it. This is one of the reasons that small businesses, self-funded retirees and small investors ran from the Liberal Party. It was because of the three significant land tax increases and the impacts they had on their budgets. There were tax increases and tax increases. We could go through them all, but I think I have painted the picture that when a mirror is put to the former government's performance on land tax increases, we see that there were significant increases.

The Leader of the Opposition also talked about negative equity because people left the state. Why did people leave the state? They left because the previous government racked up debt and ran the economy into the ground. Now there is a concern in households about the mess the previous government created. It is as if someone had demolished a house and was walking around with their hands in their pockets asking, "Can you believe this? Can

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

you believe the house has fallen down? Who did this?" Who is responsible for this economy that was contracting under the former government? Who was responsible for consumer confidence, which was rock bottom under the Liberal government? Who was responsible for falling private sector demand? The former government created a mess and walked around saying, "Jeez, I do not know what happened. Look at it, it is really bad; I do not know what happened." The Leader of the Opposition avoided mentioning the increase in debt. Everyone in this state knows that we were left with a mess, and we are trying to clean it up.

I will read out some economic data. I will read through the Australian national accounts for March 2018. State final demand increased by 0.2 per cent in annual average terms, the first time in 18 consecutive quarters for WA. We have state domestic demand increasing again. Consumer confidence is up. We know that business investment is starting to recover and we have a strong public sector investment program. The previous government is shocked about the fact that our net migration was negative under it and the implications that had for the rest of the economy. It was a mess that the previous government created and that it has walked away from, and now somehow it thinks that everything has turned bad in the last 14 months, when in fact things are starting to turn around under this Labor government.

I will read through some surveys. I quote the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's "Survey of Business Confidence" of 17 May —

Business confidence has surged in 2018 to mid-boom levels as optimism rises about Western Australia's economic outlook.

The latest WA Super-CCI Survey of Business Confidence conducted by WA's peak business body, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA ... is the only WA-specific index in the country, providing a snapshot of state-wide economic conditions and business expectations.

CCI Chief Economist Rick Newnham —

I like Newnham —

said 75 per cent of WA businesses are expecting the economy to improve or stay the same in the short term—the highest it has been in seven years.

"Most WA businesses ... expect the WA economy to improve or stay the same in the next 12-months," Mr Newnham said.

"This puts business confidence for the short and long-term back at mid-boom levels—the highest in over seven years.

That is an incredible report by our friends at the CCI. A number of other reports, such as the NAB survey, all highlight the increasing confidence in the WA economy. Again, that is a significant turnaround from previous years.

The Leader of the Opposition also criticised Labor for seeking federal funding for our projects. I do not know about you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney), but when we have significant debt levels and a strong infrastructure program —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: — we try to get as much money from the federal government as possible. That is what should be done. It makes good financial sense. Why should not we get money for Metronet—50 per cent, 80 per cent or 100 per cent? Why should we not?

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Thank you, member.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Why should we not try to get more money for our infrastructure program? The Leader of the Opposition has always been anti-our approach to getting federal funding. Remember when we tried to get the Perth Freight Link funds redirected to our road and rail program? An opposition cheerleading group was established and its whole mantra was, "Don't give WA the money". That is what it was doing. The opposition was trying to undermine WA receiving infrastructure funds.

The Leader of the Opposition says, "They're getting money from the commonwealth". Yes, we want more. We want 80 per cent; we want 100 per cent, if possible. Why not? Do we not deserve as much infrastructure funding as possible in WA? Of course we do.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Point of Order

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is getting absolutely ridiculous that the member for Bateman cannot —

The ACTING SPEAKER: I take your point of order. Member for Bateman, I will have to call you soon.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course we want more money from the commonwealth government. Our strategy has always been to try to leverage as much money as possible in the lead-up to the next federal election; we have been very clear on that. The window is not yet shut; the window is still open, and we saw an exciting announcement today by the federal Leader of the Opposition, Hon Bill Shorten. To me, that has upped the stakes again, so while we welcomed that federal government funding last month, we believe we can do more. That is what we are striving to do. Anyone who tries to undermine this strategy is undermining WA's efforts to get a better deal from the commonwealth. The previous government's strategy was to do nothing. It did not engage with the Labor Party or the Liberal Party because of the factional tensions across the state Liberal Party. The former Premier could not stand other people and we all know that as a result it got nothing.

Our approach has been to talk to both sides of federal politics. For what reason? Because we want to get a good deal for WA. We will use election timings and whatever else we need to use to get more money for WA, because Western Australian taxpayers deserve it.

Mr P.C. Tinley: They expect it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think they are mildly surprised by our achievements so far. We need to deliver the infrastructure and we want the commonwealth to assist us. What is so wrong with that? I do not care if the federal government wants to claim a bit of Metronet. I do not really care, because this is not about claiming ownership or what is on a DL; is actually about delivering outcomes for WA. I do not really care about the politicking. Do members opposite think I really care that federal ministers are doing dorothy dixers on Metronet in the federal chambers? I do not care; I welcome that. Do they think I care that the federal transport documents distributed around ministers' conferences has Metronet as a key feature? I do not care. Do they think I care if federal budget papers have as a highlight for WA the delivery of Metronet? I do not care. I welcome it. This is not about claiming credit here or there; it is about delivering on Metronet and our other road and rail projects.

We have taken the approach that we have to move beyond street-level party politics and think in the best interests of WA. This is not about which part of which faction the federal finance minister is part of compared with the former Premier; it is not that. It is not about who claims credit for what. It is not about that. It is actually about getting more funds for WA and putting them into our infrastructure program. I am deeply proud that we have been able to work successfully with both sides of federal politics. For what reason? For WA. Members opposite can say whatever they like out on the street about who said this and who said that, but I think people understand that we are genuine about delivering what we committed to, and we will do everything we can to ensure that we do that. Whether it is the road projects or the rail projects, we are genuinely committed to delivering on our election commitment to service the outer suburbs, which were ignored under the previous government.

As I said, I do not care if someone is running around claiming credit for Metronet. I care about having the funds to help deliver on our commitments, and every dollar we get means less pressure on WA taxpayers. That is a good thing. It means providing transport certainty, limiting the impact on the state finances and getting commonwealth money—50 per cent, 80 per cent, 100 per cent. The idea that we could somehow be lectured by the opposition about our strategy for obtaining that money is laughable. The previous government had no plan. It cobbled together the Perth Freight Link a year before the election and that was its only strategy. We have a strategy for continuing to get more funds from the commonwealth. We will continue to apply that strategy to get as much funding for WA as we possibly can. As I said, this is not about petty politics. It is about ensuring that we get as much funding for WA as possible.

The Leader of the Opposition outlined some of the pressures on the people of Darling Range, which he discovered when his car broke down in Byford on his way down south. When he got out of his car and realised he was in Byford—a place he never saw when he was a minister for eight and a half years—he automatically started getting concerned about some of their issues. For eight and half years he completely ignored them and would not have known where Byford was. In fact, when we announced in May last year our program for delivering Metronet as part of the redirection of the PFL funds, the Leader of the Opposition was asked about the Byford rail extension and his comment was that he did not know much about Byford. That is what he said: "I was Treasurer for eight and a half years and I wanted to sell Western Power, which really impacts on everybody, but I don't know much about Byford." He had no idea about —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: He knows more about Michigan than he does about Byford!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. He does not know much about Byford.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

The idea that anyone would believe his fake sincerity with those people is incredible. The southern champion of a suburb he just fell across! I do not know why the opposition is not out there promoting its plan to sell Western Power. He is very interested in energy prices; that is what the motion is about—the energy issue. Why is he not telling the people of Darling Range about his plans to sell Western Power? I do not know why he is not doing that. There are a lot of issues across the Darling Range electorate: charges is one, maintenance is another, security of supply is another. There is a range of different issues confronting the people of Byford, the hills and Kelmscott. Maybe the opposition knows that if it tells everybody in the hills and Byford that it is going to sell Western Power, it may not work that well. It is not telling people about its plan and keen desire to sell Western Power. I know the Liberal candidate for Darling Range supports the sale of Western Power; she was part of the previous government that took it to the election. I am not sure why the opposition is not telling people that. If it thinks that the sale of Western Power was the solution for increasing pressure on energy prices—which is what it said it was—and was a panacea for the financial management of this state, why would it not tell the people of Darling Range about its plan to sell Western Power? I do not know why. I am keen for whoever wants to respond to this address to outline their views on Western Power, because I think it is fair enough.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Okay.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Good. When I finish, that would be great. I am really keen to hear members' views on Western Power.

The Leader of the Opposition outlined, as I said, that when his car broke down in Byford, he fell out and realised he was in Byford and took an automatic interest in the place —

Dr A.D. Buti: And thought that was the whole of Darling Range.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: — and thought that was the whole of Darling Range. He said, "I'm in Byford. There's some new housing. Can you believe there is new housing in Byford?" Who knew that Serpentine–Jarrahdale has been one of the fastest growing corridors across Western Australia—across Australia—for many years? The Leader of the Opposition obviously did not, but of course we did.

Let us go through many of the challenges facing the people of Darling Range, because this is what it is all about. One of the key issues is transport costs. The longer we spend on the road, the longer we are away from family—the more congestion we face, the higher the cost. Let us go through the range of issues that confronted the previous government for eight and a half years that it did not address. Let us start with one of my personal favourites—Denny Avenue.

Mr D.C. Nalder: What did your department rate Denny Avenue?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am going to ignore that.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! I have been called in here on a rescue mission and I want peace and quiet and tranquillity throughout the house.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, when I am on my feet, you do not talk. I call you to order for the first time. Carry on, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to Denny Avenue. To give some historical context, I was born at Armadale hospital and grew up in Roleystone. I went to Kelmscott Senior High School for the last two years. I went to Roleystone Primary School and then to Roleystone District High School, to make it all very clear. I did not attend the kindy or the preprimary years because we came from a Calabrian family, but from year 1 to year 5, I went to Roleystone Primary School.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Speaker. Then it became a district high school and I was in one of the first intakes of Roleystone District High School, which is beautifully landscaped. We have delivered a new bus stop in there recently, too, which is a great addition to that area. After year 10, I had to go to Kelmscott Senior High School —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: What is the relevance?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is Darling Range.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: I enjoy the life experience.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am giving clarity just in case. For clarity, I attended Roleystone Primary School, Roleystone District High School and Kelmscott Senior High School for the last two years.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, we have heard your life story.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The way we used to get to Kelmscott Senior High School from Roleystone was, of course, on which road? It was Denny Avenue. At that time, it was quite bad. It was always quite congested. How many years on? A lot of years on—28 or 29 years on—it is rated by the RAC as the riskiest road across the metropolitan area. I think it is 150 metres, member for Armadale.

Dr A.D. Buti: It is about 170 metres.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Other changes have been made to the network, so this level crossing is the main level crossing in the whole area. All the people from Roleystone, Clifton Hills and the areas to the east of Albany Highway have to access Kelmscott Senior High School—a very large school—so the congestion is enormous. We have two sets of traffic lights. The traffic enters from the business arrangements around Kelmscott Plaza. A medical centre and Kelmscott train station are also nearby. Spud Shed moved in about two or three years ago, bringing in traffic as well. So the whole area is very congested. People also access the car parks at the train stations. As a result of significant congestion through Albany Highway and other roads, and the main thoroughfare to the other side of the rail line to access Kelmscott Senior High School being in close proximity, this area is very problematic. It has been a major issue for a number of years. As I said, the RAC survey for, I think, two years in a row—potentially three—rated Denny Avenue as the riskiest road in the metropolitan area. We made a commitment. This has been on the agenda for a number of years. Federal and state Labor have made a commitment to put this issue squarely on the agenda.

We believe the separation of road and rail in that vicinity will really improve traffic flows in that area, reduce congestion, improve safety and revitalise that whole area. It is a very significant commercial and retail precinct, servicing not only Kelmscott, but also the hills—primarily Clifton Hills, and a lot of people from Roleystone come down to the Kelmscott shops as well. There are other facilities in the area. We believe that is a priority. We committed to it very early on, and we have made some funding commitments to that project. That was very much ignored under the previous government. It is probably one of the biggest issues out there, I would say, particularly in some sectors of the community.

If we head down Byford way, a number of projects are underway or have been committed to. Armadale Road is a key link from Armadale through to the freeway, to Cockburn, to that industrial area. Again, we made a commitment to bring the duplication of Armadale Road project forward. I am happy to say that that project is underway. Noting the significant east–west traffic across the metropolitan area, we need to ensure that we get right not only Armadale Road, but also the linkage to the Cockburn Gateway Shopping City. We are supporting the work done by the City of Armadale and the City of Cockburn in their campaigns. We will commit to not only the duplication of Armadale Road in that vicinity, but also the new North Lake–Armadale Road bridge. Again, that will help people in the entire area, because it is not only north–south, but also east–west. People continue to access Cockburn, the freeway and Murdoch, the whole area, and that is one of the reasons that this project is welcome. It is not only north–south, but also east–west.

I want to talk about another commitment that we made and something that we have fixed that the previous government refused to fix. I will come back to transport in a bit. The Leader of the Opposition highlighted the extension of the freeway north to Romeo Road as a major issue. The member for Wanneroo would be pleased to know that the people of Byford are very concerned about the freeway north extension to Romeo Road; the Leader of the Opposition informed us of that today. Araluen Botanic Park is another example. The board saw me in the middle of last year saying that it had been confronting this issue for many years. There is no long-term security for Araluen. Many of us have visited Araluen in the past. It is a jewel not only in the hills but also through the entire region. We have given Araluen some long-term security and a more direct relationship with government. It was calling for that for many years. I know every time I saw the former member for Darling Range, Hon Tony Simpson, in the corridor, I would say, “How’s Araluen going, Tony?” He would say, “Trying to get some movement. I am trying to get someone to listen to me about Araluen.”

Mr M. Hughes: No-one would listen.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is right. No-one in the government would listen.

We made a commitment and I think the vice-president said it was the best thing to happen to Araluen in 15 years. We have given Araluen a direct relationship with government and some funds to help improve some of its facilities in the park as well as some long-term tenure arrangements. Araluen was built by the hearts and minds of many volunteers over many years and we are very keen to facilitate and encourage that. I am very glad that we could follow that through.

I will pick up another issue that is pertinent to the member for Kalamunda, who hosted a meeting about four weeks ago in Carmel with a number of people from the Pickering Brook town centre and surrounds. Pickering Brook has

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

the many challenges that people also face in the Swan Valley and across the hills. Their land is really good for agriculture and, coming from an orchard background, I understand that. However, they face some significant challenges. The older population wants to move out or retire and there is an inability to do much with their land. We need to get the balance right of supporting agriculture and creating sustainable communities. For example, in the draft frameworks Pickering Brook was not picked up for any further investigation. As a result of the work we have done, we have made sure it is under planning investigation because we believe that giving these towns a sustainable future is very important. Looking at Araluen and some of the activities relating to tourism that are happening around the hills, I think there has been significant growth in tourism potential. From cideries or the lovely Devonshire teas that people can get on the way to Araluen—I stopped in to have one the other day—the experiences are unique and the place is incredible. We are very keen to continue that dialogue, as we suggested to the people from Pickering Brook in a meeting hosted by the member for Kalamunda about four weeks ago. We are trying to work with the City of Kalamunda and the community to talk about how we can sustain Pickering Brook. The member for Gosnells —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Cycling opportunities!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Cycling opportunities; I look at the member for Gosnells and I think of cycling up Welshpool Road East, Mills Street and Canning Road.

Dr A.D. Buti: Running, too; they're good for running.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is running, too. The member for Armadale does a lot of running in that area up Brookton Highway and through the winding hills. Member for Gosnells, cycling tourism is another area of significant potential. I am very keen to continue the work that we started over a month ago, member for Kalamunda, in how we can work with the shire and really make sure that these towns do not just die out. To me, their proximity to Perth and their potential for a lot of regional tourism in the area is an exciting opportunity. I see Araluen as part of the whole picture; it is a total experience. We cannot look at any of these places in isolation. Araluen is sort of the jewel in the crown with cideries and the value-adding by orchardists with “fattoria” experiences—farmyard experiences—if people drive around. There is enormous innovation and ingenuity from local people who really understand that value adding to their hills properties and farming experiences is important. I am glad that the Minister for Tourism also supports us and that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is part of the group that is looking at how we can create a sustainable future. I mentioned orchards in particular and it is the same in the Swan Valley; economies have changed. When my father came out from Italy and set up his orchard in Roleystone, now over 50 years ago in Karragullen, the economies were different. A relatively small orchard could be worked to make ends meet but the economy has changed. The market dominance of Coles and Woolies, technology and big farming has been felt in orchards and the horticultural area but of course, this has happened across Western Australia, not only in orchards. It has also been felt across the outer suburbs. We need to be involved in a continuing discussion—we are currently very much involved in it with the Swan Valley with the release of the review undertaken by Hon John Kobelke—about how we can grow the community and make sure we have housing for the older population. The member for Kalamunda has been very good at promoting that issue and was part of the working group looking at how we can drive some outcomes. From my personal perspective with ageing parents who now face significant health issues, what are the options in Roleystone and Karragullen? There are not many. We have to continue to consider how we are going to let people age in the community and really work hard to provide services. That is Pickering Brook.

In relation to rail, the previous government did not support the Byford extension. What can I say? They laughed at it. They said it would be 2050.

Mr M. Hughes: Minister, people are very encouraged by your commitment to that community and that district. We know it will achieve great things.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you, member for Kalamunda.

Members opposite do not support the Byford rail line. They did nothing to implement it in eight and a half years. They left a growing community with no time frame to deliver that rail extension. Members opposite stand up as though they care; it makes me sick because everyone knows that they did not care. They scoffed at rail projects and did no work to prepare for them. Now we are in government, we have to plan and do all the work for these projects. We have made a clear commitment. People know that we are committed to Metronet and passionate about delivering rail to the outer suburbs. Regarding the further extension to Tonkin Highway, members opposite do not know that we extended the Tonkin Highway to Thomas Road. When I said “Tonkin Highway extension” the opposition said “Where to, under the previous Labor government?” They did not know it had not always stopped there. Regarding the next part of the Tonkin Highway extension, the Leader of the Opposition said they did a business case in 2012–13 under the then Minister for Transport, Troy Buswell.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr D.C. Nalder: For which one?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was the Tonkin Highway extension to South Western Highway past Mundijong Road. What did they do about it? He stood up, saying —

Mr W.R. Marmion: You just said we didn't know where it went to and then you said we did a business case for the extension to South Western Highway.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, I did not say that. Members opposite were there for eight and a half years. In 2015, the former shire president said, and I quote —

“When I first got the shire president job (in 2013), I got a letter from (then Transport Minister), Troy Buswell saying the Tonkin Highway would be built in 2017,” ...

That is what the then Minister for Transport said. Members opposite had eight and a half years. A former member for Darling Range, Tony Simpson, was put on the committee and they left him to hang out to dry. They put him on a working group. When members are put on working groups, I expect at the time that Hon Troy Buswell would have operated by saying, “Go on that working group and we'll deliver you something; we'll save your seat for the next election.” He was put on a working group then the government did not commit to it. When we sought commonwealth funding, we said that the Tonkin Highway extension is a good project. It is a very good project not only because of the significantly less time spent travelling for people in that area but also it works with the Westport Taskforce as well—the planning for the outer harbour. It works with Mundijong intermodal. It works with the industrial estate. It makes a lot of sense. We went to the commonwealth and it gave us 50 per cent; we want more, and that is what we are going to try to get.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, it is 50 per cent. The commonwealth gave us 80 per cent for the Bunbury outer ring road and 50 per cent for the other projects. I think that we need at least 80 per cent, and who would argue against that? With the record GST low, who would argue for the commonwealth not giving us more funds for a key freight route? They kept saying there was \$1.2 million for the Perth Freight Link. Maybe it should all be put towards the Tonkin Highway extension. They keep saying that \$1.2 billion is on the table, which technically it is not because it is a contingent liability. They keep saying that the PFL money is on the table, so maybe they should put it all towards the Tonkin Highway extension and fund it fully. Why not? It is a freight route. It will help connect South Western Highway through to Muchea. It is a huge new corridor that will help the residents of Byford, whom the previous government ignored for eight and a half years before realising that there were residents in Byford down to Mundijong. Maybe that is something the commonwealth should do. I would hope that the Liberal Party would support WA getting more funds for its projects.

The Minister for Community Services outlined the government's commitment to the Roleystone family centre. Roleystone is something like a regional town in the hills, where people feel a little disconnected. I noticed, helping out in the campaign recently, that people sometimes feel that they do not get looked after by people down the hill. Commitments such as supporting the family centre in Roleystone are very important.

The Leader of the Opposition gave us an insight into what he thought about education assistants. He said that education assistants were members of a union and that was the only reason the government supports them. He said that we support education assistants because they are part of a union. I think he was implying that the opposition does not support education assistants. That is pretty much what I think he said. I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition would stand up and say that he does not believe in education assistants as a group of people who sit there and help students in classrooms. He just tries to brush them away because they are somehow connected to a union. It is the ideological bent. Everything is tainted; there is never anything of value. Education assistants are good—that is pretty much it—full stop. But if education assistants are connected to a union, it is like Gollum in *Lord of the Rings*: education assistants bad, bad, because they are connected to a union. It is crazy stuff. It is Institute of Public Affairs ideological warfare all the time for the Leader of the Opposition.

Another point I want to make is about aged care in Roleystone. I remember that the previous government shut down my primary school—the Roleystone primary school. I see that bits and pieces of it are still standing, but the previous government closed it down on the basis of building an aged-care facility. The former member for Darling Range, Hon Tony Simpson, was really passionate about aged care. He was really keen to try to get an aged-care facility in the community but the previous government —

Mr P.C. Tinley: He didn't get much, did he?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: — did not get there. I have sought a note on it because, as Minister for Lands, I am now very keen to see what we can do, but the processes do not seem to be in place for an aged-care facility getting there soon. I hope that I am wrong; I hoped that after the previous government shut the primary school a number of

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

years ago and just left it standing for years that we would get that aged-care facility because it is something that the community really needs.

The last comment I want to make is about the Mundijong industrial estate investment. I know that some of the work was started by the previous government; I understand that, but we are very keen to process that as a priority because it is very important for future planning for jobs in that area. In that whole corridor in Byford and Mundijong the population growth is enormous, and it is incumbent on us to see what we can do to create jobs in that area. The good thing about having a Westport task force looking at building not only a port but also all the transport and planning links, is that we can look at this in the context of intermodals in Bullsbrook, for example, where the containers are coming from. How can we facilitate intermodal freight transport and connect it to the new port? How will it work in with the Tonkin Highway projects, which include not only the extension, but also the removal of the three traffic lights just south of the Gateway WA project? This is part of our plan; it is part of the Westport vision to make sure that we have the north–south Tonkin Highway as a key corridor, and that the south east corridor, in particular, continues to get the infrastructure that it did not receive under the previous government.

There was no focus on the outer suburbs under the previous government; we know that. It left the outer suburbs to grow on their own. I know that there was significant population growth for a number of years under the previous government. We can see the growth along Armadale Road at Harrisdale, Piara Waters and Byford; in the north east corridor at Ellenbrook, Brabham and Dayton; in the north west corridor at Alkimos, leading up to Yanchep; and down in the Peel area. All these areas were growing at exponential rates. We had massive population growth for a number of years. Where were the people going? They were going to all those suburbs that were not getting the infrastructure that they deserved. We have a lot of catching up to do, and we will go to the federal government to try to get every cent possible. We will plan for the future and make sure that no suburbs are forgotten—there is no forgotten outer suburb in this area. We are truly committed to this, with proud members such the member for the Armadale working in and understanding his electorate and its surrounds. We will continue to do what we can to deliver to everyone across Perth and the suburbs. In speaking for 40 minutes, the Leader of the Opposition did not articulate one achievement. The previous government ignored the people of Darling Range. It ignored the people of Byford, Roleystone, Pickering Brook and Karragullen, and we will not.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [5.47 pm]: I stand to reinforce the tenor of the debate, which is about this house highlighting the impact that the McGowan government is having on the people of Darling Range through massive increases in the cost of living, cuts to frontline services and a failure to fund critical infrastructure. Before I commence the arguments I wish to make, I need to rebut some of the comments made by the current Minister for Transport. I will go through quite a few of them, but the first one is about the funding for the infrastructure projects from the federal government. Our issue in opposition has nothing to do with the government seeking extra funds from the commonwealth. Our issue is that the government put out a press release announcing a joint initiative between the Prime Minister and the Premier. It then took the funding from the commonwealth and booked it as a revenue stream, expensed it as a capital item and did not put in the subsequent state funding. The government is saying that it is not ready to close off the deal because it wants to negotiate more money, but it is grabbing this money and booking it in the budget. The government is artificially inflating the effect on the current account position of the state. It is artificially deflating the net impact on state debt because it is not putting the subsequent state funding into the projects. That is the issue that the opposition has with the government's commitments to projects, because it put out a joint press release with the Prime Minister stating that it is undertaking certain projects and giving the ratio and the split between the commonwealth and the state. When that comes out from the Premier's office, it looks to me like an agreement has been struck with the commonwealth on the funding arrangements for certain infrastructure projects. People in the community could be excused for thinking that an agreement has been reached between the state and the commonwealth. Then the government books the commonwealth money as revenue in the budget, which shows a better current account position than would otherwise be. It is booking revenue as income and showing a commitment to the project, and then it tries to tell the house that it wants more money from the commonwealth. The issue is not that the government is trying to chase more money from the commonwealth; the issue is that it has announced an agreement with the commonwealth, it is booking the commonwealth money and it is putting state money in the budget. I reinforce the fact that it is overstating the income position of the current account. It is understating the deficit situation. As I said, it is understating the net debt position of the state in the forward estimates. That is absolutely inappropriate.

I want to talk about a couple of projects. The Minister for Transport indicated that no planning was done for the rail project. As a former government, we started the construction of the Forrestfield–Airport Link, something that the government is now claiming as a Metronet project. The construction started under us. I personally signed the contracts, yet the government is claiming it. We also undertook the work around the Gateway WA project and NorthLink WA. The minister forgets some things. She asked what impact our government had on the electorate of Darling Range. She claims some things like Armadale Road. Again, that was agreed to with the federal government under the former administration. This government is trying to claim it. Yes, the construction will

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

happen under this government but the arrangement relating to the dualling of Armadale Road was made by the previous administration. It is also interesting to talk about planning. The Minister for Transport seems to forget that the former government had to go back and fix the issues with the Mandurah line. We had to build car parks at the train stations. We had to establish bus services that connected the train stations on the Armadale line. The government seems to forget these things that the former administration had to deal with.

Then there is the issue of the Denny Avenue level crossing. I accept some criticism from the member for Armadale. I know what that criticism is directed at. I looked into the level crossings in the state. People might forget but when they were in opposition, the current Minister for Transport and the Treasurer went out publicly and were reported in the press that they were going to start upgrading all level crossings on the network. When it came before Parliament, I asked whether they were aware that there are over 100, on average they will cost around \$50 million, so \$5 billion worth of upgrades would be required. Then they said that they would commence those upgrades. They did not realise that we had just finished the Lloyd Street level crossing. I have to apologise to people because that was made a priority of the former government because of the connection to a primary hospital, being the new Midland hospital. It would have provided easier access. So be it, and I apologise. To be honest, I would always put that crossing ahead of the Denny Avenue level crossing as we wanted to ensure there was safe access to Midland hospital for ambulances and the people of Midland.

I also went to the Department of Transport and asked what it believed were the priority level crossings across the Perth metropolitan area. Although I said that there are over 100 level crossings, there are 31 on the public transport network and another 70-odd on the freight network. We could say that we are talking about the metropolitan area. The Nicholson Road grade separation is a freight network. Over 40 000 cars use Nicholson Road each day. It was a much higher priority. We cannot do them all at once; we cannot just find \$5 billion. We have to prioritise them. I went to the Department of Transport and said, "Politics aside, what is on the priority list?" Interestingly, the department ranked Denny Avenue seventeenth. The number one level crossing that the Department of Transport advised me needs to be done is the one just behind Royal Perth Hospital. The number two priority—the member for Cannington should take note—is the Welshpool Road level crossing. Denny Avenue was ranked seventeenth. I was trying to park politics to one side and get an independent view on the prioritisation of level crossings. What has happened with Denny Avenue? Politics has taken over. I am not saying it is not important. Members should not get me wrong. We need to do all of them; we need to get rid of all the level crossings. That would make the roads much safer. We have to have a methodology and go through and define the order in which these crossings are undertaken. That is not occurring. It is cheap politics.

There is another issue that I want to talk about. Question time today was fascinating. I put a question to the Premier today relating to electricity prices. I would like to remind people what has happened with electricity. Every time we raise what the current government is doing about electricity prices, the government refers to what the former government did with electricity prices in 2008–09. I will not go into that detail but, yes, electricity prices went up a significant amount from 2008 to 2010. There were reasons for that. We have to go back further into the previous Labor administration to get a better understanding of what was put into the forward estimates by that administration. Members should have a good look at it. The increases that the current administration has imposed have been put on top of the electricity prices. If people complain about the price increases that occurred back then, these new charge increases are on top of those charge increases. They are exacerbating the issue. They are compounding it. What makes this worse is the state of the economy in which these increases are being imposed. We have pointed out, as the government has acknowledged, that the state has gone through a downturn. It is making attempts to recover. There are green shoots in the economy. We have seen an increase in insolvencies and an increase in bankruptcies, we have had the highest level of unemployment in 16 years and we have the highest number of Western Australians in the state's history seeking employment—that is, 98 300. We have seen a loss of 11 300 full-time jobs over the last 12 months. These electricity increases are coming in at that time.

This is also a time when real wages growth is less than 1.5 per cent per annum. Over a 12-month period, we have seen an increase in household charges of 13.1 per cent. We saw a 10.9 per cent increase in energy prices from 1 July 2017 and from 1 July 2018, we saw another 5.5 per cent increase. That is just energy. It is fascinating that that 10.9 per cent was for an average electricity user. It was going on the supply charge, which is a fixed charge. Modelling was undertaken by the government. The Treasurer was informed—it was only discovered through freedom of information—that certain elements and pockets within our community would be impacted more adversely. The government was advised that for single pensioner homes, the equivalent increase in electricity prices was around 30 per cent, just from the increase in 2017, and before the additional 5.5 per cent increase that was compounded this year. There has been a 30 per cent increase in electricity prices for single pensioner homes. This household charge was targeted because of the take-up of rooftop solar on private homes. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people installing solar panels. It is really interesting that a disproportionate number of people in the electorate of Darling Range, particularly in Byford, have rooftop solar—56 per cent of homes. We know that the economy is struggling. We know that the outer suburbs are doing it harder than a lot of

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

other areas. We know, as we heard from the Leader of the Opposition, that the number of households facing mortgage stress is nearly double the state average. These household charge increases have been compounded on people at a time when they are struggling and at a time when they can least afford to face these charges. That is where it is really an issue.

When the Premier was asked about this, what did he refer to first? He asked for the opposition's position on Western Power. The Minister for Transport said that she would like to see the other side and take our position on Western Power. This is fascinating. Here is our position on Western Power. We will be totally honest with the community when we confront the next election, as we were in 2017. We were totally honest when we were in government about what position we would take to the electorate.

I will tell members what the current government said during the 2017 election. I am referencing, if members want to know, the "WA Labor 2017 State Election Fighting Platform". That is the Labor Party's own document. It states —

PRIVATISATION

WA LABOR WILL STOP PRIVATISATION.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr D.C. NALDER: If the member for Kalamunda would like to know, the former government announced the potential sale of 51 per cent of Western Power. The point I make is that our government was open, honest and transparent with the community about that. The current government has said it will stop privatisation. The WA Labor platform goes on to say —

WA LABOR WILL NOT PRIVATISE ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND ASSETS

WA Labor recognises that selling your assets is a short term fix, not a long term plan.

Privatisation means future generations risk being left without these essential assets and the revenue they generate for the state.

WA Labor will stop the privatisation of existing public sector services and where possible and economically beneficial to do so bring services back into the public sector.

What have we seen from this government in just over one year? This is the platform on which the Labor Party was elected to govern and on which it needs to be held to account. The minister asked about our position on Western Power. The Labor Party is now in office. This is the platform on which the Labor Party was elected to government. What has this government done? It has sold three of the generating assets of Synergy. That was not a transparent deal. The Labor Party promised the people of Western Australia that it would not sell essential services, because that was not good for the people of this state, and that it would stop privatisation. The government has now turned around and sold three of the generating assets of Synergy. The government has not been transparent about the sale of these assets. It was only when the opposition started to question the government about what was happening with Warradarge that it came out that a secret deal was being done with a Dutch private equity fund. Subsequent to that deal becoming public, Cbus Super, an industry superannuation fund, has become involved and taken 40 per cent of that deal. However, it is still not clear what these assets have been sold for. We asked about that in budget estimates, and the Treasurer said he was not going to tell us, because it is commercial-in-confidence. The Treasurer has since retracted that and said that it sold that asset for \$17 million and it is still negotiating on the sale of the other two assets, but the deal has been done.

The people of Western Australia deserve a lot better than that. When the minister questions the motives of the opposition, we keep coming back to the fact that our government was totally honest, open and transparent with the community on what we took to the election. We did not say thing and do another. We were totally honest with the people of Western Australia that we were considering the sale of 51 per cent of Western Power.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.C. NALDER: We lost that election. We are now in opposition; we are not in government. However, the people of Western Australia can have confidence that when we go to the next election in 2021, we will make our position very clear and transparent, as we have done in the past. The people of Western Australia have every right to be concerned about the position of the current Labor government. It says that it will stop privatisation, but it has sold assets of Synergy in a secret deal. That is extremely hypocritical.

I come back to what this government has done. There has been a \$730 a year increase in fees and charges for the average household. However, we know that for single pensioners and families with large households, this increase is much larger. It is a 13 per cent increase, at a time when the retail trade and the household sector are struggling. This government has failed to acknowledge that. The federal government is making attempts to reignite the economy and to support families that are hurting by implementing tax cuts and so on. However, this government

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

is scooping all that up. It is no wonder we have seen press releases in the last week about how Western Australia is lagging the rest of Australia. The government needs to understand the basics of economics. If we take away people's disposable income at a time when there is no wages growth, the economy will continue to struggle. The government is penalising families and pensioners. That is not fair.

The people of Western Australia deserve to know the truth. This government should apologise to the people of Western Australia for misleading them and for having been elected on a false platform. I will remind members opposite of what I quoted from the "WA Labor 2017 State Election Fighting Platform". The words are pretty bold. They are in red, but I have only a black-and-white copy. This government is being disrespectful to the people of Western Australia because it was elected on that platform and is now doing secret deals with a Dutch equity fund to privatise generating assets of Synergy.

Ms S.F. McGurk: You built a \$1.3 billion stadium using taxpayers' money and you would not tell anyone how much it cost. You were not upfront at all about that cost.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I will take that interjection, because we did actually say —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: A lot of Labor supporters love the stadium.

Ms S.F. McGurk: I am not arguing about that. I am saying it was taxpayers' money and you would not tell anyone how much it cost.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.C. NALDER: The Premier promised the people of Western Australia that he would usher in an era of gold-plated transparency. The government is critical of the level of information that our government provided. Now that the government is ushering in this new era of gold-plated transparency, maybe it could provide advice about the cost of the Ellenbrook line. Given that the Department of Transport has acknowledged that the project development plan and the business case have been finalised for the Yanchep line and the Cockburn-Thornlie line, the government might like to advise what those lines will cost, what the patronage will be, and what operating subsidy the state will need to provide to fund these lines. If the member for Fremantle wants to support her Premier with his gold-plated transparency, she would speak up and say, "We demand that for the people of Western Australia. I am behind my Premier, and because he said he is going to deliver this new era of gold-plated transparency, I am going to fight for it." What is the operating subsidy for these new rail lines?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member for Churchlands, when the member for Bateman said he would take interjections, that does not include you.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I will wrap it up there. This government has been quite sneaky. It put out a joint press release between the Premier and the Prime Minister. It looks to me as though a deal has been done. The government has booked in the budget money from the commonwealth for certain projects but has failed to show what will be the state contribution. The government is now claiming that is because it is trying to negotiate more money from the federal government. If that is the case, the reality is that the state government should not have booked the first lot of money from the federal government because it is not finalised. That is what should have happened. There should at least have been a line item inserted at the bottom of the page to explain that, because otherwise the government is misleading the people over the current account deficit and the debt position of the state of Western Australia, and that is not acceptable. The government has misled the people and been totally hypocritical about privatisation of state assets. The government promised that it would be stopping it, but it is now taking it out. The issue for the people of Western Australia should not be about what the Liberal Party may be considering for the 2021 election on Western Power, because they can have confidence and faith that we will be open, honest and transparent. What they cannot be confident about is that this Labor Party will be transparent about its promises to the people of Western Australia and keeping them, and that is what I am ultimately concerned about. I have one more thing to say —

[Member's time expired.]

Dr A.D. Buti: Madam Acting Speaker!

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Madam Acting Speaker!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member for Armadale.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [6.10 pm]: That did not quite work, boys!

I would like to contribute to this debate. It was interesting that most of the member for Bateman's speech was not related to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which dealt with the cost of living and frontline services in Darling Range. Very little of his speech dealt with Darling Range. It is understandable that it did not

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

deal with those issues, because the opposition knows very little about Darling Range. I interjected on the opposition leader when he was on his feet and asked him whether he ever went to Darling Range when he was the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine, go outside if you want to talk.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I did not mean the member for Bateman; I meant the opposition leader.

I asked the opposition leader and he would not reply. I am sure he did go at some stage, but he was not very confident to give me a response about Darling Range. As the Minister for Transport mentioned, he seemed to think that Byford was Darling Range. As I am sure the opposition knows now, because there is a by-election on in one week and a half, Darling Range is the biggest metropolitan electorate in our electoral system and is probably as big as the seat of Moore. It contains many, many districts, shires and councils. It is very hard to listen with any confidence to the opposition leader when he says that he has any concern about the people of Darling Range.

The opposition leader talked about the value of people's properties and he mentioned Byford. There is a problem with the value of people's homes in Byford that is not due to this government. There has been a rapid expansion of housing in Byford over a number of years. As we know, the housing market has been depressed, but I will tell members one thing: the value of housing in Byford will not improve if appropriate infrastructure is not put in place, and this government is looking at improving the infrastructure of Byford. We are the party, we are the government, that is committed to the extension of the Armadale train line to Byford. Only this government will build it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Ask the federal member for Canning, Andrew Hastie, whether he thinks the Armadale line should be extended to Byford. Only this government will build it. The Leader of the Opposition seems to suggest that we are not committed to the extension of the Armadale line to Byford. Ask the Prime Minister whether he believes that the state McGowan government is not committed to the Armadale extension to Byford. The federal government is confident that we will build it because it has also committed some funding.

I turn to frontline services.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is very interesting that this motion was moved by the opposition and yet it has no interest in the debate. That is quite interesting. The numbers have swelled a little bit in the last five minutes, but for most of the debate the opposition has had about three or four members in here.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: At least you have been here!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, I have been here because I actually do care about Darling Range. Many of the things that are beneficial to my electorate are also of benefit to Darling Range.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands!

Dr A.D. BUTI: For instance, there is the new policing district. There will be a new policing district that will be based in Armadale. That is of immense benefit to many parts of Darling Range, the Kelmscott hills, Roleystone, Bedfordale —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Not Karragullen.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is of immense benefit to Karragullen also, Mundijong and Serpentine. Rather than having the police hub in Cannington, for them to get out to Karragullen, the centre is going to be Armadale. We are focusing the policing service in Armadale on the surrounding area, which takes up much of Darling Range. The opposition says our decisions are impacting frontline services, and it can bet that they are impacting frontline services in a beneficial way by going to smaller policing districts. The former government and police minister ridiculed the idea of a 24/7 police station in Armadale. Ask the residents of Darling Range whether they are happy. A female came to me from Roleystone, which is in Darling Range, a few years ago. She had been assaulted on her way home from school. When she told her father, he took her to Armadale Police Station. That was at 4.15 on a Thursday and the police station was closed. He rang the bell and no-one answered. He then had to drive all the way to Cannington. Does the member for Kalgoorlie think that is acceptable? Does the member for Kalgoorlie think it is acceptable that a person who has been subjected to a sexual assault cannot go to a local police station at 4.15 in the afternoon on a weekday and expect to receive service? What does the member for Kalgoorlie think?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: She should be able to make a call to the service.

Dr A.D. BUTI: This is the point that the member for Churchlands does not understand.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Help me understand.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will help the member understand. As he knows, demands on police are extraordinary, so they prioritise and go to calls where there is an immediate danger. This was post; it was after the assault had happened.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It was post; I was talking pre.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Of course it was post. She had been subjected to an attack and then she went home and her father took her.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: So not an emergency like a 000 call, I've got it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Does the member for Kalgoorlie, as a former police officer, think it is appropriate that at 4.15 in the afternoon at a major regional centre the police station is open to the public? Does the member think it should be open?

Mr K.M. O'Donnell: At four o'clock it should be open.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right, but at 4.15 in the afternoon it was closed and it was not open to the public at all on the weekends. That is an incredibly significant policy position of this government. The fact that we have these new policing districts, with one based in Armadale, which will service the majority of the Darling Range electorate, will be of significant benefit.

The member for Bateman, who is the former transport minister, talked about Denny Avenue. I think the electors of Darling Range, particularly those who live in the Clifton hills, the Kelmscott hills and Roleystone, will be very interested that he still does not see that issue as a priority.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: You're verballing him.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, I am not verballing. He said the transport department determined that it was about priority number 17.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: But it is not him, so do not verbal him.

Dr A.D. BUTI: When the late Don Randall was member for Canning, he and I worked in tandem to try to get the state government of the day to do something about Denny Avenue. The member for Bateman, who was then the Minister for Transport, would not come on-site to inspect Denny Avenue with Don Randall and me. What he did in the Canning by-election when Andrew Hastie was a candidate was to go out for a photo opportunity with the candidate. He did not promise anything, he just had a photo opportunity with the candidate for Canning, but he would not meet the state and federal representatives for the electorate on site. Who was playing politics there? The member for Bateman always says he does not want to play politics. He was being asked by the federal member from the Liberal Party, as the member very well knows, as well as the state member, which was me, but he would not come on site to discuss the issue of Denny Avenue. He might have wanted to say that that was seventeenth in the Department of Transport's list of priorities, but it is number one in the RAC survey of drivers. I challenge the member for Bateman or any other opposition member to come out to Denny Avenue and say it does not need to be upgraded immediately. It will be very interesting next week when the voters who live in the part of the electorate impacted on by Denny Avenue go to the polls, if they know the opposition does not consider it a priority.

When the Premier asks the member for Bateman and other members of the opposition whether they will sell Western Power, they refuse to answer. In the polling that was done before the last state election, that was a major issue in the electorate of Darling Range. Darling Range goes to the polls next week, so it is incumbent upon the Liberal Party to clarify whether it is still part of its policy to sell Western Power. Is it part of its policy?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: We haven't issued our policies for the 2021 election.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, there is an election next week in Darling Range. Why should the people there vote for the Liberal Party?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: The people of Darling Range are voting on replacing the former member for Darling Range, who was a disgrace.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay, fine.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It is a by-election to replace a sitting member.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But they have to make —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Members!

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Dr A.D. BUTI: They have to make the decision: who is the better candidate to represent them?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: The government will not change as a result of the by-election. You know that, member.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The voters of Darling Range need to know what the Liberal candidate represents.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: No, at the 2021 election they can vote to change the government. They're not voting to change the government at this by-election, and you know it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So the member is telling the voters of Darling Range that when they vote—some of them have already voted—on Saturday week to replace the former member, they should not have any idea what policies the Liberal candidate stands for.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: There's going to be no change of government. You know that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It does not matter.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It does. They need good representation.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands! You are not on the parade ground now, so can you just be quiet. You might like to contemplate the fact that these are rhetorical questions being asked by the member for Armadale. Do not feel compelled to answer.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I can say that when I had my by-election in Armadale in 2010, the then Leader of the Opposition, Eric Ripper, promised that when in government the Labor Party would seek as a priority to fix up Denny Avenue. Sure enough, now that we are in government, that is what we are doing as a priority. The voters of Darling Range would like to know whether, if she is elected, the Liberal Party candidate will support the retention of the Liberal Party's policy to sell Western Power. They should be entitled to know that. Okay, member for Churchlands, maybe the Liberal Party does not have a policy at this stage with regard to the sale of Western Power.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Correct.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But the candidate should.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Why? The candidate's out there advocating to represent the people.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Member for Dawesville, as I said previously, Western Power was probably the number one issue or one of the top three issues in Darling Range during the last state election.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: It wasn't.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, it was.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: You're the member for Armadale and you know what happened in Darling Range?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Of course I know what happened in Darling Range!

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: You weren't just campaigning for your seats, you were campaigning for all seats in the eastern metro region, were you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Dawesville, having worked in the previous Premier's office, would know about party polling. He knows that parties do polls on seats and get intelligence from them. That is how I found out, and it was actually public polling; I think it was in *The West Australian*. That is how I might have found out. With regard to the member's question, I have actually done a lot of work in Darling Range because it borders on my electorate. As the member well knows, Darling Range covers an incredibly large geographic area. The former member Tony Simpson is a good friend of mine, and his office was in Byford. People who lived in his electorate at Clifton Hills and even in Roleystone would often come to me because they did not want to drive to Byford. That had nothing to do with Tony not being a good member; the fact was that my office was closer, so I did know many of the issues in Darling Range. That may surprise the member, but I did. Denny Avenue is an issue for my electorate and an issue for the electorate of Darling Range. The Armadale Police Station is an issue for my electorate and an issue for Darling Range. This government has made a great commitment to secure the future of Araluen Botanic Park, and that is important to my electorate, to the electorate of Darling Range, to the electorate of Kalamunda and to the electorate of Swan Hills. Darling Range borders on about 10 to 12 different electorates, so of course many members will be interested in what affects Darling Range.

We know the opposition does not support a solution for Denny Avenue. We know the opposition did not support the 24/7 police station in Armadale; instead, it supported a failed policing model that had Armadale, Karragullen, Byford, Serpentine and Roleystone being serviced from a police hub in Cannington. These are important issues. Because the opposition will not give us a direct answer, we also know that it still supports the sale of

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Western Power. It is quite obvious that it still supports the sale of Western Power. If that is not true, I challenge the Liberal candidate for Darling Range to come out tomorrow and tell us her position on Western Power.

Mr I.C. Blayney: It's not a general election.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It does not matter. In a by-election there has to be some yardstick for why one would want to support a Labor, Liberal or One Nation candidate. It is not a general election, so therefore the Liberal Party will not come clean on the fact that it still wants to sell Western Power—is that not right? Does the member for Geraldton believe that the government should sell Western Power?

Mr I.C. Blayney: Is it going to change the government?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Does the member believe we should sell Western Power? I tell him one thing: it may not change the government, but it will change the Leader of the Opposition. If the Liberal Party does not win this by-election, let us see how long the Leader of the Opposition remains as Leader of the Opposition.

Mr I.C. Blayney: What's that got to do with it?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It has a lot to do with it.

An opposition member: Red herring!

Dr A.D. BUTI: A red herring, is it? The opposition brought the motion and hardly spoke to it. The Leader of the Opposition did not talk about frontline services at all. He brought a motion to this house during private members' business.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: He brought a motion about fees and charges, costs of living and frontline services, but he did not even talk about frontline services. He did not talk about the previous government's record with the people of Darling Range. The former member, Tony Simpson, was a decent, hardworking member, and he was frustrated, day in, day out, by the previous government because it would not do anything out in Darling Range.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: He was frustrated because you kept taking his constituents into your office!

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member might be right there!

He used to wake up every day wondering what the Premier was going to tell him to do with regard to local government. The Liberal Party has a record in Darling Range, and that record is terrible, so no wonder the Leader of the Opposition would not talk about his party's record in government or frontline services. Then we had the member for Bateman go into a general discussion that regurgitated much of what I considered to be his very good speech in response to the budget speech, but it did not address the motion before us. He did not talk about frontline services in Darling Range at all. That side of politics does not really know or care about Darling Range. The member for Dawesville actually said, "What would I know about Darling Range?" The member for Dawesville probably knows a fair bit about Mandurah. What is south of his electorate—Bunbury?

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Murray–Wellington.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Murray–Wellington. Obviously he knows the neighbouring seat. Our record in Darling Range is fantastic. We are delivering on the extension of the Armadale line to Byford.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Thanks to the Libs.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is not thank you to the Liberal Party. The police station at Armadale and the new policing district are frontline services that are impacting on the electors of Darling Range, who go to the polls in a week and a half. This demonstrates the lack of respect the Liberal Party has for the voters of Darling Range. It is telling the electors of Darling Range that they should go to the polls in under two weeks without any idea about what its candidate stands for or what they believe should be delivered to the people of Darling Range. The Liberal Party is saying that the people who vote in under two weeks should have no idea what its candidate stands for or what its candidate will argue for the people of Darling Range. People who go to the polls in Darling Range in under two weeks know that the Labor Party stands for the extension of the railway line to Byford and that we have guaranteed a secure future for Araluen Botanic Park and a 24-hour police station in Armadale and a new policing district in Armadale. That is what the voters of Darling Range know. The member for Geraldton mentioned that it will not change government. He is right. That is more reason for the people in Darling Range to vote for the Labor candidate, because the Labor candidate will be in government. If they vote for the opposition, they will not be in government and they will not be able to deliver anything. The members for Kalamunda, Swan Hills, Armadale, Southern River, Forrestfield and Thornlie now all have boundaries attached to Darling Range. If the new member for Darling Range is a government member, they will be able to work with the government to ensure that frontline

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

services are delivered to the voters of Armadale. If they vote for the Liberal Party, they know that for two and a half years nothing —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville!

Dr A.D. BUTI: When the member says that we are governing for our own seats, we have most of the seats.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: All these here?

Dr A.D. BUTI: How many opposition members are there? I do not think the member for Geraldton would say that we have not delivered for Geraldton.

Several members interjected.

Mr I.C. Blayney interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member was congratulating our decision. He should be congratulating our great decision.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I can put up with your asinine comments, but Hansard is finding it incredibly difficult. The member for Armadale is provoking you and I can understand why your impulse control is limited, but it is very hard for Hansard, so have some consideration for them.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will finish up because I am sure that someone over that side wants to speak and, hopefully, the member for Kalamunda might be able to have a word or two.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Kalamunda can get up next, but he is the only one who will speak sense, because the member for Dawesville will not. The fact is that we have delivered and we will continue to deliver for Darling Range. We have been in government less than two years and we have done more for Darling Range in those two years than the previous government did in eight and a half years. Go and ask Tony Simpson, who now enjoys life up in the north west, about the frustration he had with being the member for Darling Range in the Barnett government. Go and ask him and look at the record. The previous government delivered nothing for Darling Range. It delivered more in Armadale than it did in Darling Range, and that is saying something.

Dr D.J. Honey: It doubled in size in five years.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is not due to government policy. That was development.

Dr D.J. Honey: Of course it is.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What did the previous government actually do?

Dr D.J. Honey: We built the economy and jobs.

Mr W.R. Marmion: We built the training centre.

Dr A.D. BUTI: A train station in Byford?

Mr W.R. Marmion: A training centre.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Where?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members for Nedlands and Cottesloe!

Dr A.D. BUTI: The previous government's member for Darling Range turned more and more grey because he was frustrated by the lack of attention from the Premier and the rest of the cabinet. I asked the Leader of the Opposition how many times he went to Darling Range and he remained silent. He went probably a couple of times, but not very often. The previous government did nothing in Darling Range. The Liberal Party does not deserve to win Darling Range and it will not win Darling Range. We have the better candidate and better policies and we are prepared to tell the voters of Darling Range what our policies are. All the Liberal Party members say is that it is not a general election, so they do not need to worry about it. It is a dishonest and disrespectful way to treat the electors of Darling Range. This is absurd. A political party wants people to go to the polls and vote for them, but it will not tell them what it is going to deliver or advocate for.

Dr D.J. Honey: Because they are going to judge you.

Dr A.D. BUTI: They are going to judge me. Does the member know what my margin is? We will not worry about that.

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I checked the member for Cottesloe's comments on public and community housing. He is wrong. I will seek an apology at the appropriate time. He does not have more public and community housing in Cottesloe than I have in Armadale.

Dr D.J. Honey: It's better quality.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is better quality. The member is not the member for Struggle Street anymore. Is the member still the member for Struggle Street?

Dr D.J. Honey: It is a better quality of struggle.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think on that great note, I will end my speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member for Churchlands, you looked very hard done by when you did not get the call last time, but that is because you did not seek it. You stood up without seeking the call. That is why the member for Armadale got it.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [6.36 pm]: I took the umpire's decision and I was fine with that. Thank you for your explanation, Madam Acting Speaker.

It was good for us to hear a coherent speech from a member of the Labor Party, a backbencher, because what we got from the Minister for Transport was completely incoherent. It had nothing at all to do with the subject matter of this debate or the voters of Darling Range. The people who matter are the people of Darling Range. Even the member for Armadale strayed back into his own electorate for most of his speech, but he tried to link it somewhat to the Darling Range by-election by saying that what matters in his electorate of Armadale matters to the people of Darling Range. At least he made a valid attempt. The member for Armadale asked the question about what matters most to the people of Darling Range going into this by-election. I will tell members what matters most to the people of Darling Range going into this by-election: it is good representation. In 12 months, Labor has had three candidates; one who was an MP for 12 months and who clearly had a Walter Mitty aspect to his personality. Labor members were all well and truly caught out by that. Any political party can be caught out by a member who deceives on their curriculum vitae. That is a given. However, it is how the situation is managed going forward once the person is found out, and Labor did not manage that well. The crisis management in the Premier's office was an insight into its decision-making on how it handled the member for Darling Range, and that is what has got us to this situation today.

We would think that after what happened with the former member for Darling Range in this place, the Premier's office, who backed him solidly for a good three months after he was found out, would be really red-hot in making sure that when it selected its second candidate for Darling Range, that person would have been thoroughly vetted, solid as solid, and ready to go for the people of Darling Range—wrong. Two senior ministers spoke publicly. The Minister for Transport said that it was a minor mistake and she was a quality candidate. The Minister for Water said, "No problems here." Then, fortunately for the people of Darling Range, that candidate said, "Enough; I'm out." Here we are with Labor's third candidate. This is about the people of Darling Range wanting good representation. Labor's third candidate was an unknown entity to the Labor Party until she joined the party and three days later was made the candidate. The vetting process for the candidate extends itself to what we do not know. She is unknown to the member for Armadale, other than what he has done in the last two weeks through helping her doorknock. But the member knows that before that, she was unknown to his party. She was a political entity who was unknown, untested and unvetted.

Members opposite are basing their decision to put that candidate forward to the people of Darling Range based on their Premier's judgement and his judgement alone. We know, and they know, that most people in their political organisation have said, "Enough's enough; we should sit this one out. We've done enough damage in how we failed to effectively represent the people of Darling Range that we should sit this one out." Members opposite know that is what their political party was saying, but the Premier said, "No, I refuse to do that because I will look weak. I will present a candidate. I will go and find that candidate." He has found one and we do not know much about her because, like Harvey Keitel, "the Wolf—the cleaner" out of that great movie, members opposite have gone in and cleaned up her history. If anybody wants to know this candidate's background at all, they can get only the hospital grade, clean CV that the Premier distributed to the community. That is it. Nobody in this chamber really knows what this candidate is about and neither do the people of Darling Range, but they are taking it on the trust value of the Premier.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, can I just draw you back to the subject of the motion.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. The people of Darling Range are taking it on the trust of the Premier to have a candidate who they hope will represent them well on frontline services. I can tell

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

members that hope is not a good task verb. People want members who can not only represent their political ideology and political party well, but also somebody who can represent people well and has demonstrated that they had the capacity to do that at some point in the past. The big difference between the Labor candidate and the Liberal candidate, now the member mentioned candidates, is that our candidate represented East Metropolitan Region, as the member for Armadale knows, for an extended period over eight years.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: She represented that area very well. In fact, the community —

Mr D.J. Kelly: Then why'd they dump her?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mate, she was not dumped. She was number two on the East Metro ticket and —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister! Member for Swan Hills!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Surprise, surprise, Minister for Water; we lost the election!

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I am on my feet; I know it is hard to tell! If you are interjecting, then I do not have the opportunity to tell the member to get back to the words of the motion.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. In any case, we have a candidate who has a solid track record.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Frontline services and infrastructure, member.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: She has a solid track record of representing the people of East Metro on frontline services and infrastructure. She has represented them extremely well for over eight years. She has a track record of being very good with people and getting in there to support people, back people and represent them well. That is what this race is all about. It is not about a 2021 general election. It is about good representation in the Darling Range electorate because the government has failed to deliver good representation to the people of Darling Range for over a year. Members opposite all know that.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can I just say, member for Swan Hills, that when members opposite started talking about frontline services, we have not heard an announcement from the Premier on frontline services. We heard from the Premier an announcement of \$3 million over 10 years to support, as the member for Armadale outlined, a tulip festival! Do the people of Darling Range really think a tulip festival is their number one priority?

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I will help the member for Swan Hills to understand that when —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

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

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: When the member for Swan Hills gets onto the ground and talks to the people of Darling Range, she will understand that a tulip festival is not front and centre of their biggest concerns that affect their day-to-day lives. I will tell the member what —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Member for Swan Hills, tulips do not matter to the people of Darling Range. What matters is job security, food on the table, a roof over their head, community safety and good policing, as the member for Armadale pointed out. That is what they care about.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: They care about excellent education provided to kids in their community, excellent health services and most importantly at this current time of our economic cycle, which this government has failed to improve upon—in fact, it has got worse and I will get to that in a moment—these hardworking people of Darling Range have been hit up and down from out at Mundaring Weir all the way around, down towards

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Serpentine. As the member for Armadale pointed out, it is a vast electorate that covers a huge amount of ground. It is no easy task for a member, but it is easy for the Liberal candidate, Alyssa Hayden, because she is a hardworking, outstanding former member of Parliament who knows how to get out there and work hard. She recognises that what is important for the people of Darling Range is keeping the cost-of-living pressures down.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I can tell members that power, water, car costs, public transport costs and ongoing government fees and charges are what they are focused on going into this election. When the member for Armadale says that frontline services such as making sure there is a good level crossing at Denny Avenue and there is a good tulip festival out at Araluen —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: When the member for Armadale says these types of things, the people of Darling Range are focused on cost-of-living pressures, having a job, having a roof over their head, being able to feed the family and making sure they can control their own personal debt. That is what they are focused on. That is what they need support with. They want to make sure that education, health, and law and order is looked after. Those people who look beyond what is affecting them in their day-to-day lives will also look at governance. They will look at the government and ask, “Is the government governing in the best interests of Western Australia? Is this government demonstrating good governance? Is it demonstrating effective representation and is it making sure that the people of Darling Range can trust in the leadership of the government and the leadership of the Premier?” That is what they will be asking. In just 15 months and two budgets, this government has failed on every single one of those criteria that I just went through. This government has failed on every single one. When the member for Armadale asked what this election is about, it is not about election policies in 2021; it is about that. The list of things that I just outlined is what matters to the people of Darling Range, not whether the Liberal Party will take a policy on privatisation to the 2021 election. The people of Darling Range are focused on their living standards and making sure they are looked after for the next three years. They want someone to represent them soundly and honestly in this place —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: — and to hold the Minister for Water to account.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Minister for Water, I will get to some of the increases in fees and charges in a moment, but the minister’s leadership of his portfolio has frankly been appalling.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you know that it is improper to not refer to a member by either their seat or their position, so if you insist on continuing to call the member by another name, you might want to do that outside rather than in here.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Minister for Water knows perfectly well that he slipped in a water tax on the people of Western Australia. Sewerage charges are 42 per cent above the cost of delivering that service. They call it a charge, but it is 42 per cent above. The minister has slipped in that tax. It is called fees and charges but, as I have said in this place before, minister, 42 per cent—if it walks like a tax, if it talks like a tax, it is a tax, my friend. There is no other way of describing it, and the Minister for Water is deceiving the people of Western Australia by whacking them with high water taxes. That is one of the essential services that the people of Darling Range absolutely need and should not be paying through the nose for, yet the government continues to whack them with these absolutely outrageous charges for water and sewerage.

Recently, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia did a survey on cost-of-living pressures.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I will get to that in a minute, minister. In total, 64 per cent of people surveyed cited the cost of groceries, utilities and transport as major day-to-day issues. Seventeen per cent of people surveyed had to borrow from a friend or from family members. Nineteen per cent had been unable to pay a bill on time. The National Australia Bank found that loan default rates in Western Australia were rising. That is the context in which this Darling Range by-election is being fought, under those conditions. In addition, the number of people falling 90 days or more behind in their mortgage payments has doubled in the past two years. What is this government

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

doing to support the people of Darling Range who fill that demographic? The member for Armadale knows that they are going through these really tough cost-of-living pressures. When he makes his \$3 million tulip festival support announcements, does he really think that matters? Of course it does not. What matters is looking after the people who are trying to have a go, at a time when it is really tough for them. It is really tough out there, and a lot of those households are on single incomes, trying to raise families and do their best, and the government tries to make out that it is so much more important. The Minister for Transport was going on about trying to beat Alannah MacTiernan's transport effort on rail. Well, whoop-de-doo! I can tell him now that the punters are not that interested in whether the current Minister for Transport can sit in her ageing years on a rocking chair next to Hon Alannah MacTiernan and say, "Well, look, you made Mandurah, but I did this; aren't we wonderful." Meanwhile, the people in Darling Range, who just want cost-of-living pressures reduced, are being ignored by the minister and her government. That is what we are dealing with, and that is why we are debating this motion now. That is absolutely why Alyssa Hayden, the outstanding former upper house member of Parliament for East Metropolitan, will do a wonderful job of representing the people of Western Australia.

Ms J.J. Shaw: She doesn't understand the area, and neither do you.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member for Swan Hills, you do not have to stay in here and put up with this, if you do not like it. If you insist on staying in here, I suggest you maintain some decorum.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Swan Hills just walked right into that one, saying that I have no idea about that area. The member for Armadale knows me, and knows that my family has a strong history in that area going back some time. I actually know the Byford area quite well. In fact, my parents had a business down that way, and they also had a business up Kalamunda–Maida Vale way. Both ends of this electorate are quite well understood by me and my family, and we have had quite a close connection with it for quite some time.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, you should know better, and member for Swan Hills, yet again. I call you to order for the second time. Thank you.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I know that people get excited in this place and think that just because I am the member for Churchlands that I have only ever existed in the western suburbs, but that is not true. All of us have come from somewhere. The member for Nedlands, for example, has a strong history in the goldfields, Bunbury and Armadale. If the government is looking for somebody to represent three of its seats, it should go and talk to him, because he can do it better than any member opposite could. We have a broad history over here, but let us get back to the issue.

CommSec, in April of this year, said that the jobless rate is 30 per cent above the decade average. That was 12 months into the term of the present government. Construction work for the December quarter at the end of last year was 37.6 per cent below the decade average. We are not dealing with a time when people are feeling comfortable and confident about getting work. We need to make sure that we are putting in place policies that can support people to get jobs, not media releases that are almost Rudd-esque in style, trying to grab the 24-hour media cycle, create a headline and hope that that will do the job. It will not, because as I said before, hope is not a good task verb. Members opposite need to get out there and get their hands dirty, and make sure they are putting in place programs and policies that support jobs, so that people can support their families. They need to make sure that cost-of-living charges are kept as low as possible during these difficult employment statistics times, not increasing electricity charges by 17.9 per cent in just 12 months, water costs by 11.5 per cent, motor vehicle charges by 7.6 per cent, or public transport fares by 12.6 per cent. These are the things that matter to the people in Darling Range, be they in the hills at Mundaring or out towards Byford, regardless of the different demographics across the electorate.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: That is what the government needs to focus on, not ripping off people who are doing it hard and rolling out these flashy media releases with the Premier on his knees planting a plant with the new candidate whom he does not know because he has just met her, at Araluen supporting a tulip festival. That will not cut it with the people of Darling Range who are doing it tough. What will cut it is good, solid representation, so that the member can sit in the caucus room and argue the case to cabinet ministers and say, "Enough with these rises in electricity prices; enough with this rip-off in sewerage rates and water; enough of whacking us hard with these public transport fees when it takes us a fair while to get from that electorate to the city for a job. We are paying top premium prices on our public transport anyway, so why hit us with a 12.6 per cent increase?" That is what matters.

If the member for Armadale, or the Minister for Transport if she is out there listening somewhere, are looking for policies to take to this election, they should not take policies about Western Power; they should take policies that will reduce the cost of living. Those are the policies that matter, and that is what we are focused on. Keep the

Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Acting Speaker (mr I.C. Blayney); Mr Dean Nalder; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

prices down. Support the people to get out there and get jobs. Make sure that they feel supported and that they are living in a safe environment, with increased police numbers in that Darling Range electorate. In the health services in the Darling Range electorate, reduce surgical wait times, and reduce the four-hour wait time in emergency departments, so that people get to see an emergency specialist quicker. Make sure that law and order, health, education and public transport are covered, then cost-of-living pressures will drop. That is what the government should focus on; that is what this election is about.

This is actually a point in time at which the people in Darling Range can ask whether, 12 months into the term of the new government, enough of them are prepared to make a six per cent swing to change from Labor to Liberal. That is the question here. All of us know that nobody can really predict the result accurately. Some polls might be saying 54–46, some might be saying 52–48, and others might be saying 50–50. The bottom line here is that this is a litmus test of this Premier, and we know it. This is a test of his leadership. If there was a one per cent swing, and it was correlated across the chamber over the same point in time, it would mean that three members would be out of a job—Jandakot, Kingsley and Joondalup are gone. The government might retain the seat; it will still be in government regardless of the outcome, but a one per cent swing would send a message that three members in this place would be gone if that were repeated for them. That is the message that that sends. If it were a two per cent swing, we could add Murray–Wellington to the list, and if it were three per cent swing we could add Pilbara, Kalamunda, Burns Beach and Bicton to the list.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, I remind you of the motion.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: As the Acting Speaker has correctly pointed out to me, the motion is about the delivery of essential services, and the delivery of essential services and keeping cost pressures down is what is important. This by-election will be a test of that. If it is a three per cent swing, that represents up to eight people in this chamber on the government side losing their jobs. We might not win this by-election. I think we should. I think Alyssa Hayden is an outstanding candidate. Out of the two candidates, I think she genuinely will do the best because she knows the job. She is running for the job, she knows the job, she understands the job, she has worked East Metropolitan, and she is good to go. She can hit the ground running, and she can hold the government to account, to represent those people well.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, back to the motion, please.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Bringing it back to the motion, Madam Acting Speaker, she can represent the people well, because she can make sure that she is a voice in this Parliament that is not constrained by the caucus, convention or cabinet. She can be a real and accountable voice who can get out there, represent those people and look after them. That is what she will do. Doubling down, penny-pinching, miserable meanness with cost-of-living increases—as the Minister for Water, with his 42 per cent sewerage charge, exits the chamber—is not fair, because the government should be restricting its spending on projects that can be postponed. They can exist on the transport plan, but they can be postponed, to get the debt down. We know that the government took over debt of \$32 billion, but it also added \$7 billion to it in one year. The Metronet costings from a state perspective were not in this budget. We know that; the shadow Treasurer told us that. That is probably half a billion dollars at least that could have been added to this budget. The government needs to get its budget debt down.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.