

SUPPLY BILL 2013

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 May.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [9.57 am]: I continue the remarks that I commenced yesterday when I was commenting about the Premier's remarks in this house and his calling the member for Girrawheen "sweetie". No doubt at some future stage I will refer to the issue of parliamentary standards, because we have a Premier in this state who does not enforce any standards. He has continually promoted the member for Vasse to various positions, including his current positions of Treasurer and Minister for Transport. The Premier clearly has no problem with the fact that that is a man who undid the bra of a staffer up here at Parliament House, who sniffed the chair of another female Liberal Party staffer and who has allegedly engaged in all kinds of other behaviour. I have mentioned those two incidents only because they occurred here at the house. He has made remarks in this chamber that are inappropriate. The Premier clearly sees no issue with language in this house that in other Parliaments would be regarded as unparliamentary. The Premier stood by earlier in the week while the Minister for Transport called one of the members a "no-hoper" and/or "a fool", and the Premier took no issue with that. Yesterday the Premier called the member for Girrawheen "sweetie", so I think we know where the Premier's standards on parliamentary behaviour lie. Perhaps it is a shame that the former member for Churchlands no longer sits next to him and gives him some advice on how women might react to some comments, and some advice on parliamentary standards and behaviour—something that the former member for Churchlands spoke about on numerous occasions.

Today I want to move on to some other issues. In particular, I want to move on to what is an ongoing issue in my electorate. Anyone who has travelled through the Guildford–Midland area at any time over the last four and a half years will have seen that the Liberal–National government has failed the people of Guildford and failed the people of Western Australia. At the very entry to Guildford, whether people have come across the bridge from Bassendean along James Street or whether they have come down Great Eastern Highway in the other direction and onto Johnson Street, they see that right at that significant intersection in the centre of Guildford stands the derelict Guildford Hotel. The hotel caught fire on 31 August 2008, approximately one week before the 2008 election. At the time we heard a lot of platitudes. Both parties said they would act on this because they wanted to see the Guildford Hotel restored to its former glory. We agreed it was a tragedy. This hotel had been placed on the state's Register of Heritage Places many years ago. It is one of the most historic buildings in Western Australia and it stands at a prominent intersection in historic Guildford, one of the earliest places settled in Western Australia. I also note that Guildford Primary School is the oldest continuously operating government primary school in this state. Guildford is an area that is rich with heritage buildings, but most prominent of these in the Guildford town site is the Guildford Hotel.

Since the election of the Liberal–National government in September 2008, we have heard nothing but excuses. Most members on this side feared that post-September 2008 the hotel would not be properly protected over the coming winter. In the lead-up to the winter of 2009 the Guildford community called again and again for some kind of roofing structure or cover to be put over the building and for some kind of action to be taken by government; but we heard nothing more than platitudes from the minister and others. They said that the Heritage of Western Australia Act was inadequate and there was nothing much they could do. We heard again and again, most recently from Hon Alyssa Hayden, who said the government had been working with and talking to the owners: "We've been speaking to them very nicely and we're really hoping they'll do something." The government has been hoping, with its fingers crossed, for nearly five years now! We are approaching the fifth anniversary of the Guildford Hotel fire.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Shame!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: It is an incredible shame, and it is a blot on the landscape of Guildford and a blot on the record of the Barnett government. It is too late now for the government to say that the Heritage of Western Australia Act is inadequate and to blame the act and say that it does not properly protect heritage buildings. Members opposite have been in government for nearly five years now. They have had the opportunity to amend the heritage act.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is demolition by neglect; isn't it, member?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: It is, absolutely! We are now approaching the fifth winter with that gaping site having no roof over it. Over the last five years we have seen a considerable deterioration of the fabric of that building: water is getting into the foundations and basement; vandalism has occurred; plaster is coming off the walls; and brickwork and woodwork are further deteriorating. Some historic architectural features of the building have been dumped at the back of the site and some pilfering has clearly occurred. That is this government's record on

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heritage in this state. There is nothing that the government can do or say on heritage matters in this state that could have any credibility in light of what it has allowed to happen with the Guildford Hotel. Year after year, the government has told us that something is happening, but it is up to the owners. The government has said it is taking them on trust; they are coming up with a plan, and the problem is not with the government, it is the council and so forth. The council has approved plans; they were approved a year or so ago. The government is still saying, "Let's wait and see how it goes. Let's wait and see if the owners get their act together and restore the building." Early on, back in 2008, there was a case for taking the owners at their word; in fact, one of the owners attended one of the early meetings at the Guildford Mechanics Hall and said it was their intention to restore the building and they would get on and do that. In those initial stages, people took them at their word. They said that the building was insured and they would be able to put the insurance money towards the restoration of the hotel. In my initial conversations with the City of Swan, I said the owners were clearly people who had made an investment; they were businessmen and they clearly wanted to make a profit. It was certainly in the interests of the City of Swan and the community to see the building restored, and if that meant providing some bonuses to the developers for restoring the hotel, I felt that would be in order.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: They might get a bonus plot ratio or concessions such as a reduced number of parking bays, or whatever concessions were appropriate and that the council was able to provide as an additional incentive to make this redevelopment stack up. I certainly thought that was in order. The council has bent over backwards in this regard, and the owners and potential developers have received considerable incentives for that plan. In my experience with local government, when I served on the City of Perth we would often give developers some concessions and we would set some conditions. Sometimes those developers would take those concessions with one hand and then run off to one form of appeal or another to seek further concessions. The old forms of appeal were to the minister or the town planning appeals committee. Members know that is now the job of the State Administrative Tribunal. It would take too long to go into the detail of what occurred at the SAT, but I can say that the developers have achieved something that is very workable; they have received considerable concessions and I would have thought they would have gone ahead, but we have still not seen that. The latest event in the saga is a sign on the site seeking expressions of interest from prospective tenants. It is certainly the community's strong view, and I think it is an appropriately held view, that the owners may not proceed with the development unless they get some expressions of interest and can lock in some tenants. In fact, they may not even go to the next stage of getting a building approval, which is not in place yet. I say that enough is enough. That was probably a fair comment three years ago, but we are now coming up to the fifth anniversary of the fire and this is a disgrace. It is an eyesore in the centre of Guildford. People should know that eyesore is symbolic of this government's total inaction on heritage matters.

Mr J.H.D. Day: There has been a significant attempt to engage with the owners and I understand the government met with them yesterday. I agree it is a major problem and personally I would like to see strong action taken. It is not as if nothing has been done.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Does the minister have any ideas on what that strong action might be?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I do not really want to canvass it, but I am interested to know what your proposal is. But I share the member's view that it is a significant problem and something does need to happen.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I had nearly eight years' experience on the City of Perth and I sat on the town planning committee for most of that time. There were some developers and owners of property that we could take at their word and they got on with things. There were others that needed the stick approach and we had to make the threat. During the election campaign, the Labor Party signalled that if it were elected it would look at compulsory acquisition. There are a variety of mechanisms by which to do that. With that as a prospect, perhaps the owners might take a harder view.

I am also not sure why the government has not, at any point, taken the option of putting a conservation order on the Guildford Hotel; perhaps at some stage someone from government could explain to me why not. Although I acknowledge that the heritage act is inadequate, I would say two things: firstly, this government has had nearly five years to amend the act to deal with things such as demolition by neglect, to put more teeth into the act and to deal with issues such as movable heritage and the like; secondly, the one strong part of the heritage act is the power to put a conservation order in place, and I think that needs further consideration. I know my former colleague the former member for Perth, Mr John Hyde, raised some points about provisions of the Building Act and made some reference to the Town of Vincent's use of the Building Act, and so there may be provisions there as well.

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I note for the record that Landgate records indicate that the Guildford Hotel was purchased by the current owners on 17 July 2006 for \$2 million. It may also be the case that there was a separate arrangement for the actual business; I certainly do not know the details of that. The actual purchase price of the building and land—it is a significant parcel of land—in 2006 was \$2 million, which seems to have been a very good buy by those owners. It concerns me in one respect that there has certainly been talk that the insurance payout for that hotel was somewhere north of \$4.5 million. If my sources are accurate and that is the case, it seems that the owners may have already made a profit out of that site; that would depend, of course, on what they paid for the business and whether that was a separate transaction. But I doubt, in the circumstances, that they would have paid anything like more than \$2.5 million for the business. There will have been other costs associated with the purchase and the like, but on those figures it seems possible that the owners have already had a windfall.

What worries me about this government's attitude is, as the member for Girrawheen, the shadow Minister for Heritage, interjected, that this is nothing more than demolition by neglect. If this government continues to stand by and allow this hotel to be damaged beyond repair, to be damaged beyond a state at which it can be restored, it will effectively give a further windfall to the owners of this property. They will be rewarded, not punished, for their neglect of this hotel over the past four and a half years. An unencumbered, greenfield site in Guildford—it is a considerable area of land—is, no doubt, worth more in dollar terms than a site encumbered with a damaged heritage building. I really wonder about the continual discussions we hear government is having with the owners. The government keeps meeting with them—Hon Alyssa Hayden says she has been present at several meetings with them. I just note the current disdain with which some ministers treat elected members of Parliament. I do not include the member for Kalamunda in this because I certainly have no issue with his standards of probity, behaviour or protocol as a minister, but some ministers do not pay appropriate respect to elected members of Parliament. Although we on this side of the house are Labor members of Parliament, the fact of the matter is that we are elected by our constituencies to represent our community. I heard today that the Minister for Heritage has again had a private meeting with the owners but did not see fit to inform me. The previous minister obviously had a number of meetings at which Liberal upper house members were present, but he did not inform me when he was meeting, invite me to attend those meetings or seek my view or that of our former shadow Minister for Heritage, John Hyde. I think these are the kinds of matters on which members of Parliament should work together. I am the member for Midland, which includes all of Guildford, and I think it is appropriate for local members to be consulted. There were a couple of exceptions, but as a minister, when I visited other members' electorates or dealt with issues in their electorates, I generally took the trouble to inform them and have discussions with them. In fact, the Premier can attest to that, because there were numerous issues I dealt with as a minister that involved his electorate on which we worked together. Perhaps the Premier should consider giving some advice to his ministers about paying appropriate respect to members elected to represent all constituencies in this state and involve us in it.

I am very keen to support the community in this. I think this is one of the biggest blots on the first term of the Barnett government. It has little time now to redress the situation; my view is that if it cannot be redressed—if there is not a building application before the council and building underway very, very soon—the government needs to stop being Mr Nice Guy and take some strong action to preserve this heritage asset. I cannot say it more strongly; this is a disgrace. This is a shame. This is a blot on the record of the Barnett government, and it must take immediate action to rectify it, not just have another behind-closed-doors meeting with the owners and cross its fingers and hope the owners do the right thing because so far, over four and a half years, they have not.

Just before I sit, I am aware that the Minister for Housing is not in this place this morning but I do want to highlight that housing issues, particularly Homeswest issues, in my electorate are out of control. I write to the Minister for Housing on a weekly basis about a variety of housing issues in my electorate. The dominant issue is people who are homeless—people who need a roof over their heads and cannot get one—people with children. One couple with a couple of children and another on the way is currently sleeping on the verandah of one of their parents' houses. It is a little two-bedroom house in my electorate and it is not big enough. The couple is currently sleeping in the sleep-out and the children are sleeping in the lounge. The wife is expecting another baby any week now, and it will not be adequate for the baby and the couple to be in this tiny sleep-out. They are the kinds of issues I am dealing with because of this government's neglect.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [10.19 am]: I rise to add my comments to the debate on the Supply Bill 2013. This bill has been introduced by the government because it has delayed the budget until August of this year rather than the standard May of this year when the budget should be brought down. Instead of dealing with the budget, we are in the house dealing with a pre-budget document designed to allow the government to spend money in the lead-up to the budget in August of the next financial year.

It is interesting that although we need a supply bill because we do not have a budget, the government is constantly making a range of budget announcements. Virtually every day the government is making

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announcements not only about the budget but also about spending commitments and changes to taxation arrangements. These are all things that would ordinarily be part of the budget. In other words the government knows what is in the budget but it has delayed the budget. The government knows what it will do in the budget, because it is actually putting in place revenue measures that would ordinarily be part of the budget three months out from the budget, yet the budget has been delayed until August of this year. This is very unusual.

Ordinarily, a new government—a government that is elected for the first time, not the second time—has some justification in delaying its budget because it has never been in office. If a new government is elected in March and the budget is delayed, there is some justification because it has not been in office before. The standard arrangement, at least in recent years when an election was held in February or March, has been to delay the budget until the second half of the year. But this is not a new government. Despite the Premier's perversions of the English language to indicate that this is somehow a new government, it is not. We still have the same Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer as we did in February of this year, yet the government has delayed the budget. There is no justification for that. This budget should have been brought down now. The evidence for that is the fact that this government has made major budget announcements virtually every day over at least the past week that have equated to, in the case of this government, broken promises. Never have so many broken promises been made by so few in such a short period than has happened here under this government. Five major announcements have been made over the past week, and there have been numerous smaller ones that my colleagues are dealing with in the case of their own electorates. There has been a smorgasbord of broken promises in the past week. The government is getting them out of the road early in the hope that the public forgets.

What has been heartening is the fact that people who report these matters in the state's press were there when the government made the promises. They heard the promises come out of the Premier's mouth. They saw his lips move and they heard what he said. They saw the written material that the Premier produced around those promises. They are able to compare what he says now with what he said during the course of the election campaign. They do not suffer from promise amnesia like the Premier does! The Premier has a severe case of amnesia when it comes to the commitments he made to the people of Western Australia. He also has a severe case of blaming straw men for his failure to deliver on his promises; yet the straw men he blames hold no water—if that is an appropriate analogy, and I am not sure that it is! On successive days each one of the Premier's straw men—in relation to GST revenues and the drop in commodity prices—has proven to be false compared with what the budget showed prior to the state election. Prior to the state election, the midyear review, the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* and, I might add, the federal budget, the budget showed that this government's GST revenues have increased significantly on what was predicted in last year's federal budget. Although the Premier is correct that it is \$400 million down on where it was last year, it is actually significantly higher in 2013–14 by \$349 million than what was budgeted for in last year's federal budget. It is actually significantly higher. In other words, the cut was to be far bigger than it turned out to be. We have also found that the iron ore price, which accounts for 70 to 80 per cent of the state's royalties take, has not gone down at all. It has gone up significantly since the government put in place its projections back in the midyear review for what would happen with iron ore prices. Also, the Australian dollar declined below what the government budgeted—it is now down at 98.7c, whereas the government budgeted for it being at \$1.02 or \$1.03 or thereabouts. Each one of those factors has improved compared with what the government budgeted for.

The Premier's excuses are shown for what they are—falsehoods. For 16 long years I have observed the Premier in this place as a former minister, opposition leader, backbencher, a shadow minister without a portfolio and coach of the Liberal Party team at one point. When he used to always say things that we knew were inaccurate, we constantly pointed them out, but the great thing these days is that everyone notices. That is a great thing. Everyone notices, because in the extremeness of an election campaign, when he is the Premier and his daily commentary is reported and watched by people who follow it intensely 14 to 15 hours a day—large numbers of them in the press; they watched it all and they saw it—now they know what we have known for a long time; the Premier speaks in falsehoods. He speaks in falsehoods on virtually every subject. I will go through some of those in a moment, but he speaks in falsehoods constantly. The amazing thing is this is a Premier who could defeat a lie detector test! I understand there are some people who can do it. The Premier actually believes it when he does not tell the truth. He will say contradictory things in the same sentence, and he actually believes it all makes sense and that he is telling the truth! He could defeat a lie detector test. It is extraordinary that he has that capacity to believe what he is saying even when what he is saying is shown to be patently and absolutely false.

I will go through the Premier's falsehoods and the Labor Party will continue to go through them. This will be a major theme during the final term of this government. One thing the public of Western Australia do not like is being misled and hoodwinked in the lead-up to an election. They voted on the back of certain promises and commitments that were made to them; they were not even minor commitments. Western Australians voted on the back of major commitments that were made during the course of this year's election campaign. The

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Liberal Party won the election, true, but Western Australians voted on the basis of commitments that were made and millions of dollars spent—public and private, I might add—by the government advertising on the back of those commitments. Do members know what was stamped on every single one of those commitments?—“fully funded; fully costed”. Do members know what that means? That means this government will deliver them. I could pull out 15 separate items of material distributed to electorates around the state on which the words “fully funded; fully costed” are stamped. There is a list of commitments that the Premier now, or some of them, is backing away from to the people of Western Australia. Indeed the government set up publicly funded websites about some of them and publicly funded television advertising. I even recall a billboard with some of these commitments on it on the Windan Bridge, which were locked in stone, according to the Premier, prior to the election. Where are they now? I think we need to go through it, and we will go through it constantly over these four years, so that people understand that when the Premier speaks prior to an election, he is not telling the people of this state the truth. I refer to electricity prices, the Metro Area Express light rail system, the Swan Valley bypass, small business tax cuts and the opening of the Ballajura Police Station for 24 hours a day. Numerous significant promises were made to the people of Western Australia, particularly for those major infrastructure projects, electricity prices and the small business tax cuts that were hurled out to the people of Western Australia over three years. They were not just an election campaign promise; they were held out over three years in numerous pieces of material as something that would be delivered come 1 July 2013.

Let us go through them. There is electricity prices. In the course of four and a half years the government has put up the state’s electricity prices by more than 70 per cent for the people of Western Australia. The other day when confronted with this, the Premier said, “Well, we’re putting them up four per cent this year, and 10 per cent was in the budget, so we’re doing it significantly less than the budget shows.” That is wrong, Premier. The budget shows a five per cent increase, not 10 per cent. Again, they are falsehoods. Five per cent is budgeted for the coming financial year. He has put it up four per cent, but when the Premier and I were in the ABC studios, and in numerous other interviews, he said that the increase would be at or about the rate of inflation. By putting it up four per cent, when the projected rate of inflation is 2.75 per cent, according to what I read in the paper today, that is 45 per cent above the rate of inflation. That is a significant broken promise.

I have been itching to point out what the Minister for Energy said on this. In our first sitting week he was asked —

Considering Treasury estimates that inflation will rise at the rate of 2.75 per cent from 2013–14 over the forward estimates, can consumers expect electricity prices to rise at the same rate?

The minister answered “Yes”. A one-word answer; that is fairly unambiguous. There is not much room for movement, and he answered yes. Not “probably” or “we expect so”. The answer was yes that electricity prices would move at 2.75 per cent. What did we then find? When he was asked if he misled the house, he redefined the question and answered as follows —

The Leader of the Opposition asked me, “Did the Premier say that the electricity price would be at or above the rate of inflation and would the expected rate of inflation be 2.75 per cent?” which I summarily answered “Yes”.

That is how he redefined my question. My question was —

Considering Treasury estimates that inflation will rise at the rate of 2.75 per cent from 2013–14 over the forward estimates, can consumers expect electricity prices to rise at the same rate?

When asked about it, he came up with a completely different question that I never asked him. That is the sort of leadership the Premier has shown. His ministers even believe it when they say things that are not true, so a minister in the house said absolutely definitively that electricity prices would go up by 2.75 per cent. During the televised leaders’ debate the Premier said electricity increases would be at or about the rate of inflation. Then the Treasurer went out last week and announced price increases and the Premier went missing for four days and would not appear to answer the questions on the basis that he thought everyone had forgotten. That has been his practice. He says things then goes to ground so that everyone will forget, and we can move on with something else. As I keep saying, the great thing about that election campaign is that everyone was watching and taking notice at that time; they heard him say it. The entire press gallery was taking notice and heard the words come out of his mouth.

On the MAX light rail program, the Premier is now saying there are technical issues and location issues and issues about how it will feed through the city and the like, which may delay it, and then there are cost issues. That was not the case before the election. In fact, the Premier used \$2 million in his publicly funded advertising, including a billboard on the Windan Bridge, promoting the MAX light rail system. Was there any mention of

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any of these issues in any of that advertising, including on the website that he established about his bigger picture? No, there was not. When these issues were raised prior to the election, the Minister for Transport and various candidates went out to the northern suburbs with a big billboard, to show exactly how it would go, indicating that all these issues would be resolved. The MAX light rail proposal was set in stone prior to the election, now it is one of those promises that is going by the wayside. Bear in mind that, according to the pundits at least, the Labor Party lost the electorate of Perth on the back of promises like this because, allegedly, Perth electors voted on the basis that this government would build a light rail system through the city of Perth. All the people in the northern suburbs who suffer congestion and those in Victoria Park, the western suburbs and the city who voted on the back of a light rail system running through the city were duded. They were lied to. This government lied to them in the lead-up to the election. The government lied. Its foundation in the lead-up to that election was lies, lies, lies.

On the Swan Valley bypass, I have the Liberal Party's material here. There is no mention of a two-stage road. There is one qualification in the famous press conference, which we now know, because the Premier told us yesterday, that the member for Girrawheen did not attend!

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. McGOWAN: One qualification was made at that famous press conference. I have here a photograph of the Treasurer and the Premier standing by the road as a truck is passing. According to an article written in *The West Australian* by Gareth Parker on 27 February 2013 —

He said he expected the Commonwealth would be required to fund “at least 50 per cent”.

“These are the sorts of road projects the Commonwealth will contribute to,” Mr Buswell said.

I spend a lot of time in the part of the world around Ellenbrook and the like. The Swan Valley bypass will be a significant road designed to take traffic away from some of the commuter routes out there, particularly Great Northern Highway. It was called a one-stage project. There was never any mention of two stages. In the words of the Minister for Transport, the one qualification was that the commonwealth would need to contribute 50 per cent. What did we find on Tuesday? The commonwealth called his bluff. In response to what the government requested in writing, the commonwealth said, “There's \$420 million for that road.” The government put in an application requesting the money for that road and the commonwealth will give it to them based on the terms that the Minister for Transport said publicly he would require. The government got exactly what it asked for from the commonwealth—a 50 per cent contribution for that road. Now what is the government saying? It is saying, “Oh, no we don't want that; that's not our priority any more”, even though the government put in an application for the money, even though the Liberal Party won the electorate of Swan Hills on the back of that commitment, and even though its candidate in the electorate of West Swan campaigned on that issue. The Liberal Party deliberately misled and lied to the people of West Swan and Swan Hills on the back of a massive road project that would have improved congestion. Now it will not deliver on what it said it would, even though the commonwealth government is offering half the money for the project, which is exactly what the government asked for. That is extraordinary. The Premier now redefines once again. He is a redefiner extraordinaire of promises. He redefines. What is more, he believes his redefinitions. He is a redefining extraordinaire believer of his own promises.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Delusional.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Delusional. He made those promises to the people out there. He stood by the road with the truck and the Treasurer; Minister for Transport and said, “Yes, that's what we're going to do. We need the commonwealth to contribute half.” The commonwealth is contributing half but now the government is not doing it. That is extraordinary.

We also have the business tax cuts. I will explain to the Liberals what this is about because I do not think they know. This measure was designed to allow a person who has built up a small business to sell that business and the purchaser of that business would not have to pay stamp duty, in particular on the goodwill that is generated. The goodwill generated by a retail store, manufacturing business or a business in the service industry is a large part of that business. People do not just buy a shop and pay a lot of money for it unless it has a significant component of goodwill. Goodwill is when customers loyally or habitually attend a shop or business. That is the goodwill component. Often that is the most significant component of a business. It is not the fittings, the equipment or capital; it is often the goodwill, and that is a large part of the stamp duty. By removing this scheduled tax cut, the government is actually taking money away from the seller of the business. Otherwise, that component of the stamp duty would be a windfall to them because they would be receive that benefit rather than the Office of State Revenue. By removing that tax cut, the government is hurting people—mums and dads

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throughout the community—who would have received that windfall for their hard work. I reiterate that just so Liberal members know what they have done. The amazing thing is that it was legislated for by Eric Ripper. It was actually an L-A-W law tax cut designed to commence on 1 July 2010. It was in law and passed by this Parliament. The government passed legislation to withdraw it, but it said in all its election material that it would start on 1 July 2013. What did we hear yesterday? The government is withdrawing it. The Premier's lame excuse was that it did not feature in the election campaign and therefore was not a promise. Has anyone ever heard anything so lame? What is another word for lame?

Mr P. Papalia: Pathetic.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Pathetic. It was a pathetic excuse: because it did not feature in the material in the election campaign, somehow it does not apply, even though it was law. I remember when the government broke the original commitment to put it in place. I assumed the fact that the government put it in law actually meant something. I was not going to go out in the election campaign and say, "Is the Premier actually going to deliver on the tax cut that is currently law and has been agreed to by ministers ad nauseam over the past couple of years?" I would have looked foolish to have alleged that that was being removed because everyone would have said of course it is there—it is law. Instead, yesterday the government announced that it is withdrawing \$500 million worth of benefits to small businesses in particular across Western Australia. It will take out \$500 million from the pockets of small businesses across Western Australia.

There is also the amazing case of the Ballajura Police Station. I am told that there were eight flashing signs set up around the electorate of West Swan in an incredibly well funded Liberal Party campaign saying there would be a 24-hour police station but then we learnt last week that there would not be. My goodness; that is a big broken promise to the people of Ballajura and West Swan. I hope they are aware of what the Liberal Party has done to them with that broken promise. There are numerous others. The train station the Liberal Party committed to in Secret Harbour has now been withdrawn, and I am sure there are others around the community. They are pretty big broken promises.

There are no excuses for this, and the excuses that have been rolled out do not carry any weight. The government always knew that the state's share of goods and services tax revenue would fall, but, according to the state government's and the federal government's documents, the state government thought it would fall more than it did. We all knew the state of the finances of the GST revenues before the election. The great revelation yesterday—members could literally see the blood drain from the Premier's face—was when we revealed the advertisement by Tony Abbott in Tasmania in which Tony Abbotts says that the Liberal Party will not change the GST arrangement. I could see the blood drain from the Premier's face because he had been building up Tony Abbott. He told us that Tony Abbott understands and will sort things out because he is the man. It turns out that Tony Abbott will not countenance or even consider a change in the arrangement and is actually advertising to the people of Tasmania that under no circumstances will the GST arrangement be changed. Bear in mind that if Tony Abbott becomes the Prime Minister of Australia in September, our GST share will fall further; I guarantee it. That, Liberal Party members, will mean a state Liberal government and a federal Liberal government have reduced Western Australia's share of the GST even further, which is hardly surprising because it was a state Liberal government and a federal Liberal government that signed up Western Australia to the GST arrangement in the first place under the current conditions through which the GST is distributed. Come 15 September, if our share of GST goes down further, a state Liberal government and a federal Liberal government will be to blame. I guarantee members that it will go down and the shoe will be on the other foot.

As I said before, our iron ore revenues are higher. There are structural issues. The Premier flicks from one issue to another. When it was proven that the iron ore price was higher than when the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* and the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* were prepared, he flicked to another issue. He then said it was the GST. Then we learnt from the federal budget papers that we were receiving a higher level of GST than was predicted in last year's federal budget. Where will he go next? Maybe he will go to the dollar and say that because the dollar is stronger than projected we are losing money. I have looked at the dollar. The dollar is actually lower than it was projected to be in the midyear review. At that time it was estimated to be \$US103.4c for the remainder of 2012–13. The fact that it is lower means we get more revenue. We are getting more revenue because of the lower dollar, because of the iron ore prices and the predicted GST we are receiving is higher than was predicted. In each of those cases there is no excuse. Who will the Premier blame next for these things? Is there anyone else? Can anyone think of anything else?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Santa Claus!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Maybe he will blame Santa Clause! We will see where he goes to next in his frantic efforts to shirk responsibility for his own broken promises. Maybe it will be my fault. He seems to think I am responsible for a lot of things. Maybe it will be my fault that he breaks his promises with such aplomb and

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impunity. The great thing is that everyone is awake now. I am very happy that people have worked out exactly what is going on in this state under this government. It just breaks the promises upon which it was elected with aplomb and impunity. We will hold the government to account for the next four years for all those broken promises and make sure that the people of Western Australia do not forget.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [10.49 am]: I start by acknowledging, as many of my colleagues already have, that this is National Volunteer Week. Western Australia is blessed with more than 600 000 volunteers, and I want firstly to mention those who volunteer at our schools. They undertake a range of duties, including working as mentors, chaplains, uniform coordinators, P&C members, canteen workers, school volunteer program workers, RoadWise coordinators, classroom helpers, school council members, costume makers and library assistants; the list goes on. All of them enhance the school experience of students and complement the demanding work undertaken by teachers and administrative staff.

Without singling anyone out, I would like to make special mention of the volunteers at Hudson Park Primary School, Peter Jackson, Josh Jackson, Wendy Seneque, Liz Lee, Stacey Morton, Danika Mackenzie, Sherrilee Leonard, Liz Fricker, Ros Lock and Fay Gabrielson. At Landsdale Primary School, Debbie Yates, Nicola Peiris and Keera Bull. At Girrawheen Senior High School, Andrew Locke, Cassie Bowyer and Jan Bigwood. The following volunteers at Roseworth Primary School are particularly significant because they do not have children at the school: Minetta Mundy, Sue Sutherland, Sue Jopson, Paula Green and Robyn Willoughby. An occasion like National Volunteer Week is a terrific opportunity to acknowledge those unsung heroes who do such fantastic work at our schools.

Although there are a lot of non-government organisations and charities that work in my electorate that contribute greatly to our social capital and that assist those who are most disadvantaged, I would particularly like to single out the ladies at the Girrawheen St Vincent de Paul Society: Maureen Chorlton—who has worked at Vinnies for 35 years—Leanne Coles and Carolin Alexander.

Also in the context of National Volunteer Week, I would like to congratulate *The West Australian* newspaper. It gets a lot of brickbats in this place, but I think the series of articles it has run highlighting the roles that various volunteers play has been terrific. I particularly enjoyed an excellent story by Michelle Wheeler, published on 6 May, about Joe Tuazama, who is a refugee from Liberia. The article reads, in part —

“People in the refugee camp had no hope,” he said.

“We didn’t even have the hope of finding something to eat each day. But today we can look to achieving our long-term dreams.”

For the president of the Liberian Community of WA, this dream is not about fame or wealth but helping his expat African community.

Mr Tuazama has instigated programs including Mentor Me, which helps young people become role models, and Miss Liberia, a pageant to raise girls’ self-esteem and teach them how to act as young women.

And this volunteer work is on top of being a full-time engineering student, an orderly at King Edward Memorial Hospital and working at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. West Metro Crime Prevention and Cultural Diversity Office chief Sgt Don Emanuel-Smith nominated Mr Tuazama for the Edie Hoy Poy Volunteering Award for Ethnic Communities, describing him as someone special.

I am pleased to say that last night at the WA volunteering awards, Joe won the Edie Hoy Poy volunteering award for ethnic communities. It is well deserved, and as I said to Joe, those who had the privilege of knowing the wonderful Edie Hoy Poy would know that she would have considered him a worthy winner. I will also take this opportunity to congratulate Volunteering WA for holding a terrific gala dinner last night, at which a number of our volunteers were honoured.

The second matter about which I want to raise concerns relates to the impending commemoration of the centenary of the Anzac landings. As we know in WA, we commence these commemorations next year in Albany to coincide with the anniversary of when our brave Anzacs left there to fight in the Great War. As most members here will know—we have had grievances on this matter in the past—the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has a policy of clearing grave stones if the lease on a grave is not renewed by family members after a certain period. As members will also be aware, amongst the graves at Karrakatta are scattered the graves of a number of soldiers who served in either the First or Second World Wars. There are concerns that our valuable history is being lost under this policy of grave clearances. There are concerns that, as our interest in the Anzacs increases and families want to visit and trace their personal connections to this key event in our history, their capacity to locate these graves will be hampered by the uninformed policy of clearance. I have been contacted by a constituent who is in this very position. She wanted to visit the last resting place of a relative who served in the Great War, and, I

believe, participated in the Anzac landings, but with the grave stone having been removed, she cannot even locate where he is buried. She suggested to me—I think it is an excellent suggestion—that as part of our Anzac commemorations, a wall similar to the migrant wall at Fremantle be erected bearing the names of those Western Australians who served in the Great War. In the meantime, it would be terrific if the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board could exercise a level of restraint and circumspection when dealing with graves that are an important part of our heritage. I am a little concerned because responsibility for this is in the hands of three different ministers, and we all know that when that happens, things can sometimes fall through the cracks. I urge the Ministers for Veterans, Local Government and Heritage to formulate a strategy to stop this practice of removing the grave stones of our veterans.

On a completely different topic, over the past few weeks I have been reflecting on the state of federal–state relations. There is no doubt that a state Premier’s principal role is to represent the interests of the residents of the state. I am not sure, however, that this is presently occurring in the context of federal–state relations. Some might say the Premier is cutting off his nose to spite his face; arriving at COAG meetings with a churlish attitude and obstinately refusing to participate in the deliberations is not necessarily serving this state well. The fact that he is characterising the discussions as standover tactics by the federal government, failing to identify areas of common ground and failing to constructively progress key issues shows that the Premier is derelict in his duties to the citizens of WA. To put it simply, the Premier has gone on strike until 15 September. It is not just me saying that, but also the Premier’s fellow Liberal Premier, NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell. When interviewed at a press conference in April this year on the signing of the commonwealth government’s so-called Gonski education reforms, he noted, according to the transcript of an *ABC Insiders* program of 28 April, that —

Western Australia did vote no to that first federation referenda and you do get the impression that, particularly after COAG (Council Of Australian Governments) meetings, they regret that they ever voted yes.

In the same transcript, from an interview on *The Project*, he noted, in a dig directed at Premier Barnett —

Well I can’t go on strike until the 14th of September and refuse to deal with the Federal Government.

Those who have had any experience with how COAG operates know that, generally, the states are asked to sign off on a proposal and general principle that the bureaucrats still need to thrash out and work up as a detailed proposal. It is this detailed negotiation that can lead to accommodation of specific regional variations. For example, I know from the COAG discussions on getting better health outcomes that the states varied greatly in how they wanted to achieve that, and there was an accommodation within COAG negotiations for states to be able to operate, in that field, in a way that best suits their current practices. I have had the privilege of attending a number of COAG meetings, first in my capacity as parliamentary secretary to Premier Gallop and then as the state minister for federal–state relations. I particularly recall a special COAG meeting on terrorism following the events of September 2001 at the World Trade Center. At that COAG meeting, Prime Minister Howard secured agreement from I think all Labor Premiers on several wide-ranging legislative measures. The proposals were not even available to the Premiers in advance, and at the actual meeting Prime Minister Howard read from an A4 sheet of paper that was not even in front of the Premiers at the time.

After the meeting and for a number of months after that, consistent legislation was passed in all states based on the agreement in principle that occurred at COAG. The bureaucrats continued after that COAG meeting to discuss and finalise implementing the agreement in principle. If, as the Premier says, Western Australia is leading the way in disability services, surely he should be exercising leadership and embracing a scheme that will mean that all people with disabilities, irrespective of where they live, are given certain entitlements.

For the Premier to isolate himself and prevaricate on signing off on the NDIS is to be complacent and short-sighted. I say “complacent” because, yes, disability services in Western Australia are, comparatively speaking, better than those in other states, but they are far from perfect, with many missing out. Just ask those disappointed individuals who have unsuccessfully used the combined application process, or CAP, to access either accommodation services, alternatives to employment services or intensive family support services. WA’s system is based on a rationed pool of funds that can meet only about 10 to 30 per cent of the need for accommodation assistance. Currently in Western Australia, 70 to 90 per cent of families who seek accommodation assistance in every round of the disability services capped funding do not receive it. For example, in the 2011–12 funding round, 559 families applied for accommodation assistance and intensive family support but only 89 received funding. I know from personal experience during my brief period as Minister for Disability Services that many who miss out on CAP funding are extremely worthy cases. There are some heartbreaking examples of carers who are under great personal stress or illness and are at the end of their tether who are nevertheless asked to hold on without assistance or with limited assistance for an indeterminate time. Those families acknowledge that the demand far exceeds supply, but most will say, “We could hang on if we just knew for how long before help

would be on the way.” That is a particular concern, I think, of ageing parents who want some assurance that in the event of illness, incapacity or death, their loved one would be nevertheless looked after. The Premier should walk a mile in their shoes and put aside his ideological objections to working with the federal government. He should think about how he could exercise statesmanship and sign up to the NDIS. He should listen to the many with disabilities in this state who ask him to do so.

In this context I would like to quote from an article that Tim Soutphommasane wrote in *The Age* earlier this month. It is titled “When did the lucky country become selfish?”, and he writes —

It should be the mark of a civilised society that it takes care of its most vulnerable members. For this reason alone, a national disability insurance scheme merits the bipartisan political support it enjoys. Its eventual passage through Parliament—assuming that happens—would count as a major social reform. The scheme would significantly improve the lives of the disabled and their carers.

And yet, our debate about the NDIS reveals something less than edifying about our political culture. One in which economic prosperity has bred a certain decadence and has corrupted our sense of civic responsibility.

He goes on to say —

As I highlighted in this column a fortnight ago, there is a section of Australian society that suffers from cognitive dissonance when it comes to taxes and government services. Namely, many wish to enjoy better government services, and believe there should be higher taxes to fund them—but don’t believe they should be paying those higher taxes (even if they are relatively well off).

In the case of the disabled and their carers, higher taxes are the price we will all have to pay for social justice. More concretely, though, any suggestion that Australian households can’t afford the modest tax increase proposed verges on the perverse. After all, we live in a period of unprecedented economic prosperity. If this country can’t afford to assist its vulnerable and needy during such a period, when can it ever afford it?

This is one by-product of prolonged economic growth: it can turn people inwards and encourage them to aspire only for themselves and not also for their community. And it is one reason the public mood is so out of sync with the current relative strength of the Australian economy.

He concludes —

... our political culture also imposes constraints on the conduct of reform. Ours is a culture that is more material and pragmatic than it is idealistic. Whereas political debates elsewhere begin with philosophical or ideological questions, ours are much worldlier. The first question we tend to ask of any policy proposal is not whether it is good or bad, or reflects our values, but how much it costs and who will pay for it.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: To bring that down to a micro level, long-suffering parents of children with disabilities daily face barriers and hurdles we could only imagine. For example, I want to refer to one mum whom I recently met and who is a constituent of mine. Her daughter has serious disabilities and has an electric wheelchair. They attend Balga Leisurpark to use the therapy pool. This pool, which is no longer in my electorate, is used and enjoyed by many in the surrounding suburbs, including those in my current electorate. It is a valuable community asset and I am proud to have had some role in it being built. The hydrotherapy pool is extremely popular and much in demand. However, it needs a number of modifications so that this girl and many others with disabilities can make full use of the pool. At present there is only one change table. The doors on the change rooms are so heavy and open the wrong way, so having to do it while manoeuvring a wheelchair is almost impossible. As well, a hoist is needed, and the existing pool chairs have been used so much that they need to be replaced. These problems with access and safety make the exercise of attending the pool highly problematical and extremely trying. I hope in the months to come that, working with the City of Stirling, we can improve the physical environment and at least remove the impediments to access and enjoyment for many.

Finally, and on a broader note, I have been reflecting on the focus on public transport in the recent state election. Recently the Grattan Institute published a report on productive cities. I commend that report to members; it is certainly worth a read. It puts into context the traffic congestion debate. It raises concerns, for example, that for many in the outer suburbs, access to employment requires travel, and the cost of housing means that many have to travel further to access employment. The report notes that to make our cities more productive, the transport system needs to improve. It notes —

... that labour markets are shallow in significant parts of Australia’s biggest cities.

Of which Perth is one. It continues —

In many suburbs—particularly outer suburbs—residents can reach fewer than 10 per cent of all metropolitan jobs with a reasonable commuting time.

Increasingly, employees with high-level qualifications and high incomes live close to the heart of our cities. Meanwhile, workers with trade skills or low skills, and people on lower incomes, tend to live further from the centre. Rising house prices have exacerbated this divide. If this polarisation continues, then many people risk being locked out of the parts of the city that offer the richest access to jobs.

How can governments respond? Governments are frequently called upon to create jobs in outer suburban areas by offering incentives to business to relocate or by building new employment clusters from scratch. Yet there is little evidence that such policies work. A better option is to move people closer to jobs. This can be done in two ways. First, the supply and diversity of dwellings in existing suburbs can be increased.

This requires changes to the planning laws and closer liaison with local governments —

Previous Grattan research has shown that people want more housing choice. It can be created if the disincentives developers face are addressed, if suburbs are not locked down by restrictive zoning and planning rules and if residents are engaged up front in decisions affecting their neighbourhoods.

Second, the transport system's capacity to connect people and jobs can and must be improved. That means better road systems and better public transport ...

The shape of our cities is above all an economic issue.

To date, this government has lurched from one crisis to another, often responding reactively. I fervently hope, but am not confident, that in this term the Barnett government will turn the corner and develop some evidence-based policy and seriously deal with the real issues that the Grattan Institute raised that affect outer metropolitan areas of our city, such as my electorate. As the report notes, failure to do so will further polarise our community and foster disadvantage.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [11.11 am]: I take this opportunity to raise two issues. The first relates to the upgrade of the Stirling Highway and High Street intersection in my electorate. In my inaugural speech I spoke about the number of trucks moving through this intersection. For over 10 years there has been a need for change to this area of road. It is a dense residential area and as a result of the hundreds of thousands of trucks moving directly through the area, there has been an urgent need identified to improve this intersection. In short, the end of Stirling Highway forms a T-junction where it meets High Street, which later becomes Leach Highway. There is a need to have an easing along the road so that trucks do not have to stop and start, which is noisy, unproductive and dangerous. During the recent state election campaign, I spoke to a resident who felt very frustrated that, despite 10 years of discussion over the intersection change and changes to the houses of her immediate neighbours—their houses were bought out by the government for the intersection changes—she was still completely in the dark about what would happen to the intersection. She did not feel she could undertake any sort of maintenance on the property, let alone renovate or make changes to her home because of the uncertainty about the upgrade.

There has been much debate about the design of the changes, and the previous member for Fremantle would have raised these issues in the house; that is, the community wants to lessen the impact that the arc of road that results from these amendments would have on the community and the amount of green space that currently exists south of Leach Highway. There is a public and private golf course in that area, and I refer to not only the changes to the golf club but also the trees and green space.

The other frustration for residents is the need for efficiency along this stretch of road. In my inaugural speech I also referred to the identification by the World Health Organization in 2011 that diesel particulates are a class 1 carcinogen; that is, those emissions are on par with tobacco smoke and asbestos. Trucks that stop and start along that road cause a lot of pollution, and any sort of easing of traffic and reduction in the number of stops and starts would hopefully reduce that pollution.

After being consulted to within an inch of their lives for over 10 years, residents were dismayed last year to learn that the state government had removed money from the state budget that was previously allocated to the road upgrade. As a result, the federal government, which had allocated match money, was also lost to the project as a source of funding. So, after a decade of identifying the need and discussion about the road upgrade, this state government removed money allocated to this important improvement.

Along with many others in the community, I was happy this week to hear that the federal Labor government has recommitted its share of money—\$78 million—to the High Street–Leach Highway–Stirling Highway upgrade.

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We now require two things from this state government. The first is finalisation of the design of the road upgrade so that it is one with which the local community can live. The community is particularly concerned that the upgrade results in safer roads and smooth traffic flows, but that it is not a green light, if you like, for more trucks. I referred to the hundreds of thousands of truck movements in and out of the port each year. That particular stretch of road takes the vast majority of those truck movements. The output from the port of Fremantle is expected to double in the next five to 10 years before it reaches full capacity; therefore, there is a need for the increased use of rail for that freight movement, and for not all of it to be transported by road. Residents do not want this road upgrade to increase that stretch of Leach Highway to six lanes as they believe more roads will simply result in more trucks. They are opposed to the upgrade resulting in an increased number of lanes, but they want to see the upgrade take place.

The first thing that must happen is that the design of the upgrade is finalised with the community. In the last few months, a new round of consultation has started between the relevant departments, the Fremantle council and other stakeholders over a satisfactory design for the upgrade so that the objectives of the changes are achieved and traffic flow is improved with minimal impact on residences and green space. I note that the government and those departments have not bothered to go back to the community and keep it informed of negotiations to date and the likely outcomes. In March this year the Fremantle council took matters into its own hands and held its own consultation with residents and groups. I attended that meeting, along with more than 100 people, and the majority of those people were frustrated about the lack of representation from state government or relevant departments and that this matter was not finalised. The government must settle on an upgrade design with which the community can live, and then it must then recommit the money for this project in the next state budget. Anything short of allocating the resources and commencing this upgrade will show a complete disregard for the broader Fremantle community and the thousands of people who drive through this intersection.

Another important matter with regard to this stretch of road is the noise and pollution that residents must endure as a result of the massive increase in truck movements. I have had numerous meetings with people who live along Duke Street in East Fremantle who continue to be frustrated by the lack of response by this government to their cause for noise attenuation measures to be put in place along that stretch of road. The logical time to put noise reduction measures in place would be in conjunction with the road upgrade I have just been speaking about. There has been no decent measure of noise levels for residents for a number of years, and even then residents were given little or no information about the results of the noise testing. Questions on this were asked of the government in 2012 by the shadow Minister for Transport, but no information of any use was forthcoming. Residents want noise measurements taken, and if, as they strongly believe, noise attenuation measures are justified, they want those measures put in place. As I said, a logical time for this to occur would be in conjunction with the road construction that is desperately needed and that I hope will be funded in the next state budget.

The second issue I will raise concerns a comment by the Premier during the state election campaign. On 8 February a report in WAToday read —

Premier Colin Barnett has vowed that if re-elected, he would legislate two major changes to deregulate licensed venues.

The Premier stated —

“People will now be able to go to a restaurant, have a glass of wine, have a drink without having to have a meal,” he said.

As we heard this week, there is an opportunity for us to debate this sort of legislation; there was an opportunity last week and there will be an opportunity next week. It is very disappointing that we do not have this sort of bill before us so that we can progress the Liberal conversion to this very important piece of Labor policy—that is, the deregulation of liquor licensing—to allow for small bars, and for venues that currently hold liquor licences to have their licences amended so that they can serve drinks without food. We look forward to that legislation coming before the house.

In the meantime, while we wait for that legislation, I have a good example of a popular and successful venue in Fremantle, which could be doing just as the Premier described—that is, offering drinks without food—under a simple amendment to its current licence, but its application has been frustrated by an intervention by WA Police. The venue I am referring to is the X-Wray Cafe run by Sue and Greg Leaver, which as I said is a popular and successful venue. It is a licensed venue; it serves food and it also has live music. Its emphasis is on supporting local and original music. What is remarkable about this venue, for anyone who has been to it or will go to it in the future, and what will strike people as soon as they go into it, is that there is a wide range of ages and types of people socialising and the emphasis is on food, music and socialising rather than the consumption of alcohol. It seemed logical to Sue and Greg Leaver to apply to amend their licence when they heard the Premier’s comments

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during the state election. I had a conversation during the election campaign with Sue Leaver, one of the licence holders. She commented that both parties seemed to be supporting small bars and a deregulation of alcohol licences to encourage a variety of venues, obviously to supply alcohol in a responsible way, rather than just large beer barns or night clubs that were encouraging alcohol consumption. Sue Leaver noticed that both parties had good policy on this and was looking forward to amending their venue's licence so they would be able to serve alcohol without an accompanying meal. They applied for an extended trading permit earlier in the year that would allow patrons to have a drink without having a meal. But they were dismayed to find what they thought would be a straightforward application was met with a 23-page intervention by the WA Police. On reading that intervention, to my amazement and that of Sue and Greg Leaver, it almost sheets home to the X-Wray Cafe most of the alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour in the Fremantle CBD.

I want to take this opportunity to place on record my support for that venue and for the type of venue that the Leavers run. From my experience it is the exactly the sort of licensed venue we should be supporting. It has a range of ages and types of people intermingling, food is available and it encourages local music performers. I understand that Greg Leaver will have an opportunity to discuss his concerns live with the Commissioner of Police on Paul Murray's program on 6PR next week. It will be interesting to hear a licence holder of a small venue discuss with the Commissioner of Police why this is the sort of venue that government policymakers and the police should be encouraging to flourish in Perth.

We hear a lot of talk about Perth becoming a more cosmopolitan city. People are travelling more widely and going to other cities, both in Australia and overseas, and they are getting frustrated at our licence restrictions. There is opportunity within our current licensing arrangements for small bars like some that are in my electorate to be supported. I think they should be supported as a policy measure by this government and I will encourage Sue and Greg Leaver to approach the minister to explain their frustrations. I also look forward to seeing the relevant legislation come before the house to enact what has been longstanding Labor policy on this question.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [11.26 am]: It is interesting when I listen to some of the comments in this debate from the Labor Party about election commitments, particularly when I go through what happened in the state election and commitments made by the Labor Party in regional WA—or should I say its lack of commitments!

Mr W.J. Johnston: Like your commitments in 2008 when you signed an agreement!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is great to see that Labor members are in the chamber so that they can listen to some of these commitments that they failed to achieve in regional WA.

Mr W.J. Johnston: There's a difference between me and you! I'm an honest man. I tell the truth. You're a rat and everybody knows it. You signed an agreement and you ratted on it. You were elected —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As a National!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for Cannington, I want to listen to the member for North West Central and I am having trouble hearing him at the moment.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is great to see that nothing has changed over the other side!

Mr W.J. Johnston: You're a rat and you'll die a rat! Nothing has changed with you! You're a rat and you're going to die a rat. Every day you live, you're a rat!

Point of Order

Mr P.T. MILES: The member for Cannington was asked to desist. He is still interjecting on the member for North West Central. I ask you to bring him into line.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for Cannington, I would like to be able to hear the member for North West Central. Member for North West Central, could you just direct your remarks to me, please.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As I said —

Mr P. Papalia: Are you going to change sides again when the tide turns?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I was feeling unloved over the last couple of weeks, but it is great to hear that the Labor Party has found its voice again and is trying to discredit how the voters of North West Central voted—and what they voted overwhelmingly for! The Labor Party strategy for regional WA was to get rid of the National Party. How was it going to do that? It came up with the strategy of preferencing against the National Party. It preferenced my Liberal Party colleagues in government in a lot of seats—particularly in my seat. The Labor

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Party thought it would be successful by preferencing the Liberal Party, which I found astounding! Obviously, the Labor Party sees the National Party as its biggest threat, and we did manage to pick up quite a few of its seats at the last election. The Labor Party strategy was to preference against the National Party. I think that backfired on the Labor Party! In my electorate, where every party preferred against the National Party, I managed to pick up 60 per cent of Labor Party preferences. Sixty per cent! Good strategy by the Labor Party yet again on how it can best represent regional Western Australia; the best way it represented regional WA was by making sure it directed preferences against the National Party. It is interesting; I think I have worked out why the preferences were going against the National Party in regional WA. The commitments the Labor Party made in my electorate fell well short of money already allocated by the Liberal–National government to projects that were already in the budget and underway. I will give members a couple of examples. Carnarvon Regional Hospital: \$20 million of royalties for regions and \$6 million from the health department was allocated by the Liberal–National government to redevelop Carnarvon hospital. What did Labor do? It offered to pump \$19 million of royalties for regions money into Carnarvon hospital if elected. So what happened to the \$7 million? Where was it going to go? I will answer that question, I think, later. The same happened with Exmouth District Hospital. The Liberal–National government, through royalties for regions, put \$8 million into the redevelopment of Exmouth hospital. So what did Labor do? It said it would put in \$7 million. Members can see a bit of a theme. I can talk about other commitments in terms of upgrades to hospitals that the Labor Party made, and yet again they fell short of what our commitments were during the election campaign.

But what I find absolutely concerning is that the Labor Party cannot even read the budget papers to see that \$26 million has been allocated in Carnarvon or \$8 million has been allocated to Exmouth hospital, as well as the allocation of \$7 million of royalties for regions money to a new Carnarvon community college. What was Labor’s response during election time? “We’ll put \$5 million in.” After a \$7 million project had already commenced, with the first stage nearly completed, Labor was going to take out \$2 million. I want to know what roof or wall the Labor Party was going to leave out, or maybe there was not going to be any plaster on the walls—I do not know! But it seemed that during the election campaign the whole game of the Labor Party was to take away from the budgeted commitments already made by this government—interesting. I think that was basically it in terms of commitments made by Labor Party.

Where was the royalties for regions money going to go? What plan did the opposition have? It is great to see the Labor Party all starting to walk out because it hates the truth! All members walk out. They all yell out and they all walk out. We know they hate the truth.

Ms L.L. Baker: I’m sorry; are you speaking to me?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is interesting. I am sure the member for Maylands will walk out because she does not like the truth either.

So, when it came to the election campaign, where was the rest of the royalties for regions going to go?

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for Mandurah, I would like to listen to the member in silence, please.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes, well I won’t; I’m leaving!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I wish I had that photo that I found of the member in leopard skin!

Like I said, the Labor Party does not like the truth, so its members all walk out. But I was trying to explain where the rest of the royalties for regions money was going to go—where? Basically, the commitment made during the election campaign was that the Labor Party would do it better and that it would spend money in regional WA better. I am still waiting for its policy on what it was actually going to spend that money on, but I think I have worked it out. I think its strategy was to not spend royalties for regions money; if it had been successful at the election, it was going to get rid of royalties for regions. It was going to fund the projects it had committed to, because basically the election campaign was run in the city over city rail and road projects—regional WA was not talked about. The only party that talked about regional WA was the National Party. So the view I have taken from the election campaign is that the Labor Party was going to redirect royalties for regions money into the city. Was that to pay for Metronet, or the possible blowout of Metronet? Was it going to pay for the Ellenbrook railway line or whatever else it promised in the city, because no promises were made in regional WA? The only promises the Labor Party made were to actually take money away from projects that had already commenced. So I wonder what wall and what roof it was going to leave out; or was it going to leave a couple of roof tiles out so it could save some money to redirect to the city? I think its game plan was to take the royalties for regions money and put it into the city.

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The Labor Party has a severe lack of representation in regional WA. Its whole focus has been on the city—it is a very city-centric party—and the election proved what the Labor Party is all about. It is all about redirecting money from regional WA to the city. That might be great for some of the city electorates, but the wealth of this state—the wealth of this country—is coming from the north west of this state. The north west has been neglected for 60 years, and finally, over the four years of royalties for regions, this government has been able to turn it around to finally see investment occurring in the regions. Like I said, the Labor Party does not like the truth—another Labor person walks out. I wonder how many Labor Party people will be in this place at the end of my speech.

Labor has no plan for regional WA. Over the past four years this government has been able to rebuild towns that have been neglected by previous governments; it has been able to turn that around and invest in our education and health, and our ageing infrastructure, and provide upgrades to the main streets in iconic areas of towns to try to increase the number of people coming to live in regional towns and increase tourism. I will give members some examples of what we have managed to do in the past four years. We are seeing the upgrade of the main streets of Carnarvon and Cue, and the town of Mt Magnet has been transformed. I do not know how many members have been to Yalgoo.

Ms A.R. Mitchell: I've been to Yalgoo!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I thank the member for Kingsley. The member for Geraldton knows Yalgoo quite well because he often travels to Cue for the “Cue Parliament” and pops into Yalgoo. I urge members to go and have a look at what a very small local government can do with a small amount of royalties for regions money; it has transformed that small town. I urge members, if travelling up north, to turn right at Geraldton and go for a drive to Yalgoo; but do not stop there—continue on to Mt Magnet. Members will see the transformation there with the new police station. I look forward to the Minister for Police coming up in a couple of months' time to open the new police station. People say, “Well, that's great”, but it is probably the first new building in Mt Magnet for 40 years or 50 years.

There is also a new museum to celebrate the history of mining in Mt Magnet. The \$1.6 million museum showcases what Mt Magnet and the region is all about. I urge members to have a look at it, but to continue on to Cue. There is a great place to stay at Cue; it is a new caravan park funded by royalties for regions. It is a fantastic facility. Travelling nomads or the travelling public going through Cue now have available state-of-the-art infrastructure in terms of caravan parks.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am sure people can. I do not think anyone is rejected, even dogs. We welcome everyone. As a dog owner myself, people accept that dogs also come along.

Sandstone is a small town, much like Yalgoo. Very little money has been spent in Sandstone, but that town has been transformed with funding from royalties for regions. It now has a water park and a brand-new caravan park. I saw a photo the other day at the “Cue Parliament”. Someone from the Shire of Sandstone was there and showed me a photo. The caravan park had just been completed and it was chockers. Why? Because it had been upgraded. Suddenly mod cons had come into the caravan park. Word had got around.

Other big projects have been completed or are nearly at completion in my electorate. I now refer to the Shark Bay recreation centre, a fantastic \$4 million centre funded by royalties for regions in that town. Shark Bay has a population that has not been supported by sporting infrastructure. This centre now provides for kids and adults alike, with a gym and meeting facilities. Kids are able to play all sorts of activities inside.

I will move on to Carnarvon. I have spoken many times in this house about the devastation after the floods of 2010–11 in Gascoyne Junction and Carnarvon. A \$60 million levee project is currently being conducted in Carnarvon to militate against what people call a once-in-a-100-year flood event. I say it probably happens every 10 years. This flood mitigation will hopefully ensure that the 2010 disaster will not happen or take place in the way that it did, because we have protection in place. We have protection in place for our horticultural area. If plantation owners in Carnarvon cannot produce, that has a huge effect on the Perth market. We end up spending a bit more on our produce here in Perth if Carnarvon suffers floods as it can devastate plantations. Members, it is amazing to see the flood mitigation measures in the 4.5-metre levees around town to try to protect Carnarvon.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I have seen them. They are really impressive.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, that is right. The Premier visited Carnarvon a few days before the election.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I was up there campaigning against you!

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Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is right. The Premier cannot win all the time. It just proves that quality candidates in the National Party get through!

The Premier saw it firsthand. The Premier came up to Carnarvon the day after the floods hit. The Premier saw Carnarvon at the height of its devastation. Hats off to the Premier, because I think the government acted in a very sensible manner to provide as much assistance as possible to those affected by the flood, but, more importantly, we are now protecting against future floods. Carnarvon does flood, and it will flood again. At the moment we are going through a drought, believe it or not. I will talk about some of those issues later.

If members visit Exmouth, they should look at what projects are happening there at the moment. The Shire of Exmouth is upgrading the CBD by reconfiguring it to make it more friendly and to allow Exmouth to grow. Exmouth is a town that has huge potential to grow. The shire is ensuring that it caters for not only tourism but also the oil and gas industry that is increasing in activity on a day-to-day basis. There are great opportunities in Exmouth. There are a lot of issues we need to try to overcome. Housing is probably a big one for Exmouth; that is, trying to keep on top of the growth and ensuring that Exmouth does not become another Pilbara town like Karratha—probably like what Onslow is going through at the moment with the biggest LNG project occurring off the coast, in the Wheatstone project. It presents many challenges, but the exciting part of all these challenges is that we have plans. With royalties for regions, we can now plan for future growth. I would like to see Exmouth become a SuperTown. I would like to see Carnarvon become the regional centre that it once was. Previous governments have let down the Gascoyne in many ways, which has restricted the growth of these towns. Over the past four years we have been reversing that; 60 years is being reversed over a short time. I urge members to visit the north west and see how it has been transformed.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. Tallentire: How is Coral Bay going? Are you supporting Coral Bay becoming a major town?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is interesting that the member mentions Coral Bay. I spoke about this in the house last week. I said that I think previous plans for Coral Bay were very unrealistic. Coral Bay needs to be turned into a proper town.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Does the member want it to be a major town?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I want it to be a town. I think there is a big difference between a town and a major town. People live in Coral Bay. People deserve to be able to purchase their own house in Coral Bay. Does the member support people living in the conditions that they living in at the moment in a place called “Little Kenya”, because I think that is where the member is heading? He likes to see kids growing up in a caravan without the ability to live a normal life in a house, go to school, have a good health service; it is very —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Royalties for regions has done nothing for them. You have been talking about “Little Kenya” in Coral Bay for at least six years.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: When is the last time the member went to Coral Bay?

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Probably four years ago.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I think he should go there and have a look at a \$17.5 million facility that royalties for regions built for Coral Bay to get people out —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: You have been the member for that area but have done nothing about it for four years.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member is out of his league here. He should stick to his metro issues because if he goes to Coral Bay —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: “Little Kenya” has been fixed, has it?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We have built 70 dwellings in a \$17.5 million facility to get people out of the conditions that they are living in.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: After four years, have you fixed it or not?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I will tell the member what the problem in Coral Bay is: it is the Ningaloo strategy that was developed under the Labor Party. It was developed from a campaign called Save Ningaloo to prevent any development occurring in Coral Bay. The strategy basically said: no housing, no permanent dwellings can be placed in Coral Bay; they can live in Exmouth and Carnarvon. At the moment there is somewhere between 150 and 250 people living in Coral Bay, of which there are probably 100 in new accommodation that royalties for regions paid for. The rest live in caravan parks, called “Little Kenya”. What has prevented the building of housing is that the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation just lost its appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal to have freehold in lot 308, which was to allow up to 12 Government Regional Officers' Housing homes to be built

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there. It will also allow for business owners and people who work and live in Coral Bay to build their own houses. The tribunal rejected Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation's appeal.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: People will not be able to afford to buy a house there.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: What is affordable, member?

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Have you done anything to provide accommodation for people working in tourism in Coral Bay—yes or no? How many people are living in caravans after four years of you supposedly lobbying on behalf of your constituents?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member should go and look for himself. People who live there should have the capacity to purchase their own homes, full stop. The member should look at "Little Kenya". Some people like that sort of environment.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Are you justifying that kind of squalor now?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: He's not saying that at all.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Yes he is; he just said that some people like that shanty town "Little Kenya" kind of squalor.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member has a problem listening. Why does he not walk out as everyone else has? The member should realise that "Little Kenya" is unacceptable. The Shire of Carnarvon is applying for compliance now —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: What have you done about fixing it?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Member! Coral Bay needs to be rezoned as a town. We have taken steps, with the Baiyungu Corporation, to build workers' accommodation to provide immediate relief. Only a week ago the State Administrative Tribunal and the Department of Planning rejected an application for the Baiyungu people to build and sell lots to people in Coral Bay. As I said, the whole problem with Coral Bay is the present strategy, which determines whether any future growth or development can occur or whether people can own their own homes, whether they be freehold or strata title. Given the outcome of the SAT hearing, that policy needs to be changed, because it says that people need to live in Exmouth or Carnarvon, and that is not realistic. The failure for Coral Bay to be zoned a proper town site is having a damaging effect on the environment and a huge effect on planning and the ability to get it right. I therefore urge this government to change the policy and realise that people live in Coral Bay and that there needs to be a plan and recognise what the Baiyungu people have done to make sure that Coral Bay has a good water and power supply. The government should recognise the agreement reached between the state and the Baiyungu people under the previous Labor government and adhere to that agreement. The Baiyungu Corporation should be allowed to develop land to provide housing for the people who live in Coral Bay. That is the answer. No-one condones the situation there at the moment. I do not think it is acceptable for people to live in those conditions in those small areas. We should provide proper housing for people at Coral Bay and make it a proper tourism destination for overseas travellers, people who live in Perth and people who live in the Pilbara. It is a great playground of the north west in which the people who live in the Pilbara can enjoy rest and recuperation from their mining jobs. As I said, Coral Bay needs to be rezoned to a proper town to allow for growth.

The investment occurring through royalties for regions is definitely having a dramatic impact on the liveability of a lot of these towns but one issue that is letting us down is transport. The north west bus service has just been cancelled and people who need to go to Perth or Geraldton for medical treatment can no longer catch a bus. When the cost to travel on the current airline service in Shark Bay and Carnarvon is up to \$920 return, if not more sometimes, it is a very expensive proposition for people to travel to Perth for medical reasons or whatever. The Minister for Transport is aware of the issue and of the concerns of the people in the Gascoyne about trying to improve their airline service. We need to rethink how transport is provided around our state.

Quite a few issues are hampering the growth of our towns in the north west. I do not think they are insurmountable. As a state we are doing all we can to assist local governments and development commissions to grow the towns. It is great to see consideration being given to some aspects of transport. I understand the federal government announced \$171 million for improvements, given the number of crashes that occur along the North West Coastal Highway between Minilya and Barradale. It is a very skinny, dangerous stretch of road. Given all the activity and the truck movements in the Pilbara, it is great to finally see some investment from the federal government to improve a very dangerous stretch of road for not only tourists or people travelling between the Pilbara and Gascoyne, but also truck drivers who regularly drive up and down between Perth and the Pilbara, ensuring that our economy keeps ticking over. I hope that does not change with the change of government after 14 September and that all political parties keep that commitment to provide \$171 million.

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As I said, many issues are creating challenges, including in the horticultural industry. I mentioned droughts earlier and the Carnarvon horticultural industry is struggling due to lack of water. There has not been a river flow since 2011, and that is causing uncertainty over the water supply. There is also concern about the importation of produce, such as mangoes, from other states. The threat to our mangoes is the introduction of seed weevil into our state. I hope the Minister for Agriculture and Food will rethink allowing those fruits to be imported to our state. There are a lot of challenges but, more importantly, we have a plan for regional WA, and I think the National Party is the only party that has one. I am proud to be an elected member of the National Party and represent my community as I know I can with a party that believes in regional WA.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day (Leader of the House)**.