

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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## **PREMIER'S STATEMENT**

### *Presentation*

**MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier)** [3.53 pm]: I rise today to inform the house of the WA Labor government's agenda for 2018. Before I begin, I acknowledge that we are assembled here today on ancestral lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people, and I acknowledge their elders, past and present.

In the second year of this government, we will get on with the job of shaping a state that is fair, prosperous and brimming with opportunity. For most Western Australians, that means a state where they can find a good job, feel secure and valued in that job, and have faith that their children will get to have the same experience. That is what Labor governments do. In 2017, my team and I got on with the job of delivering our commitments. But it was also a year of grappling with the serious problems that face this state, whether they were known or unknown to us before the election. The budget, reshaping the public sector, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, on-demand transport, the stadium footbridge, the stadium agreement, Perth Children's Hospital, the west Pilbara, the GST, redirecting Perth Freight Link funds and workers, the economy, Indigenous housing and tourism funding have all required bold action from government in a tight fiscal environment.

We have not been afraid to make big decisions. That will be no different in 2018, and my government has an ambitious agenda to match. I am pleased to advise the house that all signs point to an economic recovery in Western Australia. A record number of Western Australians are currently employed. Under my government, 40 000 new jobs have been created since the state election, and unemployment is down and confidence is up. We believe the best way to support this recovery is through the confidence that comes with Western Australians being employed and confident in that employment. That is the reason Western Australian jobs are this government's number one priority and I want all Western Australians to share in the state's recovery and future success. As such, in 2018, my government will pursue major projects, landmark legislation and crucial reforms. Members would be aware that this Parliament passed the government's Western Australian Jobs Bill last year. The policy underpinning that legislation will be announced imminently and the regulations will come into force in the second half of 2018.

In 2017, we saw an incredible turnaround in the regions. Although jobs disappeared in the regions in 2016, employment growth outside Perth and Mandurah outstripped growth in Perth in 2017. When we talk about local content for WA, we mean local. We want contractors in Geraldton to have the best chance of winning government work in Geraldton. To make that happen, every regional development commission will have dedicated local content officers in 2018, linking government work with local suppliers to create more jobs in the regions. This year will also mark the commencement of the government's Aboriginal procurement policy. It will start at one per cent and rise to three per cent by 2020. It will require every agency and trading enterprise to meet targets in contracts awarded to Aboriginal businesses. In March, the Department of Finance will host an Aboriginal Business Expo to showcase the capability of these companies to the public and private sectors and strengthen their relationships with government buyers. Although the business of procurement is not glamorous, the government strongly believes that its spending should benefit the state's economy and local employment.

We all know that WA workers and firms are some of the best in the world, and the WA government industry participation strategy means that we will take full advantage of that and grow our state's capacity to do great and wonderful things in the future. We have seen this with local workers building the new Matagarup Bridge over the Swan River. I want all Western Australians to know that we have a plan so that WA jobs come first, well into the future.

The government has a suite of major projects to deliver essential infrastructure while employing thousands of Western Australians and their skills. Last year, Metronet got off to a flying start. The taskforce was established, funding was secured for the Cockburn-Thornlie link and the Yanchep extension, and the planning process commenced for the long-awaited Ellenbrook line. This year, the Railway (Metronet) Bill 2018 will come before Parliament as the enabling legislation for the Yanchep and Cockburn-Thornlie components. Consultation on the Morley-Ellenbrook line will continue, as will development of the detailed business case for Infrastructure Australia. It was fantastic to hear the federal opposition's financial commitment to the Morley-Ellenbrook line. I am hopeful that in 2018, it will be matched by the federal government. Work has also commenced on the planning of the Byford extension to the Armadale line, and 2018 will see the start of the level crossing removal at Denny Avenue. Although the stadium footbridge has been one of the most vexed issues in the state, my government is pleased that the decision to bring the fabrication to WA means the bridge is well on the way to completion, as well as creating 200 local jobs. The minor changes made to the design will not only reduce cost and risk, but also deliver an iconic structure that will allow for tourism opportunities. The 72 steel components are currently being delivered to the site and we look forward to the bridge's completion in the coming months.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

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Major construction for the new museum is underway and on track for opening in 2020. This world-class facility will generate nearly 3 000 construction jobs and over 400 creative jobs and generate \$31 million in extra tourism spend in its first year. Most importantly, it will provide Western Australians with an amazing venue to share our history and stories with the rest of the world and future generations. I take the opportunity to remind everyone that although the building may still be under construction, WA Museum continues to run exhibitions around the state that are fantastic. I take great pleasure advising the house that my family loved *Dinosaur Discovery* at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Westport, the project for Perth's new outer harbour, is underway, with project director Tim Collins appointed in January. We all know that the inner harbour cannot grow forever and that the state needs a long-term plan for freight to keep the economy growing. Consultation is well underway and will be a necessary exercise to make sure that the new outer harbour meets our state's future needs with the requisite transport links.

Subject to the necessary environmental approvals and permits, Broome port is on track to be dredged in 2018. Once completed, it will give cruise ships 24-hour access to the port, meaning a significant tourism boost for the Kimberley. Existing port users will also benefit by allowing larger vessels and fuel tankers better access during a larger range of tides.

In the regions, work is progressing on the Marble Bar Road realignment and the sealing of the Karratha–Tom Price and Broome–Cape Leveque Roads. We should also see the completion of the South Coast Highway upgrade and stage 2 of the Margaret River Perimeter Road in 2018. Labor governments build necessary infrastructure and have a history of getting it right—the Forrest Highway, desalination plants and rail all over Western Australia. It is interesting that we have just passed the 10-year anniversary of the Mandurah rail line, a wonderful piece of infrastructure that changed the way we move about our city. It is a universally loved project now, but we should not forget how controversial it was at the time. The state's infrastructure needs and priorities have at times been a political football in this state. It is why last week we announced the consultation process for Infrastructure WA. Infrastructure WA, like its federal equivalent, will provide the best, expert and independent advice to the state government about our infrastructure needs for the future. It will gift to Western Australia a plan for what is required in the short, medium and long term. It will be a transparent plan, based on the best expertise available, to leave to young Western Australians, and those not yet born, a vibrant society, strong economy and dynamic state, and to make sure our scarce infrastructure dollars are spent well.

In this financial climate, every dollar of government spending has to be scrutinised. Between the shocking state of the finances that our government inherited last year and the subsequent \$5 billion in revenue writedowns before our first budget, this government has made tough decisions in order to fix the mess. I am pleased to report to the house that we are making progress, all without selling Western Power or the Water Corporation. New legislation will be brought in this year to enact the government's election promise to ensure that foreign property speculators pay their fair share and end the rorting of the payroll tax exemptions for trainees. Both measures, already announced, will contribute to the improvement of the state's fiscal position. However, for every saving that we make, the commonwealth government seems intent on taking the equivalent in GST from Western Australia. It is incredibly disappointing that the commonwealth government let the Commonwealth Grants Commission take another \$348 million from Western Australians last week. It is up to the commonwealth government to finally show leadership and put dollars back on the table for WA. The government will continue to find efficiencies required of it in the budget to keep it on the path of fiscal repair. We take no pleasure in the hard decisions that we have to make to achieve this. No government likes to say no. No government is eager to rationalise services. But, at times, responsible governments have to make difficult decisions. We will always look to get the balance right and listen to community concerns. Sometimes we will make mistakes. Unfortunately, difficult decisions are the burden we are left with after eight and a half years of grossly irresponsible financial management.

My government will continue this year with reforms to the public sector. The machinery-of-government changes will be bedded down and efficiencies realised with the ongoing voluntary targeted separation scheme. Although the service priority review last year found that the WA public service is a capable and professional institution, there are many avenues to modernise and improve the services our government provides to Western Australians. The government has endorsed the findings of the report and 2018 will mark the beginning of long-term reform. Work is underway on whole-of-government targets on cross-portfolio issues, CEO performance pay, data sharing and digital transformation to enable better access to government services. I expect the special inquiry into programs and projects will be released soon, which will guide further reforms.

When we went to the state election, we promised to put patients first, and I am pleased to say that we are delivering in health. Despite an increase in attendances and ambulance presentations at metropolitan hospitals in 2017, there has been a significant decrease in ambulance ramping, and 2018 will be an exciting year for health and mental

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p25e-79a

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health. Since taking control of the new Perth Children's Hospital last year, I am very pleased that we are on track to open it in May. I can advise the house that the component replacement process is ahead of schedule, the commissioning of the hospital is on track and we look forward to the first patients arriving.

The Karratha Health Campus is on track for practical completion by the middle of the year and to open to patients by the end. The facility will contain an expanded emergency department, a new surgical centre, birthing suites and world-class telehealth, as well as a suite of other essential services under one roof. We are also making good progress on the state's first medihotel at Murdoch to provide a better level of care, especially for regional patients when they are being treated in Perth.

Regional mental health will also be a focus of this government with the first step-up, step-down facility in the regions to open this year in Albany, with work progressing on facilities in Bunbury, Broome, Karratha and Kalgoorlie. The government is also looking forward to receiving the sustainable health review in coming months to guide us on the future of our health system and ensure that future generations of Western Australians can rely on a world-class health system.

This year, 2018, is a big year for education. Labor governments know the importance of quality TAFEs in delivering the skilled workforce our economy needs and teaching our students essential skills that will serve them well in life. It is important to remember that TAFE students will be paying the same fees in 2018 as they did in 2016. Last year we committed to freezing TAFE fees and that is where they are staying. This is a marked change since the astronomical fee increases of 500 per cent earlier this decade saw major declines in students taking up training.

In schools, 2018 will see the first 100 of our promised extra education assistants go back into classrooms. Half of those will be into regional schools. Parents know just how vital EAs are. No matter their child's circumstances, they know having an education assistant in the classroom means that their child will have the best chance of success.

Regional WA will also benefit from 50 additional full-time employee Aboriginal and Islander education officers in classrooms to give Aboriginal children additional assistance. They will be allocated to 51 schools in 2018, including regional senior high schools, district high schools and remote community schools. These specialist positions deliver better engagement between schools and their local communities, and mean Indigenous children have the best chance of success in their education.

This year will also see two important changes to our students' education. Firstly, digital technology and coding will be a mandatory part of the curriculum from pre-primary to year 10. Secondly, works will begin on the first tranche of the science labs in primary schools that were announced last year. With our rapidly changing world, it is important that our children receive an education that prepares them for the modern economy—that they leave school computer literate, science literate and thinking critically.

Legislation: 2018 will be a landmark year for the legislation considered by this Parliament. The first priorities will be the passage of important legislation currently before the Parliament: legislation to freeze the salaries of ministers, members of Parliament, judges and senior public servants; "no body, no parole" laws; ending the time limitations on civil actions for victims of child sexual abuse; expunging historical homosexual convictions that never should have been considered crimes, and laws to increase penalties and payouts for workplace safety violations and deaths. 2018 will see the introduction of a wide range of legislative reforms to diversify the economy, deliver justice and make Western Australia a better place to live.

Legislation to validate mining leases thrown into question by the ruling in *Forrest and Forrest v Wilson* will be a priority, providing certainty for our mining industry and wider economy. We also call on the federal government to make its component of the necessary legislation a priority.

Reforms: As I mentioned earlier, my team and I are not afraid of tackling difficult issues. Government is a uniquely placed institution to solve seemingly intractable issues and deliver a stronger economy and a fairer society. We made a commitment to diversify our state's economy so that our prosperity was not beholden to commodity prices alone. I am pleased to announce that we will be further diversifying our economy with a new suite of reforms and legislation for liquor licensing to grow the hospitality and tourism industries. A decade has passed since the landmark reforms of the previous Labor government created small bars and forever changed the nightlife of Perth for the better, without costing taxpayers one dollar. This year the government will seek to expand those reforms. We will shortly be announcing the next logical steps for liquor, hospitality and tourism reform to grow the industry, create jobs and grow Perth's nightlife, entertainment and cultural offerings. The government will also be progressing gaming reform with legislation to address issues in the industry, from point-of-consumption tax to the

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p25e-79a

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prohibition on gambling on the outcomes of foreign lotteries. Although the latter issue may be contentious, members in this chamber all recognise the incredible contribution the state-owned Lotterywest makes to our society. No-one wants to see its work undercut by bookmakers in other jurisdictions who have no such obligations to communities in Western Australia.

My government is not afraid to tackle difficult and complex policy areas, and few are more notoriously challenging than on-demand transport. The government is committed to finding the right balance and delivering a fair and level playing field for both taxis and new entrants to the market, while also recognising the government's responsibility towards those who in good faith took out mortgages to buy into a system it had guaranteed. While consultation is progressing, 2018 will see the introduction to Parliament of the legislative component of those reforms.

One of the most difficult decisions my government had to make last year was the decision to join the nationally delivered National Disability Insurance Scheme. We took that decision to ensure that Western Australians with a disability, their families and carers had the certainty, capacity and resources that come with the national scheme. From 1 July the NDIA will assume responsibility for the delivery of the scheme in WA, and 2018 will see a lot of hard work to ensure a smooth transition, with the goal of a full rollout by 2020. WA will maintain a Minister for Disability Services and will continue to work alongside people with disability and the sector to ensure quality services for our community.

Strata reform is an issue that has crossed numerous governments. I am pleased to announce that in 2018 we expect to introduce the first major reform of strata titles in over 20 years. In planning, we recognise that Perth cannot afford to endlessly sprawl forever. It is essential that as density increases, we have the policy settings for strata titles correct. By reforming strata laws, government can deliver new jobs through development, security and peace of mind for homeowners and unlock the potential for vibrant communities that the new community titles will deliver.

This year the Minister for Local Government will continue the work on the review of the Local Government Act to bring the legislation into the modern day and allow for commonsense reforms. Preceding this, 2018 will see the introduction of the Local Government Amendment (Suspension and Dismissal) Bill. Previously, in the event of misbehaviour of a single councillor, the state government had only the option to dismiss the entire council. This new law will allow for greater flexibility for when individual councillors bring entire councils into disrepute.

One of the most divisive issues of the past government was the proposed changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act. However, this government strongly believes that any revision to the act from 1972 needs to have a greater role for Aboriginal people, not less of one. With that in mind, I advise the house that consultation on reforms will begin in the first half of the year, with the aim of a green bill being presented to Parliament by the end of the year.

I am especially proud to confirm that 2018 will see lightweight single-use plastic bags banned in WA. It is estimated that 360 million of these bags are used in WA each year for an average of 12 minutes, never biodegrade and cause untold havoc on our environment and wildlife. It represents needless destruction of our native mammals, marine life and environment. This year will also see the introduction of legislation for a container deposit scheme. Like with plastic bags, there is overwhelming support from the public for action to increase the rate of recycling. It is high time that WA followed suit with jurisdictions like South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales and implement such a scheme. It is estimated that recycling 10 000 tonnes of waste creates three times as many jobs than sending the same amount to landfill. Following consultation with industry, the scheme is expected to start on 1 July 2019. In this day and age we have a moral responsibility to avoid needless waste and environmental destruction. Those who believe that the public will not support these measures think too little of their fellow Western Australians. Preserving the environment or growing the economy is a false choice; with good policy and innovation, the two go hand in hand.

Law, Order, Safety, Justice: The government has a serious agenda to keep the community safe and deliver justice to Western Australians. Although our state's isolation serves us well in avoiding some of the horrors the rest of the world has seen, we can never be complacent regarding the threat of terrorism. In the first half of 2018 we intend to introduce the Terrorism (Extraordinary Powers) Amendment Bill 2018, based on the lessons learnt from the Lindt café siege, to give our police officers clarity in situations where lethal force is required and authorised. Work will also commence on legislative reforms agreed upon in last year's special Council of Australian Governments' meeting on terrorism with regards to preventive detention. We must always remain vigilant to new and unanticipated threats to our safety.

The Corruption and Crime Commission is set to gain new powers in pursuing unexplained wealth, and the WA Police Force will be better equipped to investigate money laundering, giving our state the tools to tackle organised crime. The government will also deliver an election commitment with the introduction of legislation to outlaw the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. To put it more plainly, the government will be making

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

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revenge porn a criminal offence. A trusted person distributing personal, intimate images is a deliberate act to cause harm. It is this government's belief that this deliberate act of harm should not be responded to by blaming the victim. It is the perpetrator who should feel the condemnation of society and the force of the law.

I can advise the house that 2017 saw the start of work in the West Pilbara in response to the shocking revelations of child abuse from the ongoing police and child protection investigations. The plan of action that will be announced is the result of ongoing collaboration with the local community and will be community-led. We know that a government-imposed response will not be as effective as one owned by and developed with children, families and elders in the Pilbara. That sort of approach has repeatedly failed communities and, for the sake of the survivors, we cannot afford it again. Much of the preliminary work, linking children and their families to counselling, re-engaging with school and providing additional support, has occurred throughout the investigation and early response process. For the sake of the people of West Pilbara, we hope the plan will not only be successful, but also provide a blueprint for lasting change in other communities that have experienced generations of trauma.

Road safety is a focus for this government. I am pleased to inform the house that 37 fewer people died on our roads last year, but there is more work to be done to ensure that the 161 who did, did not pass in vain. We are committed to ensuring that dangerous regional roads, where the majority of those fatalities occurred, are fixed with royalties for regions funding and patrolled by the new Regional Enforcement Unit of Western Australia Police, established in January this year. New laws will be introduced to lower the speed threshold of aggravation for dangerous driving causing death or grievous bodily harm, and introduce a new circumstance for aggravation in the case of unlicensed driving in prescribed circumstances. The government will also strengthen the law and increase penalties for drink and drug drivers, including strict bans for recidivist offenders. These laws are long overdue and, in addition to providing justice to the families of victims, will drive a change in culture for when Western Australians get behind the wheel.

In the workplace, the government is taking action to change workplace culture and ensure that all Western Australians return home safely to their families at the end of the day. There is currently legislation before the house to raise the penalties related to workplace deaths as well as to increase payments to the dependents of the deceased. Subsequently, this year will see legislation to modernise the governance of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission while the government waits upon the findings of the review of the state industrial relations system to guide further reforms.

This has been my first Premier's address, and I would like to take a moment to say a few words about the last person to deliver one. The retirement of the member for Cottesloe from this house represents the end of an era, after a long and successful political career. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him and his family all the very best for the future.

Conclusion: Although 2017 was a big year, 2018 will eclipse it. As members can see, my team and I have a plan for this year and the future. I have always said that WA Labor is a party of government. We are a party that embodies the best of Australian values: kindness, mateship, compassion and cleverness. We are a party of big ideas, and you only get to bring them to life in government, so we are a government that is committed to delivering jobs and justice. We are a government that is committed to listening to and bringing people with us, but we will not shy away from making tough decisions. We are a government that wants to help create a state that is fair and prosperous and that provides opportunity for all, no matter where you start in life. We look forward to continuing to provide good government in our second year in office. Thank you.

[Applause.]

*Consideration*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love):** The question is —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the National Party)** [4.24 pm]: I rise to respond to the Premier's Statement and to put comments on the record about some of the statements that were made by the Premier on the government's plan for the coming year. Although I commend the Premier for his optimism and his statement that he intends and desires to govern for all, I do not believe that his actions have demonstrated that over the course of the last 12 months. Certainly, there are people in this house who were on the steps of Parliament today who could attest that they do not believe that the government is governing for all, and that the government is not compassionate, is not listening, and is not providing fair and prosperous opportunities for everyone to go forward.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

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I share the Premier's sentiment that 2018 will eclipse 2017. I share his aspiration that this should be a government that casts its eyes beyond the seats it holds and beyond the metropolitan area, and takes into consideration the real grief that is being felt in regional Western Australia. That is not just in relation to education cuts, because there are a number of other areas from which we have had feedback and great consternation expressed to us by our constituents across the regions of Western Australia that there has been a concerted and deliberate effort to remove or bully those that have received funding, from royalties for regions in particular, and for them to be clawed back so that the government can pay for its own election promises. That includes Moora Residential College.

The savings that the Premier continues to talk about have not been articulated properly. We hope to be able to interrogate them more now that Parliament has returned, given that we were not given that opportunity or courtesy prior to the Christmas break, so that we can understand more clearly where the government's priorities lie. From our perspective, it is clearly not in the education space, despite the Premier having spent significant time talking about education and the investment this government will make in regional WA.

As I said earlier during the suspension of standing orders, it is one thing to say it; it is another thing to actually put actions behind it. Although the Premier continues to say that he regrets the decisions he has to make because he feels he needs to offer an explanation about why he has reprioritised funding for education in regional Western Australia to pay for the government's exorbitant election promises, we will make sure we use our time in this Parliament to further understand where that funding has gone.

Another statement the Premier continues to make is that the government is spending the full total of royalties for regions funding and that there has been no reduction in the full and total spend of royalties for regions. We know from the previous budget that there have been a number of substitutions of what we would call core government business, and more have been announced today. The government is reducing the opportunities for which that fund was originally created—opportunities to drive regional development and investment, and to make these communities better places to live, dealing with infrastructure and the social services that support and expand these communities. When we put normal government expenditure into the royalties for regions program, we limit the ability of the government to provide those opportunities.

Although I cannot criticise the Premier's comments about wanting to deal with road safety issues—I have a number of them in my electorate, and Central Wheatbelt has a horrific road safety record—I question how much the government can really put a dent in that from the royalties for regions budget, and why that is not coming from consolidated revenue, if it is a key priority for the state government. Having just listened to the Premier, that is one of the things we will continue to pursue. I am in full agreement that we need to deal with the state of our regional roads. A number of key arterial and other roads in my electorate are in a horrible state of disrepair. I am told by my colleagues in the east that this government has no great appetite to prioritise spending on regional road networks. We know that road projects require commonwealth funding. The theme that has developed over the course of the last 12 months is that the majority of the road projects that this government has put forward for commonwealth funding are in the metropolitan area.

If the Premier wants his government to be known as a kind, compassionate and clever government, he would do well to reflect on what has happened today and over the last three months and make decisions that will give people in regional Western Australia faith that the education of their children is not being compromised in order to pay for the election promises that were made by his government. Over the last 12 months we have talked at length about how the Labor Party made those promises in the knowledge that it could not afford to pay for them. This government came to power without a financial plan. We are all paying the price for that. The government will not relinquish its desire to deliver on Metronet. I understand that people in the outer metropolitan area would love to have a more connected public transport system. I do not deny that we as a government and an opposition should aspire to achieve that. However, when that comes at the cost of providing essential services in regional areas, we need to question the government's priorities. That is exacerbated by the fact that this government still has no financial plan. We have just heard in the Premier's Statement about the government's priorities. We are yet to hear the Premier articulate how the government will pay for those priorities. That should strike fear into the hearts of all people, not just those who live in regional Western Australia. However, people in regional Western Australia are the first to feel the brunt of any cuts, because it is more expensive and challenging to deliver essential services and development in the regions than it is in the metropolitan area.

Unfortunately, the best example we can give of how the government has approached these cuts is Moora Residential College. Moora Residential College has provided an option for students who live locally and elsewhere in the region. They were told today by the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training that they can go to Northam or Geraldton or elsewhere.

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**Mr V.A. Catania:** Just down the road!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Just down the road, indeed! That comes from a member who spends many hours on the roads in his electorate and understands very well the impact of these cuts, particularly to Schools of the Air. The government has underestimated the passion of not only regional people but people in the Perth metropolitan area about these iconic institutions that provide an essential service and support for our kids. The member for North West Central supported his constituents when that announcement was made, heartlessly just before Christmas. It is very difficult for people in regional Western Australia to coordinate themselves and rally. They often have to travel great distances

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Some of them travelled 800 kilometres.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes, and some of the people at the rally today did the same. That demonstrates the depth of feeling towards this government and these decisions. I have not heard from the Premier's Statement today that the government will remedy that situation and enable people in regional Western Australia to aspire to more than just the crumbs that fall from the edge of the table. It is disheartening to hear the president of the Shire of Moora, Ken Seymour, the president of the Moora Residential College P&C and community members say, "If we cannot have the whole lot, please just let us have a little bit. We will just take the crumbs, and we will deal with the building the way that it is. We do not need to have anything new. We will not aspire to have something better for our students. We will do the compromise." That is entirely opposite to the attitude and desire that was created when royalties for regions was instituted. It was about giving people the option to say, "This is what we would like in our community. This is what we need to make our community grow and thrive." Key pieces of infrastructure, such as Moora Residential College, camp schools and agricultural colleges, are the foundation of regional communities. They are economic drivers. They also provide fundamental and essential services for families and communities. It is, therefore, incredibly disheartening to hear people say that they are willing to take less.

Moora Residential College was budgeted for an upgrade out of royalties for regions. That was on the back of a long list of upgrades of all the other regional residential colleges. Our government also made an investment in senior high schools in regional areas so that there would be a wonderful symbiotic relationship between senior high schools and residential colleges and families would be given a real choice close to home.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The minister will get her chance. The purpose of that investment was to provide a real choice for parents. In my electorate of Merredin, had that upgrade to Merredin Residential College not occurred, many parents would have turned around and walked straight back out and said that is not a real choice, because it is substandard and would not meet the expectations of anyone in this state. People in regional Western Australia do not want a Fiona Stanley Hospital or a children's hospital in every town. However, they do have some expectations. It is incredibly disheartening that the Moora community is being forced to make a choice. The government has put duplicitous arguments. We are given a different argument, depending on which government member we choose to talk to, about whether a saving is being made or whether it has been reprioritised to meet Labor commitments. Hon Darren West, a member for the Agricultural Region in the other place, has told everyone that the hostel is in an extremely bad state and cannot be renovated, and replacing the hostel will cost in the realm of \$9 million, which the government does not have. The president of the Shire of Moora has said that he and others have inspected the college, and the building is in quite good condition and could service the community for another five to 10 years with minimal maintenance. The Premier has been quoted as saying that it will cost \$8.7 million to make the residential college fire safe. The Minister for Education and Training has said in response to questions in the other place that Moora Residential College is not the government's priority; the government has other priorities, and that is where the money for that college has gone. My question is: which is it? This government is in disarray, it has not taken the time to understand what these cuts mean, and it is making decisions in haste.

[Quorum formed.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Government members do not like to hear what we are saying on this issue. That has been patently clear over the last three months as regional and metropolitan communities have rallied strongly against this government's heartless and chaotic decision-making. The Premier came back from leave and had to stand next to his Minister for Education and Training and reverse the decision that she had made. That shows that the Premier does not have confidence in the capacity of his minister to make sound decisions. The minister is clearly not asking the right questions. The minister has clearly not read any of the material on the lead contamination issue. The minister was aware of that problem and should have dealt with it during the school holidays. The minister failed to do that and unnecessarily alarmed everyone who was affected. Instead of managing her portfolio, the minister went through the budget and looked for the low-hanging fruit. She knew there was no possibility that a Labor

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member would win those regional seats. It is difficult not to be cynical when we look at the government's expenditure in the past 12 months. A pattern has certainly emerged. The families in Moora and the families and communities that have the ag colleges and the school camps are feeling bereft and lost because they do not feel as though they are getting a fair hearing from the government. They do not feel as though there is any idea about the ongoing ramifications. They do not feel as though they have been provided with appropriate answers to their questions about what the real savings are and what the opportunity cost will be if they are closed down. The announcements were made in a particularly heartless fashion and everyone has been left to pick up the pieces. People make decisions about their kids' schooling and education in a long-term sense. The families of students at Moora Residential College were told it would close at the end of this year, so kids going into year 11 were told they would not be able to complete their schooling at the college in year 12. The Minister for Education and Training said, "That's okay. We'll figure out a solution for them. We'll figure out something else." That is an incredibly disruptive thing to happen in years 11 and 12, which is at the end of a student's schooling career. Putting aside the hurt and pain and all of the disruption it caused for the Schools of the Air students, although it has been resolved, that created an enormous amount of angst. There has been no apology. As I said, the Premier can apologise and express regret, but if he does not follow up with action and say, "This is unacceptable and I will not tolerate this from my ministers", we can expect to see more and more of those types of decisions as the government scrambles about trying to find savings so it can pay for its extravagant election promises. I am sorry to say that it will be the people in regional Western Australia who will feel the brunt of this.

When we reflect on the last 12 months, the challenge is that there is not even an option in most cases for the groups involved in some of these decisions to be consulted. That appears to be becoming a hallmark of this government. When the increase to the gold royalty was being put forward, I remember asking the Treasurer whether he had consulted with the industry. His response—it is not word for word because I do not have it in front of me—was essentially, "No, we knew they weren't going to like it so we didn't bother!" That is a nice way to run government. It appears that people in the education system in Moora, in the Schools of the Air and in others have also been treated in the same way—no opportunity for consultation and no opportunity to put faces to those cuts. The decisions were made in haste, which the minister admitted, and the fallout was left to be cleaned up by the Premier upon his return. I would suggest that the entire state has lost faith in the Minister for Education and Training's ability to manage the education system. That is a pretty fundamental part of government. Education and health would be our two biggest spends.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The Premier needed to come clean in his Premier's Statement. He should have taken the opportunity to put things right and he should have apologised. He has done none of that. That is the arrogance that we see emerging in this government. Because it has such a huge majority, the government feels as though—others have also commented on this to me in my travels around the state—it can do anything. It can express regret and then move on and continue to pay for its election commitments without putting forward a real financial plan for this state. That is the key here. The key is there is no plan to rectify the finances of this state. I am sure there will be a flurry of planning announcements over the next 12 months. There will be a flurry of announcements about the things it is going to do, but mark my words, when the next election rolls around, it will have done very little other than pay for its extravagant election promises. Metronet is one of those.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Not all!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The member for North West Central is quite right; I do not think it even has enough money to do that.

It was unprecedented today. I want to put on record again my thanks and gratitude to and admiration for the ladies of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia and their support network. The Premier suggested we were out there firing everyone up. The CWA stands proud on its apolitical stance. It has had good relationships with governments of all persuasions in its 94-year history. It has a strong history of advocating for the betterment of education for all children, particularly in regional areas. It felt strongly about this. The CWA never rallies or protests; it is not the way it does business. But it felt so strongly about this issue that it gathered its members and supporters to come to this house. That should be something this government takes notice of. Snide remarks and talk about tea and scones and all the rest of it that I hear washing around the chamber is underestimating the power of a very well connected —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You should not say that—that is not true.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It absolutely is.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr D.A. Templeman:** There is a lot of respect for the CWA from everyone on this side.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** If there is that deal of respect, member, they need to be listened to. It was unprecedented.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You don't go around making offhand comments like that.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is not offhand. I am relaying the comments that I have heard.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Who from?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am not going to warrant them with a formal airing in here, other than to say that that sentiment was expressed around here today and it is very disappointing. At anyone's peril do you underestimate a very well connected network of women who are determined to make a difference. I put on record my admiration for these women because it was completely out of their comfort zone to turn up and do this today. It shows the depth of passion and feeling about the education cuts.

Let us talk about the full extent of those cuts. This government has systematically reduced education funding in regional WA. When the Labor Party came to government, it slashed the boarding away from home allowance. The Premier was doing the education estimates. When questioned in the estimates hearing after the budget, he was unable to understand, comprehend or know what the boarding away from home allowance was actually for. There was some intimation in his responses that it was for rich farm kids who could go to private boarding schools. It is actually for kids who have no other choice because they do not have access to a senior high school in their area. That fund can be accessed only when there is no access to an education option close to home. For the first time in its history, that has been reduced by this government.

The cuts to the ag colleges have already been articulated outside this house and I am sure will be canvassed more over the coming weeks. That is an attack on the best system for agriculture education in the nation, without doubt. It is renowned around the nation. People would love to replicate what we do. That will have long-term ramifications. I have referred to the closing of the Moora Residential College. There is still not any degree of clarity about the closure, sale or leasing of the school camps. My question to the minister—I am sure it will be asked by many members—is what process has been gone through to ask for someone to come in and run these now that they are not closing, supposedly? Has there been an open and transparent process to allow those people who might be interested in running them to run them, even though that is not something we support? How is that being run? Again, there has been ad hoc, chaotic decision-making by a minister who has been shown wanting in making judgement about the things that can and cannot be funded going forward.

I now refer to the hiking up of the VacSwim fees. I am an ambassador for the Royal Life Saving Society. It has a wonderful record in this state of preventing death by drowning. Vacation swimming should be accessible and affordable to everyone in this state. It is an institution. That is something that has been made less accessible by this government in stark contrast to the previous Liberal–National government that made access to sport and being part of a sporting club more affordable. That is what I call kindness and compassion. This government's decision is not what I call kindness and compassion.

I know these questions will be canvassed by other members across the coming week because these issues need clarity. There is a lack of clarity in how this government has accounted for these savings and where it will get the remaining funds from. Now that it has reversed the decision, where will that money come from? Will that still come from education or will it be found from somewhere else? Can we expect more cuts in other areas where the government considers there to be low-hanging fruit? I suspect that will be the case. I will be watching the Minister for Education and Training very closely. I am not sure that she has the trust of the Premier at this point because he will not want to defend this when he is trying to roll out —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is right. There are things at play here that are perhaps stronger than a good education outcome and a budget outcome. That is entirely correct. Again, that is very disappointing. I think that most of the comments from the minister, the Premier or members for the Agricultural Region that have been trotted out over the last three months in relation to these issues can be rebuked and there can be cause to question the validity of some of them. The minister claimed the camp schools are not full and are not being utilised, but when I was Minister for Sport and Recreation, a study was done—I do not have it in front of me—linking kids' physical activity in the outdoors to their strong performance at school. This is at a time when Nature Play and initiatives like that are getting more and more traction, and there are links to our regional communities, with the ability for kids to learn, become leaders and test themselves. In the face of all that evidence and the growing move to make sure that kids are away from screens and outdoors, we have a minister saying that that is not our core business,

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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and I cannot agree with that. Setting aside the economic impact on the jobs of the people who have been affected and who take their roles very seriously, I cannot agree that this does not fundamentally have an impact on the educational outcomes of our kids, and that is something that the minister has attacked. These are the comments that the Premier declined to respond to in his Premier's Statement, in the motion debated during the suspension of standing orders and in question time. The government is ignoring them and hoping that we will move on, but I promise that we will not.

Now we have returned to Parliament, this is the right place to debate all those issues of Moora Residential College and the agricultural colleges. One of those, the Western Australian College of Agriculture Cunderdin, is in my electorate. It is a wonderful institution providing a fantastic opportunity for kids to learn skills, not only in trades, but also in the agricultural sector. They go on to play an enormous role. If anyone is following what is happening in the agricultural sector in Australia at the moment, they will know that our biggest challenge is access to a qualified workforce, and this is where it starts. As member for Central Wheatbelt, I am particularly passionate about making sure that we hold onto the integrity of those agricultural colleges. We will continue to maintain our pressure and support the community in its disbelief that these are things the government can do without. I will not go on any further, but I will move an amendment to the Premier's Statement.

*Amendment to Question*

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I therefore move an amendment to the question that the Premier's Statement be noted —

That the following words be added after "noted" —

and that this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to reverse its savage education cuts, in particular its decision to close Moora Residential College, recognising the damaging impact this will have on the students and families who attend the college as well as Central Midlands Senior High School and the community of Moora

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [4.52 pm]: I rise to support this amendment for a number of reasons. I find it absolutely astonishing the Premier can come in here and support this hapless Minister for Education and Training in the wake of the chaos she has caused across the whole state of Western Australia over the summer, when most people should have been able to relax and enjoy holiday time with their children. Instead, people in regional Western Australia such as visitors to the Landsdale Farm School, the people involved in Schools of the Air and the gifted and talented program have all had their plans for the 2018 school year up in the air, not knowing what the government is going to do to look after the interests of their children. I think it is disgraceful. This minister has form. She had form for the chaotic and haphazard management of her portfolio when she was a minister in the Gallop government. It is not as though she is inexperienced. Her management of government business in the other place is nothing short of a disgrace. She is not able to communicate with the crossbench in the other place and that is why this government is having so much trouble trying to get its legislation through; that is, she refused to speak to any of those crossbenchers until the first vote on the floor of the house when she worked out she did not have the numbers. In the caucus room she has the numbers, but out there in the Legislative Council, where the votes matter and the legislation is made, she did not have the numbers, so she got caught wanting. There is chaos in the other place because of her utter inability to communicate, understand issues and work effectively and cooperatively with any other human being. That is what we have seen with these cuts.

Anybody who has been a minister will know that if they have a toxic relationship with their agency and ask it to find some cuts, the first thing the agency will do is hand over the most politically unacceptable cuts that can possibly be imagined. An astute minister would look at those and say that they do not think people would accept closing the Schools of the Air. Did this minister do that? No. Most people would look at those cuts and say they do not support cancelling the Follow the Dream program. That is a partnership with the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation that helps Indigenous children, secondary Aboriginal students in WA public schools, to achieve positive academic outcomes and assist them to move on to tertiary education or a TAFE and helps them prepare for employment. Would any minister with even half a skerrick of nous say it is a good idea to reduce funding to the Follow the Dream program? She could even have a look around her own caucus room. Guess where the kids from that program go to school? They do not go to school in the western suburbs as part of this class war and maybe that is why this funding is being replaced; they go to Governor Stirling Senior High School, Belmont City College, Hampton Senior High School, Mount Lawley Senior High School, Sevenoaks Senior College and Swan View Senior High School in the metropolitan area. That program is right across the Pilbara and the Kimberley, where the vast majority of our Indigenous students go to school. All those high schools have representation from that program so that we can bring our Indigenous kids into better outcomes. We know that if

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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we give them better educational outcomes and opportunities to achieve them, they will succeed. They go to schools in Roebourne, Derby, Port Hedland, Karratha, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Northam, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany, Katanning and Bunbury. Tell me whether Indigenous kids in those areas need additional support or not and tell me whether a minister who had even half a brain would consider for even a second closing or reducing funding to that program. They just would not do it if they knew what they were doing.

What was the minister doing over the whole of January, for goodness sake? These cuts were announced on 13 December—\$64 million worth of cuts—after Parliament had risen, so there was no scrutiny within the Parliament. We do not even know where the additional \$41 million worth of cuts from education will come from. We know that this first round of cuts will take 170 positions out of the Department of Education, including 70 teachers. That is what we know from the first media release. Thank goodness that the Schools of the Air closure has been reversed. I mean, imagine closing down an iconic program for Western Australia, a program that reaches children in the remotest parts of the state, children on pastoral stations who get rained in and cannot move from their homes because during the monsoon the waters rise and they cannot get in and out of their properties except by air. That is who Schools of the Air look after—children in remote areas—so they can stay with their families, where they belong, during primary school. That is what that program is all about, keeping families together for the welfare of our children and ensuring they can get an education to boot. That is what this minister said she would close. She backed away from that, but not until there had been a month of pain and suffering for all those families campaigning through the holiday period, when they should have been able to relax—cancelling their holidays so that they could campaign against the savage education cuts. Finally, after a month of agony, we got the reversal, and the reversal is telling. This goes to the heart of the performance of this minister and her competency—that is, to be getting over \$300 000 of taxpayers' money every year as her salary to make decisions in the interests of Western Australian children. What did she say? I have a media release that has comments attributed to education and training minister Sue Ellery. I love this. This is a gift. I do not know who her media adviser is, but I think they should be getting a boot on the bum along with the rest of those education department employees who apparently are not doing their jobs. This minister is the one not doing her job. It states —

“Finding savings in education is extremely difficult and in an effort to help fix the finances, we made a rushed decision that left many people feeling anxious and distressed.

Apparently the changes made on 11 January will “strike the right balance and ensure that every child receives a high-quality education, no matter where they live.” In her own words, the minister said that she made a hasty and rushed decision that left people feeling anxious and distressed. How long did it take her to arrive at this hasty and rushed decision? She became a minister on around 11 March. She had 39 weeks to come up with this debacle. She had been in that job three-quarters of a year before she made that announcement. After 277 days in the job, she made a hasty and rushed decision that has caused worry and concern across metropolitan Perth and across the whole state.

The camp and farm schools closure decision has been a debacle. People who work in farm schools found out as part of their Christmas present that they would lose their jobs. They found out that the jobs they had been devoting themselves to, providing children with extraordinary experiences, leadership development opportunities and an understanding of what it is like to live in regional centres, and providing regional kids with an understanding of what it is like to visit the city, were gone. Between 8 000 and 9 000 children go to those camp schools every year. My children had the benefit of hopping on the *Prospector* and going to the Goldfields Camp School. They came back knowing all about the gold rush and all about the importance of the gold sector and its foundational component in the Western Australian economy. They found out about the history of the gold rush and what it was like for people in the 1800s to be in the goldfields with no water. They found out about C.Y. O'Connor and his amazing project to get water from metropolitan Perth to the goldfields so that people in the goldfields could have water certainty. That is what my children learnt after going from the Perth metropolitan area to the Goldfields Camp School. What could they learn if they went to the other camp schools in regional WA? Let us look at the Point Peron School Camp, for example, and the schools that visit Point Peron. Members would be amazed. This is like an own goal, cutting directly to the heart of every single Labor electorate pretty much. The comments from Bungaree Primary School in Rockingham were, according to my notes —

Students cannot get the personal/social growth program in a school setting that they get from a school camp. Every child exceeded their own expectation of themselves and participated to their full ability. We had a super time—thanks—we'll be back.

No, you will not, Bungaree, because the camp school is closing.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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The Waikiki Primary School students went to Point Peron, as did the Illawarra Primary School students from Ballajura. Lakelands Primary School, from the member for Mandurah's electorate, also said, according to my notes —

An excellent camp. Facilities were fantastic and the position of the camp outstanding. Looking at booking our year 6 camp here again in 2017, but this time staying a bit longer.

I hope that Lakelands Primary School students enjoyed their last camp at Point Peron because it will be gone soon.

Students from Thornlie Christian College and the Kalgoorlie Girls Academy have visited Point Peron. I cannot imagine the experiences those girls from the goldfields and the desert lands had when they visited Point Peron and saw the ocean and found out what it is like to go canoeing and swimming in the ocean, to have had an opportunity that they may not have at any other time in their lives. They are the people who visit Point Peron School Camp.

Calista Primary School students from Kwinana have been there, as have children from Goomalling, Bateman and South Halls Head Primary Schools. I consider the minister's decision and think, "What on earth was she thinking?" Did she not think about who visits those camp schools? Did she just look at where they are geographically and say, "They're in regional Western Australia; we didn't get any votes there. We'll shut them down"? The complete idiocy of this decision is that the handful of people who are employed in those camp schools in regional areas are not the only ones who are going to suffer the most, although regional towns need every skerrick of employment opportunity they can get. All those children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds—from families who perhaps cannot afford to take their children on a holiday—will suffer from this decision. A cohort of kids will be deprived of the opportunity of going on camp and having those experiences. I repeat the mantra to those opposite: no matter what anyone says, when these services are privatised, prices go through the roof. However, apparently, when a Labor minister decides to privatise camp schools, camps will still be affordable. If any other service is privatised, the price of that service goes through the roof. How on earth does the government rationalise that? There is no logic whatsoever behind the reasons for this decision. It is absolutely appalling.

The Bridgetown Camp School teaches children about where their food comes from. It comes from animals; it comes from farms. Children get to see a tractor. They get to ride around in a trailer being pulled behind a tractor and understand what it is like to muck around in mud, to milk a cow and to collect eggs. They get to understand where their food comes from and what it is like to live in a regional community. Children who go to the Pemberton Camp School, which is fantastic, are right in the heart of the karri forest. They go mountain biking, have student leadership and development games, and are introduced to the Margaret River Megafauna Funshops. They go to Walpole and climb the Gloucester Tree. It is a fantastic experience for children. They also visit the Yeagarup Dunes. I do not know whether many members have been there, but it is one of the most outstanding experiences. It is a four-wheel drive only journey. At the edge of the karri forest is a landlocked set of sand dunes. It is absolutely amazing, something that you cannot see anywhere else in the world. At the Pemberton Camp School our children are given access to the Yeagarup Dunes. One of the rarest formations around the world is right there in Pemberton, but our children will now be denied the opportunity, unless their parents happen to be four-wheel drive enthusiasts and want to go through the karri forest, climb the dunes and maybe come out at the beach and catch a few salmon. That is the opportunity our children will not have as a result of the decisions of this minister.

Landsdale Farm School is the next school I want to mention. I have a soft spot for Landsdale Farm School because my mum worked as a teacher's assistant for children with disabilities. Every year they looked forward to an excursion to Landsdale Farm School. Children with severe disabilities have gone to Landsdale to pet animals and experience what it is like to be part of a farm. My mum used to rave about it and the smiles on the children's faces. She would come home from one of those excursions absolutely exhausted. Trying to maintain the excitement of a classroom of kids with disabilities when experiencing something like holding a lamb or a chicken or seeing a cow face-up for the first time results in a lot of energy and a lot of management of those children. What an experience. That is why Landsdale was created. It was created to provide an opportunity for children with disabilities to access a farm without traveling too far. Landsdale Farm School is in metropolitan Perth so that metropolitan kids who are not able to travel long distances can have a farm experience. That experience will now be denied to those children because it will not be affordable. Governments subsidise camp schools because it is difficult to run those camp schools profitably. Whether they are a not-for-profit or any other type of organisation, the fees to access those services will have to increase. That will make it unaffordable for so many schools and communities. That is unacceptable.

Can I seek an extension please?

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** I am sorry, member.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Can I not have an extension?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** No.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I had better wind up.

Some of the testimonials on the Landsdale Farm School site state, according to my notes —

Landsdale provides so much support to children with special needs and I can't believe it will be closed down. Please don't let this happen. It will be devastating to so many.

There is a comment there from the CPSU and CSA that states —

Landsdale farm school hosts 40,000 WA kids and 47 schools each year.

The CPSU and the CSA union are appalled at this minister's decision. I do not think she will get much support from them in the future. The commentary from people, particularly teachers, who have visited Landsdale Farm School is that for those who are trying to teach some of the modules, Landsdale Farm School provides all the resources. It is therefore a significant time-saver for those who are trying to teach some of the core units that our primary school children need to learn. The resource centre at Landsdale is amazing. It is amazing because it is sponsored by the Department of Education and it has everything that teachers need. If we put it into the private sector, maybe it would work; maybe it would not. But the one thing we can be sure of—I will quote the rhetoric of members opposite—is that the price will go up. The price will go up because the government subsidises these schools for a reason. If the private sector had the ability to provide camp experiences in a cost-effective way, somebody would be doing it. If somebody could do it, how much fun would it be to run camps for kids? It would be extraordinarily fun! Clearly, the service cannot be provided in a cost-effective way and that is why the government needs to provide funding. We will be watching with interest over the next couple of months to see where the other \$40 million worth of savings will come from. My guess is that it will come from other politically unpalatable areas in education. The minister's form is breathtaking. She clearly has no nous. When I was the training minister, I remember being handed options like this by my agencies. I would sit down with them and say, "No, no, no; no to all five of these proposals. How ridiculous; go and find me real savings." That is what I would say.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Do members know what? I would not take three-quarters of a year to make a stupid decision that caused a massive backflip! That is what I would not do. I did not take three-quarters of a year to come to a decision and then say that I was rushed. I did not say, "I was rushed! My back was up against a wall. I had 277 days to make a decision, and I was rushed!"

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** What kind of minister does that? What kind of minister needs three-quarters of a year to make a decision and still feels rushed? She is the gift that keeps on giving. I hope that the Premier keeps her in the position for the next four years, because then we will be back in government. We will be back in government because our education record is outstanding. Hon Peter Collier is loved by teachers and schools right across the state. The longer the current minister stays in that role, the better contrast we will have. I look forward to 2021 and more of these stupid decisions that require backflips.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore)** [5.12 pm]: I rise to speak on this amendment. I will reiterate to the house, because members may not have been listening—many members opposite tend not to —

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is something of a moot point on this side, minister.

The decision to close Moora Residential College, in particular, is a part of the savage cuts to education that I want to talk about briefly. Before I do, I would also like to mention that the government has attacked regional communities right across Western Australia. It has made a sustained attack since Christmas, which destroyed the Christmas period for many regional families. Some families were able to celebrate when the awful decisions on the Schools of the Air, for instance, were overturned this January. All of us who were involved in trying to bring attention to that disastrous decision would attest that many families had a very disrupted, worrying and unrestful Christmas period because of this government and this Minister for Education and Training's chaotic decision-making. There has never been clarity in any of the government's announcements on the quantum of moneys that would be saved through any of the cuts that have been announced. Other members will talk about other aspects of that, but I represent the WA College of Agriculture in Morawa and will mention the decision on the agricultural college trust fund. I was in Morawa just yesterday afternoon, talking to people with long histories of involvement with the farm that relates to the college. They were very concerned about the future of their industry and the future of education in the agricultural sector, brought about by these hideous cuts, which I think are the

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result of a government that knows nothing about the regions, has no concern about regions and is involving itself in some sort of class warfare against farming families. I have listened to comments made by members opposite. I have heard comments such as “Oh, farmers; they can all afford to send their kids somewhere else. They’ve all got eight Land Cruisers. They’ve got three beach houses, so why don’t they live in one of them to put their kids through school?” I have heard these sorts of comments coming from the mouths of Labor Party members and supporters. It makes me feel sick. In this state, we do not need that type of decision-making to be at the heart of any government. We need a government that governs for the entirety of the state, not for people in electorates from which its members are derived. We have already seen the \$39 million slush fund that members opposite have been throwing about with largess in their electorates.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** They have gone so far as to use taxpayers’ money—public money—putting their ugly mugs on cheques and pretending they have been responsible for getting that money to those people. What a lie!

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** How dare they use \$39 million of taxpayers’ funding to put out the lie that they are somehow personally responsible for bringing a playground or a play shelter to a community!

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** At the same time —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** At the same time, members opposite have been running around our electorates —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

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

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** At the same time, members opposite have been running around National Party electorates and cutting programs that are fundamentally important to our communities, such as the Moora Residential College and education for kids. It is worrying for families that they do not know what will happen to their kids’ education. They do not know how they will be able to provide one of the most basic, fundamental services for any family. I have lived in that district for many years and I have had to make decisions about where my own kids would be educated. It is never an easy decision.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Every family has to make a different decision based on their own circumstances.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville! Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the second time. Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the second time as well.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I can personally attest that none of those decisions is easy. Members opposite have taken away one of the best options for many families. I have heard people attest to the fact that many farmers have enough money to send their kids somewhere else. I can point to families that do not have enough money to make frequent trips even from Dalwallinu to Moora to see their kids. Members opposite are now telling me that these families have to go to Northam, Perth or somewhere else. These people are not loaded. Not every family in my electorate is a wealthy farming family. Many farming families are not wealthy. It is fundamentally wrong and disgraceful for members opposite to make decisions based on the fact that they think these families can afford to send their kids wherever.

The minister has never provided me with a proper analysis of the cost of keeping open Moora Residential College. On 14 September, I raised a grievance about the government pulling \$8.75 million from Moora Residential College when the money had already been made available by the previous state government of Western Australia.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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Whether or not members opposite like it, the Liberal–National government was the state government and it made a decision in cabinet. The decision was announced. It was part of a program that had been going for four years to upgrade every one of the agricultural colleges. Work had been done in Geraldton on Clancy House, which has not been mentioned, as well as work in Merredin, Esperance, Northam and Broome. The funding for Moora was part of a program. It was not an afterthought. It was not tacked on the end of a dying government's decision-making. It was part of a program that was put in place many years before. Members opposite came along and cut it. The government and the minister have refused to give proper costings on what it would cost to keep the college open. In the grievance, I asked the minister to provide me with the information that she was basing her decisions on and how much it would cost to make the college comply with the necessary safety and building codes to keep it open and provide at least a basic facility for those kids.

That had never happened. I have subsequently written to her and met with her, and she has given me assurances that she will give me that information. She still has not given me the information so I can only assume that the information does not exist. If the information does not exist, how on earth is the government making these decisions? How is the government booking these so-called savings to the state coffers from the closure? I would dispute the figures that I have seen that closing the Moora Residential College over a few years will save \$900 000 in operating costs. We still have to feed those kids and provide them with supervision and support and the government is still getting the money in from the parents and the federal and state coffers through the isolated children's assistance scheme and other means. I do not agree with the accounting. There has not been any detailed costings provided to me as the local member or to the community. We have seen members of the community here today. They have travelled down especially to see what is going on and why their state government is making decisions that are contrary to the interests of them and their community. Have they been given any proper answers? No. They were told, "Your kids can go to Geraldton. Your kids can go to Northam. Your kids can go somewhere else." Actually, they want their kids to stay in the central midlands area. They do not all live in Moora, but many of them live within touch of Moora, just too far to send their kids on a school bus. They need a facility like that in the area. There is no other senior high school between Perth and Geraldton, except for the Central Midlands Senior High School. If the government takes 17 per cent of the students out of that school, it is going to take out hundreds of thousands of dollars of ongoing funding for that school. It will take out another three teachers for that school.

We have heard the Premier and others talk about the need to make sure that our Aboriginal people get a decent education. I can tell members that there is a very significant population of Aboriginal people in Moora. They will suffer just as much as anybody else with the diminution of educational opportunity in the central midlands. In fact, they will probably suffer even more because they are amongst those people who are often not sent away somewhere else to school in any case.

**Mr J.R. Quigley:** Are they at the college or the residential school?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** They are at the school and the effect on the college is affecting the school. This is a tied situation. We have a college that supports the school and a school that supports the college. The two have to be looked at as an organism. They are not divorced from one another. That was the approach taken in Merredin and Esperance to build up the strength of the high school as well as the strength of the residential college to provide an educational opportunity for people in those regions. Within my electorate of Moore, if the government takes this away and we end up with Central Midlands Senior High School falling down to the point at which it no longer offers any sort of realistic educational opportunity, then there is no senior high school in the entirety of my electorate. My electorate is bigger than the state of Tasmania. It might not be as huge as the member for North West Central's, but I can tell members, you can drive for six hours and still be in it. This is not good government. It is not fair to those children. It is not providing any sort of equality or equivalence of educational opportunity between students in our state. Many of the families who will be affected by this decision are very concerned about the future of their children, but this is only a snapshot of time. What about the next generations? The government might be working with those families who are in the college now, but what about the mothers who have got children in year 6 or year 4? Who is going to work with them? What is going to be their opportunity? What incentives will be offered to them to move away from their own district? I am sorry that the government turned it into something so political by just turning on its head and attacking regions. We are not the ones who come in here and try to make a city and country divide out of every issue.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** But the government has done that to the point in which its own country Labor members are running around telling people in my electorate that they are working towards a solution. What is their solution?

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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Their solution is to close all the facilities in our regions. Great solution, guys. Country Labor is doing a great job! No, it is not. It needs to lift its game if it thinks that it is going to stand any chance at the next election of getting any members back in the regions, because I tell members what, people out there are not just a little grumpy, they are filthy with Country Labor. They do not understand why it is doing this and they do not understand why the vast majority of the \$64 million of educational cuts that were announced after Parliament finished had to come out of regional Western Australia.

A government member: No, they didn't.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes, they did.

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The vast majority of them have come from regional Western Australia. If members look at the average educational outcomes for students who are educated within my electorate and compare them with the average in Perth, they will see that there is no fat to cut in regional education. There is not some sort of great largesse that has been doled out by previous governments that they can just live on for the next number of years. These communities are already struggling with providing a decent education for their kids. They need reinforcement. To take away the only senior high school's residential college that exists between the whole of Perth and Geraldton is a big step for the government to take. It is irreparable. It is doing it because it has a short-term budgetary problem, but it is making a change that will be affecting generations.

**Ms S.F. McGurk** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Why doesn't the member for Fremantle cut down that brand-new school that she has in Fremantle? Do not talk to me about that. That is hypocrisy. The member is getting brand-new schools, we are getting our services cut; we are getting our opportunities lessened.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** I would like to hear the member for Moore complete his speech, and I am pretty sure Hansard is having a tough job of it as well, so please just refrain from interjecting whilst he finishes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I will try to talk a little about the people of the high school and the community of the high school because some of the stories that they would tell members and that we heard today speak very much about what this is all about. There are families who have moved their children into central midlands to go to that college because it provides a level of homeliness as an option for boarding that they do not find anywhere else. Many of these kids are not, shall we say, people who are used to living with vast numbers of strange people. Going into a boarding experience is not easy for any kid. In my experience of looking at other families I see that it is a very traumatic time for many families. For some, their best option is to go to a residential college in a country town that has a senior high school attached to it. That option has been taken away and families I know in the central midlands area, not that far from Moora but too far to drive in a bus, will now have to completely change the dynamics of their family life because they will no longer be able to see their kids on the weekend and their kids will no longer be part of their community on the weekend when they are not at school. They will be at a place far more distanced from where they are. They will be in a high school probably with 1 000 kids as opposed to a high school with 100 or 200 kids, a school that matches their particular needs far greater than where they are now being proposed to go. Within the Labor Party there seems to be a view that bigger is always better when it comes to schools. I have heard the Premier today talk about the opportunities at Northam, vis-a-vis the opportunities at Moora. We heard the young man from Badgingarra who spoke about the experience he had at the Moora Residential College. When he had finished, the minister sought to turn all his words against what he said. He had said what an opportunity he had been given by going to that college. The minister got up and said, "He did some of his units through the School of Isolated and Distance Education. See, that school does not provide the opportunities he needed." I can tell members that I know him and his brother very well and they have done very well for themselves and they have excelled at school. Many other families have similar stories to tell. Sometimes it is more about providing the supportive environment for the child than all the bells and whistles. What the government wants to do is force them into an "all the bells and whistles" experience at some distant place where they will not be able to have a close connection to home.

I have said that this decision will also affect Central Midlands Senior High School. That is why not only people from Moora are getting involved in this, but also people from a bit further out. That is why the community, the Shire of Moora, the business community of Moora and all in that area are so concerned. They see this as a dumbing down of the educational opportunity within the entirety of the central midlands. That area was studied during the

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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term of the previous government. To the west of Moora are the very large Leederville and Yarragadee aquifers, and a Water for Food investigation, funded by royalties for regions under the previous government, was undertaken in that area. I understand that there is an expectation that there will be much more water available in the future. That area is already seeing a very large number of changes to, and intensification of, agriculture. There are large-scale piggeries and poultry farms for broilers—not so much for eggs in that area—and the largest citrus producers in the state are just outside Moora. That will only continue in the future, but the community, business community and farming communities in that area are also very concerned about the future provision of labour and professionals. How do we attract a professional to a town that does not have a decent school? We cannot. How do we get the right sort of people to come into that region to help and guide its development?

I turn to what should have been done. In January, I had a meeting with some Moora people. One person said the government is trying to “de-develop” Moora. I thought that was a pretty good way of describing it. Instead of being involved in regional development, the Labor Party has actually involved itself in trying to “de-develop” and diminish opportunities in the central midlands. My people will not accept that. They do not believe that the government is acting in the best interests of all regional people.

That is a snapshot of one particular issue in one particular district in my area. It is not the entirety of my seat; my seat covers a lot of people who do not go to Moora high school. They go way up to Kalbarri, Geraldton, Perth or somewhere else, but it is a very, very important issue in that area. On one hand we are told that the government needs to fix the budget and needs \$64 million from education. I have asked to be provided with accurate figures on what it would actually cost not to do this disastrous thing to the central midlands. In spite of asking since September, I have not been given a decent answer. How is the government making these decisions when it does not appear to know the true cost of either keeping Moora Residential College open or the savings that will be gained by closing it? I just do not believe that the government has really, really thought about this properly. I do not think the government understands that these are not just tick-the-box decisions and that those people can just forget it. This decision will affect the central midlands and Moora for generations to come. The government is involving itself in some very, very damaging decisions for a short-term budget fix. Everything this government does is for the short term because it has only three years left, but the effects will be very, very long lasting.

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse)** [5.33 pm]: It is fair to say that the McGowan government’s approach to and disdain for regional education in Western Australia has rung alarm bells across the state, particularly in seats that were hurt by decisions made last year by the McGowan government. In those seats, there are students who do not have access to the same range and scope of education and facilities enjoyed by families and students here in Perth. Regardless of geography, socioeconomic status or cultural background, all Western Australian students have the right to an education. That is why, when these cuts were first announced by the McGowan government after Parliament rose last year, not only was I inundated with concerns raised at my office and in the community about the decisions that directly impact on the Vasse electorate, but also people were in shock and had great concern about what these decisions demonstrate about a government that is meant to be governing for all Western Australia. The McGowan government announced tens of millions of dollars in cuts that would amount to 170 jobs and a range of vital services across the state being axed.

The hardest hit by these cuts were our most vulnerable students and those reliant on the Schools of the Air facilities in Port Hedland, Carnarvon, Derby, Kalgoorlie and Meekatharra. There was also the announced closure of the six camp schools run by the Department of Education, and the residential colleges at Moora and Northam. Liz Sudlow of the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association described the cuts most recently on ABC; she said —

“It’s really an absolutely brutal decision, it shows a total disregard to the situation of regional West Australian families,” ...

“It’s just another nail in the coffin for regional WA in general.”

The president of the Carnarvon School of the Air Parents and Citizens’ Association, Teresa Tubby, said to the ABC —

“They are really upset. Obviously there has been no consultation,” ...

“They really feel it is going to further isolate their children.”

Although the backflip on this decision was very much welcomed, we are yet to see a backflip from this government on the decision to close Moora Residential College, and other decisions made by the McGowan government such as those regarding the 36 Aboriginal education consultants. Many regional families continue to be distressed. They

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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do not feel safe or secure, and because of their postcode, they will be faced with choosing to split up their family to ensure their children have access to the same education as those living in Mandurah, Joondalup or Bicton.

The McGowan government, which promised no cuts to frontline education services, has the wrong priorities and is not to be believed. Its definition of frontline services does not extend to regional WA. The decision to close Moora Residential College shows this government's disdain for not only regional education, but also the regional businesses and communities that support these facilities. It also represents a view of regional WA that does not invest in or see the value of supporting communities outside the metropolitan area. Lack of education services means parents will have to seek other options, and professionals will have to exclude Moora as an employment opportunity and a region to invest and work in for the region to grow. Moora Residential College employees 11 staff—five full time and six part time. The college is also a big user of services. As a result, the whole community, including tradesmen, cleaners and stationery suppliers, supports this facility.

This decision is not just about regional education services; it is also about regional businesses and communities. Representatives from the CWA certainly talked about that today on the steps of Parliament, and about the impact that the closure of Moora Residential College would have. There is much talk about what the closure of the college will do for budget repair. The figure I have is that it will contribute \$945 000 to budget repair over the next three years, but the cost of regional education cuts to students, families and communities in regional WA cannot be calculated.

In announcing the backflip on the School of the Air closures, the Premier said that he would be a Premier for all of Western Australia. It is time for the Premier to prove just that and reverse this poor policy decision. Going forward, he also needs to illustrate further commitment to areas other than Labor seats and metropolitan Perth—areas that are outside the metropolitan area, in regional Western Australia. The viability, growth and sustainability of this great state is heavily reliant on the support the state receives from our regional communities, but the decisions and judgements on budget cuts made so far by the McGowan government and the Minister for Education and Training illustrate that the government's view of regional Western Australia is just the opposite. On the back of that, I encourage the McGowan government to reverse its decision and I encourage it to take a new approach and to represent not just Labor seats but the whole state.

**MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe)** [5.42 pm]: I rise to add my bit to the amendment. I firstly acknowledge the efforts of the ladies and members of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia. I thought that was a fantastic effort on their part, especially given that they have not protested before, so well done to them and to Ken Seymour, the Shire of Moora, Tracy Errington and the members of the P and F in Moora. We have met in our party room; they are very passionate and I congratulate them on their —

**Mr P. Papalia:** P&C?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Yes, P&C. Thanks, minister.

I would like to start out with a Labor policy statement that was released prior to the election—I have this one right, minister!—which stated —

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to providing a quality education to Western Australian children and young people regardless of where they live.

That was Labor's policy statement prior to the election. The operative words are "regardless of where they live". Quite frankly, I cannot see how this comes into line. If I may, I would like to quote part of the Premier's response to a question from the member for Moore in this house on 14 September 2017. He stated —

Members will recall that when Labor was last in office, we built a new hospital in Moora. Labor has a strong record of supporting the community of Moora. The previous government did not build a new hospital in Moora—Labor did. The people of Moora need to understand that in Labor they have a friend.

If this is a friend, I would hate to see an enemy. The demonstration outside today was a great example. Another thing that comes to mind is that quite a few Labor members were unaware of these cuts. I heard the member for Kimberley saying on the radio, the day after the announcement, that she was not aware. That demonstrates to me a real lack of communication and as a regional member I am very disturbed by those developments.

I am also disturbed by the way the government announced these cuts at the beginning of eight weeks of parliamentary recess. Everyone was going on Christmas holidays and, as the member for Moore stated, it basically wrecked Christmas for many of our regional constituents and members. What makes it even more disturbing to me is that the Premier stood on the steps of Parliament today and spoke about how he went to regional schools and

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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how he understands how regional communities work. As far as I am concerned, he has absolutely no understanding of how regional communities work, because it is about the flow-on effects on the community. It is about the businesses that sell goods to Moora Residential College. It is about the families who do not come into town because their kids are not at the school.

I note that the Minister for Education and Training today said that there were only 27 enrolments. It is my understanding that prior to Christmas there were 33 enrolments, so this decision has already diminished the confidence of some of those families, and the enrolments have obviously started to drop. Another flow-on effect of that is that 17 per cent of the students will end up coming out of that school, which will jeopardise the student-centred funding model and potentially result in two to three teachers leaving. As the member for Moore also stated, it will also mean that around \$350 000 in funding will disappear.

As members of the CWA pointed out today, another consequence is split families, with mothers leaving regional communities. That is a phenomenon that is really developing these days in the regions. The mother will end up going off to Perth with a student attending a college or high school in Perth, taking the siblings also, so the whole family leaves the husband behind. He might leave on a Thursday night to come to Perth, so there is no community contribution. This is a situation that is developing along with, as the CWA pointed out today, wrecking our sporting teams. The CWA also asked the government not to take our jobs, our facilities and our amenities. To be honest, I think that probably sums it up.

I suggest the Premier takes up the CWA's offer to teach him how to budget. I thought that was a very good point. I liken it to a farm budget. Sometimes you cannot make a particular item work for this year, whether it is machinery or whatever you like, but somehow you work out the budget so that you have continuity of your operation. For me, our kids in Moora are our future, and they are the future of the central midlands area.

An Agricultural Region member in the other place, Darren West, tells us how he is the only farmer in the Parliament. That is incorrect; I am also a farmer, but I also know how a farm budget works. I urge Mr West to tell some of his colleagues about budgeting. As he said, this was a mistake and he would like to see it reversed as well, so perhaps he could convince some of his colleagues to improve the budgeting scenario.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** Member, can you please use the correct title when you are referring to a member of the other chamber.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** No problem, Mr Acting Speaker—Hon Darren West.

The community of Moora deserves better. The community of Moora has great capacity to grow and increase the agricultural output of the state. I find it amazing that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is wandering around the state saying how important agriculture is to her and her government. However, at the same time, the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier are cutting education services in the Moora—central midlands region. There is no doubt that the winding down of Moora Residential College will have a massive effect on Central Midlands Senior High School. The next thing we will see is that it becomes a district high school, and it will go downhill from there. I urge the Premier and his cabinet to re-think the decision to close Moora Residential College. As the member for Moore has said, Moora has a larger underground water supply than almost every other area in the state. We need to enable the community to take advantage of that and continue with its horticultural and agricultural activities, with the growing of citrus and carrots and many other crops.

Country Labor has been espousing that it is not happy with these cuts. This morning I was on ABC Great Southern radio and I told the announcer that I was planning to speak about the cuts to Moora Residential College. The member for Albany said that he also was not happy about the cuts and was keen to talk to his colleagues about reversing the cuts. I look toward to government members having a chat to the member for Albany about that.

The Premier has spoken about some of the options for students in Moora and surrounding areas. He said that many of those students live closer to Northam or Geraldton than they do to Moora, and they can travel by bus to the residential colleges in Northam or Geraldton. We have done an analysis. I can tell the members present that 23 of the students at Moora Residential College live closer to Moora than to the two residential colleges that the Premier mentioned. Therefore, that argument will not cut it. Students who live in Coorow, Dalwallinu, Buntine, Nilgen, Bindi Bindi, Wubin and Pithara will have to travel an extra 100 kilometres a day to attend either Northam or Geraldton residential college. That is not an acceptable option.

The Premier and the Minister for Education and Training always talk about how students who live on the coast can travel by bus to Yanchep. It takes over one hour and 20 minutes to travel by bus from Lancelin to Yanchep. If the Premier were in the chamber, I would ask him whether he would be comfortable if his kids had to travel by bus for one hour and 20 minutes each day to school in Yanchep, when they could go to a school located much

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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closer to where they live. Therefore, to throw up Yanchep as an option does not help this argument either. I would like to quote a letter to the editor that was in *The West Australian* of 1 February 2018. The letter is from a constituent of the member for Moore who lives in Toodyay, and it states —

Premier Mark McGowan's children probably take less than 15 minutes to get to school.

Yet in trying to justify the closure of Moora Residential College he made the point that a suitable residential facility was available at Northam, "only" 150km away.

His election-night promise to govern for all the people in WA rings quite hollow less than 12 months on.

That summarises it quite well.

Further to that, I point out that students who live in Nilgen, who the Premier also suggested should travel to Yanchep by bus, will have to travel for over one hour and 40 minutes. That contravenes the school bus policy of the Public Transport Authority. While I am on that point, I would like to refer to some of the problems that I have been having with the school bus service. Just prior to Christmas, I brought a grievance to the Minister for Transport. The Minister for Tourism will remember that, because he responded on behalf of the Minister for Transport. The Minister for Transport and the Department of Transport need to have a good hard look at adapting the school bus policy to make it more suitable for country towns. I was in Perth in the middle of January to talk to the PTA about issues in Dumbleyung, Nyabing, Wagin, Pingrup and Borden. One of the bus services in Dumbleyung had to close. I understand that. However, I am concerned that another school bus service that has been viable may also be closed, and the community has not been consulted in the right fashion. That has put fear into the community, which is exactly what is happening with Moora Residential College. That means that instead of having a peaceful school year, the community is spending its time worrying about what will happen with its school bus service in 2019. The community knows that a lot of young kids are coming up through the ranks and that in the future the numbers will be there to make that service viable. I am asking Labor members to go to the regions and try to understand how the regions work. I have spoken several times about how my electorate is 5 912 times the size of the electorate of Mount Lawley. I would welcome the member for Mount Lawley and other members to come into the regions and see how our schools and communities work.

It is interesting that today on the steps of Parliament House, I met Ross Ainsworth, a former member for the electorate of Roe. He told me how fantastic Esperance Residential College was during his time as the member for Roe, and about how he had also sent his kids to that college. I remind members that \$14 million was spent on Esperance Residential College under royalties for regions. The member for Warren-Blackwood would remember that. That was a fantastic result. The Moora community is asking for some funding, whether it be \$500 000 or \$150 000, to enable that college to get back up to speed. The Premier talked about how Moora Residential College is not fire safe. Kids are residing in that college right now, so it must be regarded as fire safe. Narrogin Residential College also had a fantastic spend under royalties for regions. The Nationals are very proud of that. That has led to great continuity for the community of Narrogin and is helping to further develop the great southern region.

I remember that prior to Christmas, metropolitan members were telling us how fantastic it is that the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier have been visiting their schools. I would love the Minister for Education and Training to come to my region and to Moora Residential College. It is only fair and equitable that the minister, and the Premier, for that matter, take some time over the next few months to make a serious effort to get into the country and get an understanding of not only how regional schools but also regional communities work.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** Have you invited them?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I have written a letter to the Minister for Education and Training, who informed me that unfortunately, due to her schedule, she would not be able to get there until perhaps later in the year. That is disappointing. Nonetheless, the minister did reply to my letter. When the Premier talks about the city versus country divide, this is the sort of scenario that is creating that divide. Government members should make the effort to get into the country. The Premier and the Treasurer have said to ministers that they need to save \$64 million and get the job done. There are a few line items in which they can make savings, such as the \$8.7 million at Moora Residential College, and that will make a good dent in the debt. They are not being kind and compassionate, as the Premier spoke about in his Premier's Statement today. I certainly would not put this cut into that category. As the member for Moore has said, this announcement ruined the Christmas of many of our country constituents.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** In conclusion, I believe the government has provided roughly \$150 000 through its Local Projects, Local Jobs program to fund the Aubin Grove and Armadale dog parks. That is the sort of money

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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that could be used to renovate Moora Residential College and bring that back to a state that students would be more than happy to continue residing in. I ask the government to have a bit of a think about that. I also ask government members to put themselves in the shoes of a year 11 ATAR student who does not know what their future is for next year. They do not know where they will be going. I understand this applies to 11 students at Moora Residential College; so think about that.

**MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands)** [7.02 pm]: It is not a pleasant job to stand in this place and speak about a minister who, over the summer break in particular, has demonstrated an enormous amount of government incompetence on behalf of the people of Western Australia. Part of that incompetence has been fairly and squarely directed at the Premier as well, who is a partner in crime in how the government has actually been dealing with both regional communities with regards to education and with some programs that have been cut in metropolitan Perth. I will highlight some of those. Probably the fundamental error that the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier made with all those cuts that went on over the summer break was that there was no consultation with the people who are most affected. There was not one bit of consultation. It came as an absolute surprise.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Not even with their own members.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Not even with their own members—it came as an absolute surprise. It was almost a Christmas Eve sneaky, “Let’s get this through, not show anybody, nobody will see it, they will all be on a break and it will just happen.” That in itself showed a lack of empathy and a lack of leadership on behalf of the government. To my mind it was completely un-Australian in how it treated the people of Perth and the people in the bush. Members shake their heads, but if Skippy were alive today, this mob would put a bounty on Skippy’s head. The government tried to roll out killing off School of the Air! That is just unbelievable. The next thing it will do is ban Vegemite, kill Skippy and it won’t let kids watch Skippy re-runs; it gets rid of School of the Air. The next thing in its target would have been the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It would look for any means whatsoever to pay for its \$39 million local projects, local votes program. That is what this is all about. The government says it will make these budget repair cuts and then in the same newspapers we are reading about \$39 million worth of local projects, local votes programs. It is, frankly, an absolute disgrace!

Let us recap some of these cuts in this \$64 million program of cuts. I will read from an ABC online article that lists some of them —

- 170 positions to be axed
- Cuts to deliver \$64 million in savings
- Schools of the Air ... to close down
- Tuart College to be closed down
- Canning College enrolment restricted ...
- Six camp school sites to be closed
- Landsdale Farm School funding to cease
- Funding for gifted and talented programs at 18 schools cut 25 per cent
- Vacation swimming fees to increase more than 100 per cent ...
- Teacher accommodation in Moora and Northam to close
- Intake into Level 3 classroom teacher program on hold until 2020

That is not all of them, by the way. I will mention another one in a moment. That was snuck in at the eleventh hour going into the Christmas holiday period. No consultation at all. There was no, “Let’s do a needs analysis of this. Let’s see what impact it will have. Let’s see whether there are other more creative and intellectual ways we can look for genuine savings measures that will not disadvantage Western Australians in regional communities or programs in metropolitan Perth that are important for kids of all backgrounds, regardless of what side of the political divide people are on or what seat they hold.” That is what we saw.

Following this, an article was published in *The Kimberley Echo*. I do not think the member for Kimberley knew about these cuts going on up there. Maybe she can correct me if I am wrong. *The Kimberley Echo* article is headed “Minister apologises for SOTA distress”. I will refer to two bits —

Ms Ellery said she had reflected on the shock and anger generated by the cuts while holidaying in the Kimberley during the Christmas break, then contacted the Premier.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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That is interesting—she did not realise it was going to upset people: “Oh, just kill off School of the Air. What could possibly upset people there?” Without consultation; just do it. The article went on to say —

“I reached the conclusion ... we had got the balance wrong, we had got the timing wrong and we didn't bring people with us,” she said.

I will tell you what—we have a rocket scientist there! “We didn't bring people with us.” It is blatantly obvious that if an announcement is made without any consultation to kill off a key program —

**Ms J. Farrer:** How old is that article in *The Kimberley Echo*?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** It is dated 18 January 2018.

There we go. That is an example of the lack of consultation on behalf of the minister. Member for Kimberley, did you know that Minister Ellery was in your electorate?

**Ms J. Farrer:** Just last month?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Yes.

**Ms J. Farrer:** Yes.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** That is good. Anyway, I move on.

**Mr P. Papalia:** You're floundering. Move on. It is embarrassing!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Thanks for the vote of support, member. I appreciate it.

That was absolutely necessary but it was a humiliating backflip on the part of the minister to actually say she had got it wrong. Obviously she got that wrong. The School of the Air was spared the chop, which is nice to know.

The regional community continue to fight for their right to exist as valued Western Australians, particularly in relation to these education cuts. They are not being valued by what is very clearly a partisan Labor government. The flipside of that is the \$39 million spend on local projects, local votes. Those programs ignore one fundamental fact—that it does not matter whether it is a Labor or Liberal seat, there are Labor voters in both. Liberal-held seats have been denied the opportunity to request grants for programs that need financial support. Labor voters in those seats have been denied the opportunity to request a grant to support the building, construction, childcare or whatever it is that they need support for. That has been completely denied. It was absolutely a partisan effort purely driven to win votes in seats the Labor Party needed to lock in at that election. It then rolled this money out and did it at the same time —

**Ms C.M. Rowe:** Did you ask what people actually think about it? Did you ask the people?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Member for Belmont, the hypocrisy of this is that the government has a \$39 million votes program and at the same time it is cutting the Schools of the Air. That is the hypocrisy of this. Let us focus on what the people care about, because regional Western Australians were devastated at the lack of regard for those communities by this government. I will read an article in *The Sunday Times* of 4 February 2018 written by Jane Marwick with the headline “It's About the Kids”. Her opening paragraph states —

THE fight to save Moora Residential College, a boarding house adjacent to the Wheatbelt town's Central Midlands Senior High School, is an excellent example of toxic political point scoring, misinformation, poor research and a lack of consultation.

That sums it up beautifully, because that is exactly what it was and, frankly, it is just not on. Minister Ellery and the Premier also ignored their own rhetoric with a lot of these cuts going into that election and throughout last year. Even today in his Premier's Statement, I think the Premier mentioned the significant importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects for school kids—STEM subjects. He really emphasised the need to prepare kids for a science-type future. I can tell members that a key aspect of understanding science is understanding environmental and biological sciences, no more so than because of the concerns about global warming. People having a real appreciation for the environment and the environmental sciences is critically important. What has this government at the stroke of a pen got rid of right here in metropolitan Perth that has served the community for over 80 years? I am talking about the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre at Herdsman Lake. It is part of the Western Australian Gould League, which was set up 80 years ago with a view to teaching kids sciences in a physical environment—getting them out of the classroom and down into the environment to understand the biology, the ecosystems and the systems that operate in a lake environment right here in Perth.

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**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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What did the government do? At the stroke of a pen it got rid of it. I will read this letter sent by the Premier to Professor Kevin Kenneally, AM, the president of the Western Australian Gould League. The Premier wrote —

Dear Professor Kenneally

Thank you for your correspondence dated 9 January 2018 regarding cessation of funding for the Western Australian Gould League and the running of the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre.

He went on to write —

As you are aware, the Department of Education has provided \$165 000 annually to the Western Australian Gould League to fund an Education Officer and an Administration Assistant at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre.

Gone. Cut. Got rid of. The year 2019 would have been the Gould League's eightieth anniversary. People may not have been to this particular facility, but let me say a bit about it. The Gould League was established in 1939 and it was originally established at the behest of the Department of Education. I will read from the Gould League's letter to Minister Ellery explaining the background to this centre. It states —

The role of the WAGL was, and remains, to teach nature studies outside of a conventional school setting. The WAGL is registered as a school with an official school number assigned by the DoE and the Gould League has worked in close partnership with the DoE while maintaining its independence as an incorporated not-for-profit organisation. This enables us to apply for grants not available to government organisations.

It has actually been given a school number. This government at the stroke of a pen has decided to get rid of it. It is an outstanding facility in metropolitan Perth and the government thought, "No, we'll just get rid of that; it's not necessary", yet it advocates to support science in schools. It is outrageous. The letter goes on to state —

Since 2002 WAGL has had over 111,000 students participating in school-based programs.

...

An average of 6,500 students participate in WAGL programs annually.

Members can see that it is not just some outfit on the fringe that is not relevant to the teaching of science and the environment to kids in our schools; it is an incredibly relevant organisation. One of the programs it operates is through the partnership with the Catholic Education Office to provide funding to employ Aboriginal cultural education officers for the delivery of the Aboriginal science education program at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre. Today the Premier and others have pushed the case that is a great day to acknowledge the Aboriginal heritage and history of this state of ours, and here is a program that supports exactly that, but this government is getting rid of it because we do not need it. I will outline some other programs that the Gould League has done. There was the launch of the Food Web iPad application at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre by former Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley. HLWC is also a hub for professional learning for educators in sustainable schools and Aboriginal education. Again, that is a program run out of this centre that will be scrapped. The mentoring of Indigenous guides through training and participation in the ancient science program is done at this centre as well, and that is gone. There is also direct support of the education department's STEM initiatives. It is a significant education asset. It is a registered school with its own school number that requires effectively one teacher and an assistant at a cost of \$160 000 a year and covers thousands of kids who are pushed through that program each year by different schools. That is being scrapped. The Gould League is in freefall. It is wondering where this has come from. It has been doing so much good work. I went to that centre. If a centre like that is closed, it then becomes run down because it is no longer running. If a government chooses to rebuild it in a few years, it will cost millions of dollars. It is a 30-odd-year-old facility, but it has been well maintained by the people who care about it and love it—by volunteers. What will be done with the volunteers who operate this centre? A lot of people volunteer in this centre and now they will not be able to do their good volunteering work, again, to help educate kids and run all these good programs I just mentioned. This is a very serious concern to me.

Another aspect of this that is probably not well understood is that the WA Gould League and this wildlife centre was heavily supported by that iconic and esteemed member of the naturalist community Harry Butler. Most of us in this place grew up watching Harry Butler on TV and really understood his passion for the environment, for ecosystems and for teaching kids. I remember that he used to grab these animals and pick them up. He was almost like the Steve Irwin of the 1970s for those people who do not know who Harry Butler was. He was an amazing character and

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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a great Western Australian. I have an article that appeared in *The West Australian* of 29 September 2009 entitled "Kids get wildlife warrior call". It states —

After 70 years, the WA Gould League is still instilling children with a love of nature.

Further on the article notes —

Honorary lifetime member Harry Butler, WA's famed naturalist, joined as a nine-year-old and still remembers attending the meetings, which he says back then were aimed at breaking the "iniquitous habits" of collecting bird eggs and feathers.

...

Now he believes the Herdsman Lake centre is vital in educating WA children about the wonders of nature, in an age when television has replaced tactile experiences. "You only get it by touching, by smelling, by feeling ... kids are missing out on that feeling of getting their hands dirty, their feet wet, jumping in puddles, catching a tadpole and watching it grow," he said.

In 2009, Harry Butler's passion and his support of the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre and the value it presented to the study and understanding of science, the environment and species was absolutely key. Over the Christmas break the minister made a decision, at the stroke of a pen, and said, "Gone! We are getting rid of that." On behalf of not only schools in metropolitan Perth, but also universities and their students who use that facility and study that particular habitat, I urge the minister and the Premier to understand that cutting programs like this is like cutting off your nose to spite your face. The government says that it is concerned about science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects in schools, promoting the environment and promoting Aboriginal culture and heritage. This centre provides all that in the metropolitan area for all Western Australians, in a wildlife habitat, but the government has just scrapped that program at the stroke of a pen. I think the government needs to think long and hard about its decision because I have also heard from one of the WA Gould League members that Sir David Attenborough is a great supporter of the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre. These cuts, backflips and non-consulting decision-making processes of Minister Ellery and the Premier over the Christmas summer period are a real warning to us and the people of WA who look closely at what is going on behind the scenes, look closely at the programs that have been cut, and understand their importance to the people of Western Australia. For goodness sake, stand up in the best interests of the kids and the future of the state to make sure that the programs that are needed are supported and that money is not being simply redirected into areas in which it is absolutely not needed.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood)** [7.21 pm]: I, too, want to comment on a fundamentally important issue for not only Western Australia, but also regional Western Australia. A number of speakers have already referred to what might be broadly called the decision-making process of this government by looking at a range of cuts in education circles that will raise some \$64 million across the forward estimates. Some analogies have been made about how the government came to that conclusion. The member for Churchlands talked about decisions to kill off skipping. An analogy I have is that it is a bit like giving a duke a knighthood. We do not have to be far outside the decision-making circle to work out that that is a dumb idea. That is exactly where this decision is at. If I were to give the Minister for Education a little bit of credibility for having a thought-through process, a process in which she has had good information presented to her and has made a call, then, yes, I admit the government had to find budget savings, which we all do when we are ministers. If we were to give her a bit of due about that, we could ask: how the hell did she come to the decision to shut down the School of Isolated and Distance Education, to close camp schools, to close residential colleges, and to halve funding into the gifted and talented program? How did she come to that decision? If for a second I were to give her a bit of due—I will for a minute—then there is another possibility for how the Labor Party approached this issue. We know that Labor members were angry when this side of the house did not support the gold royalty change. They went spare over that. It is my view that it took them a long time—I think that they are still not there yet—to realise that they are actually batting in this game and not bowling. They are in government. The Premier has been chasing some statesman-like view as he has approached the state. One option for how this came to light is that they got in their little huddle and thought, "How can we tackle this issue?" With opposition mentality in their head, they said, "Let's touch up something that is going to be a real bother to the National Party and Liberal MPs in regional seats and we will blame it on their lack of support for the gold royalty increase."

Mr Acting Speaker, they found them. They found the Schools of the Air, the regional camp schools, the residential college in your electorate, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr R.S. Love), and cuts to the gifted and talented programs. They thought, "Let's touch up those. Let's hit out and, by the way, when we get asked by the media, we will say that these guys didn't support the change in the gold royalty. That's how we're going to tackle this issue." It was good

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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opposition thinking, but, of course, it absolutely backfired. When I went and talked in the media about the ag colleges, as I have a history in that area, and the camp schools in my electorate, and when the member for North West Central got on the radio, we were asked about the gold royalty. We were all asked, "What about your support for the gold royalty? If you supported that, this would be still here." The commentary out there on the ground was that if we supported the gold royalty, this funding would have come miraculously back into play. The government absolutely underestimated the people of regional Western Australia, those people who are disadvantaged by distance and social isolation—all those things that we know are issues in regional Western Australia that educational opportunities solve—and underestimated how sensitised they are about education in regional Western Australia. Of course, the government then had to bring back the Premier from overseas and go into the huddle again, saying, "What are we going to do? We stuffed up the first time. We behaved like an opposition. We've got to put something back." The Schools of the Air came back into play and a couple of other changes were made that clawed back some of it. Then the government thought, "By the way, we're not going to backflip on anything else, so we'll make the cuts and do a bunch of backflips."

It is interesting that the government decided to put back into place the Northam Residential College. Why pick Northam? Why take Northam out of the pile, yet still shut Moora? The government made an assessment and I think the only reason for that is that on some superficial assessment the government worked out that there are 6 000 people in Northam and 1 800 people in Moora. It picked the one it thought affected fewer people and therefore would be less of a political issue. The government totally underestimated the impact on regional Western Australia. Those people are concerned. I think the government got it wrong. I think it has been playing politics rather than making a broad assessment about the merits of the programs it will decide to cut. Government regional MPs did not even know that it had happened. With all due respect to the member for Kimberley, I heard her on the radio saying that she was not aware that it was happening. I do not know whether the member for Pilbara was even aware it was happening. The decision came through and caught government members by surprise. It was a hasty and rushed decision and the government was forced to do some backflips.

Mr Acting Speaker, I want to go through the merits of the Moora Residential College to back up the comments of you and other speakers about the importance of that college. Its geographic location in Western Australia has a catchment that fills an area. Other colleges and residential hostels in the state have a certain catchment and they pick up people from outside their regions, but the Moora college picks up a catchment for the central midlands area—that is a piece of the pie that will not be filled if the Moora Residential College is closed. Mr Acting Speaker, you made a very good argument about how the college complements the senior high school in your electorate. The decision about Moora was not about funding; it was about a decision to take funding away. In August the previous year, the government decided to fund the upgrade of the Moora Residential College. That decision was in the budget and the money was to come from royalties for regions. The government did not say that it was not going to fund it; it said that it was going to actually take the funding away. That was a very active decision and, once again, the government has totally underestimated regional Western Australia.

I want to hark back to a decision the Gallop government made when I first came into Parliament and when Alan Carpenter was the education minister. He backed funding into Mt Barker. Mt Barker was in my electorate at the time and it was the first K–12 full service school. It was based on a community college model, which really worked for those middle-sized regional schools. It had kindergarten right through to year 12—a critical mass in buildings and capital infrastructure. The government also brought in other services. It had health services so that people could come to the school to get their kids inoculated. That meant a pattern of use was developed for people to come into the school and that was critical to broaden educational outcomes right the way from the early childhood years to year 12.

In fact, member for Kimberley, I think it would be a really good model for Kununurra. The community college model was supported by Alan Carpenter and was driven by the local community. Merredin College is the other example in the state. It is also in a middle-sized, regional community and has a hostel attached to it, but the hostel is now full. The community college model fits well for regional communities of that size. The member for Moore will remember that when we announced the funding for Moora Residential College, we discussed using the community college model for K–12. Having a K–12 model in Moora was an obvious location for the middle-sized regional communities that want to have an upper school. It had the efficiencies and capital infrastructure supporting it right the way through. I thought that Moora was the obvious location. I made a statement that had we still been in government, we would have absolutely supported it. Alan Carpenter had that vision. He prepared to back money into a National Party electorate. We supported Merredin and Moora was certainly the next school on the list. I thought it would be a good opportunity. This touches on the fact that we had a statewide plan. Moora Residential College was a part of that statewide plan. I do not need to go through the list, but it included Esperance, Albany, Narrogin and Northam where we had investments in residential hostels. They are fundamental to support

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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opportunities for regional kids to attend school and to get an education full stop because if they were outside bussing distance to a high school, it would be the only opportunity they had. I think solutions need to be found for the Pilbara. Broome Residential College is full; there is a waiting list. It does a fantastic job with the hostel up there. I talked about having one in Newman at one stage, but it was not supported by the Martu community. A fairly big discussion would be needed to get the support of traditional owners in those areas, because the government would want something that is going to be supported by those people. I think the Pilbara needs to be thought about. We wanted to ensure that the residential colleges or hostels had contemporary facilities that meet the needs of a student living away from home and therefore isolation would be less of an issue than it was prior to taking up a place.

The Minister for Police talked about Swanleigh. I remember having deliberations about it. It was in metropolitan Perth, which was not an area that could be supported with royalties for regions funding. I went to Swanleigh for three years in the late 1970s, so I am very familiar with it. There was an Anglican school, which was outside government ownership. A whole range of reasons meant that we could not directly support it. If we did support it through consolidated funds, it would put the grant support per student for that school above what we already offered for regional students in regional hostels. Despite the member for Midland's comments, I do not support that we played any role in Swanleigh falling over. It was for a whole range of reasons. Our position as a party was to support investment in regional Western Australia, which we went on to do.

The total absence of regional Labor on this issue has already been mentioned, and I will touch on it as well. Members opposite are now saying, "Yes, we're trying behind the scenes; yes, we're doing this." The member for Albany talked on the radio, following the member for Roe. A number of bits of commentary have been made in support but those members clearly do not have the weight of influence in the party room, because if they did, these dumb decisions would not be made. To go back to the point I made at the start of my contribution, a view on this is that the Labor Party wanted to land the blame on our lack of support for the government's gold royalty increase. It smacks of thinking like an opposition group rather than being in government, and it came unstuck. I heard similar language from the Minister for Housing at the end of last year when he was trying to level home to the federal government and its negotiations on housing agreements that they are challenged in funding the remote communities. If members listen to an interview he did in December, the minister pretty much said that communities would have to close. The hypocrisy of the comments that he made beggared belief. I made some commentary on radio about that at the time. The same argument is being used: "Let's find someone else to blame for taking money away from these areas and some of the tough decisions that we have to make." Members opposite do not know how to govern and they are behaving like an opposition. This was a strategy of the bright-minded people who sit in the Labor Party strategy circle to level it home for the gold royalty. They thought: we will blame it on them, they will get the blame, then everyone will go knocking on their doors and have marches on their electoral offices and they will be smashed in the media. It did not happen because regional people saw through that and they know exactly where the decisions were made. It was a dumb decision. Some dumb decisions still need to be changed. This amendment to the motion and the questions that have been asked of the Premier seek to change those decisions. How many strikes can the minister have? I know the discussion amongst the aspirants who sit on the back benches is that they would like to say three strikes. A few of them would like to say three strikes, but it seems that the structures that sit behind the minister and the faces I have seen mean it will be more. There is a fair bit to go in this debate. I have touched only on the issue of residential colleges and broadly the educational cuts because other debates will come up this week that also have significant merit.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr R.S. Love), I thought you did a fantastic job with your address, which highlighted the very regional concerns for people who are impacted by this. Education is at the core. Some things should not be touched; this is one of them. The decision should be reversed, and it should be done pronto.

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [7.35 pm]: Of course, education is important for people who live throughout Western Australia, but I think it is regarded by country people as utterly fundamental. All facilities are important. We do not have —

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY**: Go back to your fights.

It is always harder in the bush and every loss is felt very hard. Meekatharra School of the Air is obviously in Geraldton. It has been for a while. It was shifted there I think during the term of the Carpenter government when the original school at Meekatharra burnt down. The school was in temporary facilities at Beachlands and I got Dr Constable to go there one Saturday afternoon when she was flying back from the north. Once again, the government was out of money, but she told her people to find the money to build a school. The Meekatharra School

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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of the Air is on the coast at Bluff Point, just north of Geraldton. It is effectively co-located with the camp school. There is an oval between the two. Our school of the air services people out to east of Wiluna; one family is about 1 000 kilometres out. There are people up around Newman and closer in around Yalgoo. We are very proud of our school of the air. I have taken two of the three previous US consuls to visit it and to go on what is called "muster". They do not have a rollcall; they have a thing called muster, which uses a combination of telephones and computer technology. The days of radio are gone. It is all computers and telephones now. When this announcement came through, there was deep shock in my office because my electoral officer was on the Meekatharra School of the Air for 10 years. Personally, I could not believe the announcement, having been involved with the Schools of the Air since I have been the member for Geraldton. Frankly, the office did not function particularly well for the rest of that day. We put a petition on Facebook and I presented that petition today. It had 1 341 signatures. It was signed by rural people from the Kimberley to as far south east as Condingup and just about everywhere in between. It was quite interesting that it had a lot of signatures from people in Perth and in particular one patch of Perth, which was Maylands–Ashfield–Bayswater. I was surprised how many signatures came from there. I acknowledge and would like to thank whoever it was who gathered the signatures for us. Between the time of the announcement the school was going to close and the time when the decision was reversed, I spent a little bit of time in Perth and I was surprised that the support in Perth was just as strong for the Schools of the Air as in regional areas. As soon as people knew that I was an MP and was from the country, they would come up and say that they thought it was an absolutely appalling decision. I would like to acknowledge a staffer for one of the gold mines in the midwest. She checks in the fly in, fly out workers to fly home at the end of their shifts. She would not allow anybody to check in until they had signed the petition. I acknowledge her. I will not use her name, but I thought that was a really nice gesture.

Did the member for Maylands sign my petition? I am disappointed. I mentioned her electorate because quite a few people from Maylands signed it.

**Ms L.L. Baker:** I was going to suggest that if you wanted to pass it on to me, I am more than happy to follow them up for you!

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** You can always get a copy of the petition from the Clerk's office, member.

We have a fundamental belief in a fair go and this decision crossed the line. People felt that we were not giving those kids who by their parents' choice live in a very isolated situation. We were not giving them a fair go. If members have never had a look at how a school of the air works, each kid is assigned to a class, each class has a teacher and once or twice a year the teachers drive around to all the stations, outstations or places where people live. They visit the families and make sure students are on track. The school also provides some social contact between kids. They have lifetime friendships as a result of it. They might live 500 or 600 kilometres apart, but that is the other kid that they were at school with. It was wrong to put families through this trauma of the change. They had no idea how the changed system would work and there was never any figure given for how much money this was going to save, so 2018 was looking like a nightmare of a year for the Schools of the Air. I am glad the government made the decision to reverse it. A lot of members have probably never known a School of the Air family. They live a long way away, where most of us will probably never go. We need people to live in these places and quite frankly they will not go there if they cannot educate their kids. Despite the hardship, they do a good job because in most situations the mother becomes the teacher and she has to play a dual role of being both teacher and mother. They usually have a separate classroom that the kids have to sit in during school hours, but it is really hard. It puts incredible stress on their families.

I will briefly talk about camp schools, because we have a camp school that is literally only a stone's throw from the School of the Air. This is an issue that needs clearing up. Our camp school serves the region and I am told it is already fully booked for 2018. It is also an essential service. Our camp school is in a heritage building that my Rotary club many years ago helped prepare for its current use. Regional kids use the camp school in Perth; quite a few of the school groups that visit me here have been staying at Point Peron Camp School. Regional kids use other regional ones and the city kids use the regional ones. They all learn from it; it is a fantastic system. They are also an essential service. I would ask on behalf of the people throughout WA who use camp schools that the government clarify what it is considering doing with them. Keep them, but the questions are: who runs them and what it will cost to use them? They are an essential service. They are not a luxury and students get an enormous amount out of them.

I have done a bit of work on the agricultural education provisions trust. Once again, this is a body that until we started reading about it, most of us probably never would have heard of. The agricultural colleges at Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa and Narrogin and the Esperance Senior High School Farm Training Centre pay a percentage of their produce income from their production into the trust. The trust funds are then allocated back

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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to the schools and colleges, but at the same time smaller ones such as Kiara College, Kelmscott Senior High School, Mount Barker Community College and a few other schools are drawn in and they receive some money out of it as well. It enables the colleges to make large capital purchases to keep their technology up to date. It spreads incomes across the schools in case of drought or other disasters—Morawa is obviously the one that has that problem more than the others—and of course the schools have to be up to date with occupational health and safety standards. Due to drought in particular, the level across the schools is valuable. The sum involved that I think the government is talking of taking out of the trust is about \$250 000. This sum will not make a huge difference to the government. I have heard the Treasurer often say that small amounts add up together to make large amounts. I understand that, but this will have quite a big impact on those schools because the funds are all used and are very carefully allocated. A very reputable group of people on the board allocate the funds and nothing good is going to come out of taking money out of that trust.

Finally, I declare an interest in Moora Residential College, which is obviously some distance from my electorate, because the Geraldton Residential College is within my electorate. I find the discrepancy on the figures to keep this facility going quite difficult. It needs a clear, objective, outside assessment of what is needed, because if we have one figure of \$800 000 and the other is \$8.7 million, that sounds to me like one is the rock bottom price that is probably too low and the other is the usual gold-plated government price. The most accurate figure that the government can get away with spending is probably in the middle. It has to consider the impact on the local community and economy when it closes something like this. In the regions, jobs are everything. There are no start-ups and new companies do not start very often. If the government wants to keep businesses and people in regions, people need jobs. A phenomenon that I will probably observe more than anywhere is in a town close to where I farm called Mullewa, where we can grade the gradual removal of services and the closure of businesses. The process feeds on itself and gets into a downward spiral. As others have said, the Moora school has a large catchment and people have been pretty blasé about the distances. Moora is about 3.5 hours by road from Geraldton and 2.5 hours from Northam. There is a natural catchment. As the member for Warren–Blackwood said, there is a natural distance that people are most comfortable travelling, to take their kids to school. The other concern I have about this is that people have to make the decision where to send their children, confident that the facility will stay open for the duration of their child's education. Simple stories of closure can be enough to make for a self-fulfilling proposition. We saw that with the closure of the boarding facilities at the Nagle Catholic College in Geraldton. Then there is the flow-on effect of the impact on the number of students in the school, which then has the flow-on impact to the number of courses offered and the number of teachers. Once again that downward spiral feeds on itself. Personally, I think Moora is one of the regional towns that we should be trying to grow, just like Northam and Katanning. They have a lot of fundamentals there, but the government seems to be most interested in how it can remove people out of these places rather than how it can move them in. That is a continuous process of government moving jobs out of them.

**Ms S.F. McGurk** interjected.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** That is a fair comment. As a government we spent more money in the regions over that period than probably any government had before, but we did not have a specific program to secure jobs in the regions; we did not proactively try to do it. Jobs were not part of it. If we are going to reverse that as a government, we have to be proactive about moving jobs into the regions. We cannot fix up the towns in the regions and think that the people will automatically follow.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Did you listen to the Premier's address today?

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** No, I am sorry I missed it.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Because he did address that subject.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I know that the Minister for Regional Development has spoken about it as well.

Of course, we cannot forget our regional cities. I will make an honourable mention. Coming down on the plane last night I was talking to someone in the education game, and he made the point that Curtin University has changed from being almost antagonistic towards the regions to now going the other way; it is quite proactive and is trying very hard to get more courses into the regions. The case this person used was in Kalgoorlie where Curtin is quite proactively trying to increase the number of courses it offers there. Sooner or later I think we have to try to address the continuous increase in the size of the Perth metropolitan area and the relative decline of the regions.

For regional people I think the final straw with the Schools of the Air decision and the other cuts was that the day after announcing the cuts the government then announced it would be spending the same amount of money on a new high school in Perth. I do not argue about the need for a new high school in Perth, but I just think there could not

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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have been worse timing for an announcement. That was the final straw for anybody who lives in the regions and relies on any of those services. I urge the government to reconsider some of these things. I do not think the sums involved are huge. I think all the services are worthwhile and very important to people who live in the regions.

**MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central)** [7.49 pm]: No plan and three per cent; I will come back to those two things. When this announcement was made on 13 December, it really, really devastated regional Western Australia. Regional Western Australia will not forget it. We have heard about it being un-Australian, and that it was putting Skippy aside and attacking the social fabric of regional Western Australia. I am glad the members for Pilbara and Kimberley are here.

One of big problems is the hypocrisy of this decision. In the same week as cutting \$64 million out of the budget for regional education, \$68 million was announced for a new school 200 metres from another school. In the same week \$120 million, I think, was announced for the prison system, using royalties for regions funding. That is why the people of regional Western Australia got really upset, angry and active. The excuse in the media statement for cutting \$64 million from regional education was budget repair. That is what the Minister for Education said; budget repair. The Premier said, "Budget repair. I regret that." But when that \$68 million was announced for a new school 200 metres from another school, it was, "How wonderful; we're meeting our election commitments." This is the hypocrisy that exists. People say there is a country-city divide. I do not want there to be a country-city divide, but the Premier has made this a country-city divide by announcing \$68 million for a new school and money from royalties for regions going into prisons in the same week that he announced \$64 million being cut from regional education.

I return to the government having no plan. The Labor Party is stuck in opposition mode; it had no plan coming into government. The member for Warren-Blackwood probably got it spot-on when he asked why Northam hostel is to be kept, but not Moora Residential College. Is it something to do with the amount of people who live in Northam compared with the amount of people who live in Moora? One of the issues the government tried to get into the media was its playing of the gold royalty card—the gold tax—and the blaming of the Liberals and Nationals for not supporting the gold royalty increase. That was to be its argument and that is how it was going to win over these cuts. My question is: How come there has been an attack on the gold industry, which makes up, I think, about 6.8 per cent of mining in Western Australia? Why has the government not attacked the iron ore industry? It is because it makes up 80 per cent of the resources in the state. Can members see how the McGowan Labor government—"Metro Mark" as we call him—wants to try to pick off what he thought were the easy places? On 13 December, the day after the Schools of the Air had their Christmas wind-ups, they thought they were getting a message from the principal thanking them for a great year; they got a message saying there might not be Schools of the Air in 2018.

People in regional Western Australia—people in the Mining and Pastoral Region—the children who are part of the Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Carnarvon, Port Hedland and Broome Schools of the Air and so forth rallied. We organised rallies. The member for Pilbara turned up, and I acknowledge that. I know it is difficult to face people, especially when they are protesting against doing something so un-Australian as taking away Schools of the Air. One thousand people attended rallies in Karratha, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie; 35 000 people signed an online petition saying this was not on. I had a couple of hundred thousand hits on my social media; there were probably millions of hits through social media with people saying that this is not on. The Premier was silent over this period to gauge the public sentiment, and when it started to affect people in Perth, who started writing letters to the editor, getting on Facebook and Twitter and started signing that online petition, the Premier started to get shaky at the knees and said, "Hang on; I think I've actually made a stupid", dumb—whatever you want to call it—"decision." The decision was endorsed by cabinet. I say that because when we were in Karratha and the member for Pilbara was there, he got up and said, "Don't blame us for Schools of the Air cuts; blame the Liberals and Nationals—blame them! There's going to be more cuts and more cuts." Can members imagine how the 130 people who were there felt?

Then the Minister for Regional Development was interviewed by the ABC and was asked, "Did you endorse this or was this debated at cabinet level?" Her response was, "Well, it was talked about." She was asked, "Did you support it?" She said, "Well, it was talked about." She was asked again, "But did you support it? She again responded, "It was talked about." So it did go to cabinet! It was endorsed by every minister here tonight—I think we have two ministers; the Premier is just leaving—and by the Premier. Every other cabinet minister endorsed these education cuts.

Everyone knows how it all works. The minister, doing her job, goes out and gives the bad news. The Premier underestimated the power of people who live in regional Western Australia and how iconic the Schools of the Air is. It is like the Royal Flying Doctor Service. One of the minister's factional colleagues, Jim McGinty, who was

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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then Minister for Health and also part of the same faction, underestimated RFDS. Can members see a bit of a theme here? They are all from the same faction in the Labor Party. Perhaps the Premier has not got rid of the Minister for Education because we all know how powerful United Voice is in the Australian Labor Party; how powerful United Voice is in the Premier's office. Members could see the look on the Premier's face when he had to make that announcement—do that backflip. Members could see the pain on his face.

**Ms A. Sanderson:** Have you got too much time on your hands, member? Too many conspiracy theories.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The member knows I am not even going to enter into it with her, because she knows how I know. I say to the Premier that that is the reason —

Several members interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** That is why the Premier will not sack the Minister for Education and Training. It is clear. Members opposite know it. A few backbenchers there know the reason as well. They know how stupid the reason is. When we have country members of the Labor Party, like the member for Albany, saying that they lobbied to change the Schools of the Air cuts and that they will lobby to get the same done for Moora college and camp school, and when we have the member for Kimberley on radio saying, "I didn't know anything about it", when we have the member for Pilbara who did not know anything about it but said there's going to be more cuts and more cuts, what do we have going on here? I think there is a bit of a ravel forming on the government side. This is a dumb decision, criticised by nearly every media outlet and 30 000 people who signed an online petition. There have been millions of comments on Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets. We know it is a dumb decision, the government did not get away with it, and it is not going to get away with it.

I go back to what I said: three per cent. It is good to have eight members here, because I think a lot of them form that three per cent. I know the member for Pilbara does. If there is a three per cent swing against the government, it will lose eight seats, and I reckon that with the Schools of the Air decision and these cuts to regional Western Australia, it has lost its three per cent. The eight members who form that three per cent should start questioning some of the decisions their Minister for Education and Training has made. I would also question why the Premier is defending someone who has lost the confidence of the Department of Education. I know, because the teachers tell me. I know, because the bureaucrats who work in the education department tell me. More importantly, I know people who live in regional Western Australia and in Perth who are saying the same thing. Three per cent, members; eight members. Start looking.

The decision-making that occurred at the end of last year and the start of this year clearly shows that the government has not transitioned into being a government and there is a real disconnect between reality and what needs to be delivered. The government talks about the deficit and so on and so forth, but then we see all these big cheques being handed out in its electorates. So it should, because it is in government and it deserves to be able to get what it needs for its communities. I think it should do that, but the problem is that everything that has been cut from regional Western Australia has been cut for budget repair. People are starting to see the hypocrisy there. They are starting to see the hypocrisy that exists with the "Metro Mark" Labor Party. That is what people in regional WA are calling the government.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** You'd know about hypocrisy.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Do not let me get started on the "Great White Dope".

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** Members!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Like I said —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** When we hear that there are only 37 students, we are talking about an investment for the future. There may be another 37 students next year and another 37 after that. I know the Premier likes to say that there are opportunities for people to go to other schools; it is down the road. It is not just down the road, members. I know a lot of members know that, and I know they are trying to do their job by defending it, but they cannot defend the cuts the government just made to regional Western Australia that is impacting on its three per cent.

The Minister for Education and Training is not going to be sacked by the Premier because he does not want a factional war in the Labor Party. His office is stacked with people from that same faction, so we are not going to

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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get the change there. There is no confidence in the Minister for Education and Training from people who live in regional Western Australia, people in the education system and people in the media. I have never seen such an attack on a minister to say that some of these decisions are absolutely dumb. If the Premier is not prepared to take action on the minister, we have to wonder what his leadership style is like. Is he going to continue to defend these decisions made by the Minister for Education and Training and, I might say, approved by the cabinet? Every cabinet minister is responsible for those cuts to regional education. We managed to overturn the decision about the Schools of the Air because it would have been like getting rid of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. People in Australia do not accept that because it is iconic. It offers a service to people who live in regional and remote Western Australia. I know that some of the spin was about the School of Isolated and Distance Education and duplication and all that. I am not going to get into why it was not duplication and how SIDE cannot be run from Leederville going out to some of the most remote places one can imagine out there in regional Western Australia.

I want to say thank you to the Isolated Children's Parents' Association and the parents and students who turned up to those rallies. For a lot of them, it was the first time they had ever done this in their life. Kids were wearing their school uniforms, proudly standing up there to read out what the Schools of the Air is to them. It is a school community; it has a head boy and a head girl. They get together with kids who are around the same age. They have a school community and that was being taken away from them.

The amendment moved by the Leader of the National Party is something that all members should support.

**Ms A. Sanderson:** What about Aboriginal kids and their education?

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** You don't care, do you?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** So why are you cutting some of those roles, then?

**Ms A. Sanderson:** We're putting them back!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** What about the Aboriginal coordinators? I think there are about 34 in the midwest, Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley areas who have been cut as part of the government's 3 000 public service cuts, so do not sit there and try to preach that you are investing all this into Aboriginal education when we know that the government's ultimate game is to try to cut some of the remote communities. That was the messaging that was coming from the Minister for Housing, I think, today.

**Ms A. Sanderson:** It's your federal government!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Anyway, we will put that aside. Members should be supporting the amendment that the Leader of the National Party has moved because it is un-Australian to target people in regional and remote Western Australia and to cut education from people who are there trying to earn a living.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** Unless they're remote Aboriginal communities.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Can I just say, if you are talking about Aboriginal people, a lot of Aboriginal people use Schools of the Air. A lot of Aboriginal people go to these residential colleges. I think the member needs to look at who is who and who goes where, and whatever is being peddled through the factional system that the member for Bassendean heads. It is probably part of the problem of the Labor Party. I know he will be a problem for the Labor Party for many years to come—part of the same group of people who said that the RFDS was an interest group; part of the same group that wanted to get rid of Schools of the Air; and part of the same group attacking the heart of regional education. I think *The West Australian* got it right: he is the "Great White Dope".

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member, I believe you were quoting a newspaper and not being unparliamentary. I ask you to keep within the context of the debate. Thank you.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The newspaper article was pretty —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** If you could focus on the debate.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** It was pretty clear, anyway. We will have that debate another day; we will come back to that one.

The people of regional Western Australia, with the sympathy of the people of Perth, are going to come after the government—three per cent gone. Do members know what four and five per cent represents? That is 10 to 12 seats, members. Let me tell you: this is a one-term government. A one-term government is clearly on the cards when it makes stupid, dumb decisions like it has with regional education. It is not on, it is un-Australian, and the people of Western Australia will remember this come 2021.

**MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie)** [8.10 pm]: Greetings, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr T.J. Healy).

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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Several members interjected.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I have been fortunate over the last few years to attend graduations at Schools of the Air.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** I thought you were going to talk about local jobs, local projects in your electorate!

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** That is later.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** You got plenty of those, didn't you, in Kalgoorlie?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** We got over 1 000 jobs! We got a shedload! No—they are empty, vacant!

Even prior to when I became a politician, I attended graduations at Schools of the Air. Schools of the Air graduations are completely different. The member for Pilbara possibly went to the Port Hedland School of the Air. We can see how much the teachers, students and parents relate to each other and enjoy the school. We are also informed each time we go to a graduation of what takes place at Schools of the Air. The camps are a huge thing for them. At the Kalgoorlie–Boulder School of the Air graduation, there was a girl who lives near Eucla. If anyone does not know where Eucla is, it is on Eyre Highway near the South Australian border.

**Mr M.J. Folkard:** I was there for a couple of years. What a great spot!

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** She did her first seven years of schooling at Kalgoorlie–Boulder School of the Air. Her mother got up to thank the teachers for what they had done, but after the first sentence she broke down, because it meant so much to her. We could see the passion, love and devotion of the students, parents and teachers. I have also been to the camp school at Kalgoorlie–Boulder. It is similar to the camp schools in Port Hedland and other areas. They provide an essential and important role within our communities. I had an idea about what the camp schools do, but I wanted to see for myself. One thing that caught my eye was that we have a school in Kalgoorlie–Boulder that is attended by a lot of students from low socioeconomic families who cannot afford to go on school camps to Albany, Geraldton or Perth. They have tried holding raffles to raise money for those students, but it does not work. Those students have to travel for only one kilometre to get to the camp school. That is their big outing for the year. They have been doing that for years, and they love it completely and utterly. It enables kids to go outside their comfort zone and do things they have never done before in their 13 years of life. Some of those kids have never been to a tourist centre, a mine or out bush. What I am getting at is that the camp schools play a very important part in our community.

Another thing that made me sit up and pay attention is the benefit of camp schools for students with special needs. It means that they can leave home and attend a camp that is just down the road from where their family lives. I mean no disrespect to people who have a special needs child, but we can imagine the smile on the child's face at leaving mum and dad, maybe while being pushed in a wheelchair, and going to camp for a week. It would be very disappointing if the camp schools were to close.

On Wednesday, 13 December, a media release was put out by Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Education and Training. It stated that six camp school sites run by the Department of Education will close. It stated that Schools of the Air, or SOTA, will close. It was not maybe, or we are thinking about it—they will close. It stated that funding for Landsdale Farm School will cease. It stated that residential accommodation in Moora and Northam will close. It stated that funding for gifted and talented programs at 18 schools will be reduced by 25 per cent. It stated that fees for vacation swimming lessons will increase, after minimal changes to fees over the past 14 years. The then opposition had a crack at the member for Scarborough for increasing technical and further education fees by a large amount. I agree that a fee increase of 500 per cent was huge. In this instance, to give a similar example, the government is justifying increasing fees for the 10-day VacSwim program from \$13.50 to \$20 or \$30.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** This is hypothetical, but I hope a child does not drown in a backyard pool and the parents say they could not afford to take their kids to VacSwim. We should not be increasing the fees for vacation swimming by so much.

Several members interjected.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I will keep going. The minister stated also in her media release —

“We've asked all parts of the community to help contribute to budget repair—the public sector, business, industry, individuals and families.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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The government went to the gold sector, and lost. One area that the government has not asked to contribute is the Western Australian Labor Party and its promises. If the government had said to the community that it made this promise, but sorry —

**Ms S.E. Winton:** What? Break our promises? Is that what you're saying?

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** The government has asked everybody else to step back. One example is the recreational promise for a marina at Ocean Reef. Many years ago, I bought a block of land at Ocean Reef because the government of the day said it was going to put in a marina. I held onto that block for years, and nothing happened, so I flogged it. Why spend over \$100 million on a marina —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** The member for Kalgoorlie has indicated that he is not going to take interjections. Member for Kalgoorlie, you should speak directly through the Chair.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I am not being rude by not taking interjections. When I get a bit more practice, I will go that way. When I am as good as the member for Churchlands, I will be right.

I was on my way to work today, and a Labor member in the upper house asked me how I was going. I said good, and he then asked me what I would be doing today, and I said that my main theme is working on the camp schools and told him that we have organised a rally for next week. He then said that they are not closing. I said I have a media release that says they are going to be closed. He said, "No, no; we're not doing that." If the government is not going to close them —

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I am going by the media release. That is why we are doing these things. It is disappointing to hear that they are going to close and then they are not going to close. If they are not going to close, I would like to work personally with the Labor government to see what we can do to ensure the camp school is still there. I am not trying to be rude but it was a silly decision for Schools of the Air and camp school; it really was. One day down the track, if cabinet minutes are released under freedom of information requests in years to come, I would love to know whether any minister in a cabinet meeting said, "I don't think we should go down this path." I am sure that they would have. I am sure the member for Pilbara would not like to see the Schools of the Air closed at this time. The government has gone back, which is fantastic. If the government is not going to close camp schools, it would be great if the minister said via a media release, "We are not going to close the camp schools." That will help. If the government is trying to look at alternatives, that is fine, but it would be great to get a guarantee that camp schools remain if the alternatives do not work. They are a valuable part of the community. It is how the government went about doing it. I dare say the former government did not sell some things correctly, but in this instance I do not believe it has been marketed properly. That is my opinion.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [8.20 pm]:** I would like to participate in this debate about schools. One reason the community is not only shocked, but also pretty upset with the Minister for Education and Training is that she was the shadow education minister for four years in the last term of government. She is my local MLC. Her electorate office is in Southlands shopping centre. I had a great deal of interaction with her. I can tell members that she understands and respects schools. I had a lot of interaction with her on all the schools in my electorate on almost a weekly basis. She understands the issues. She also organised protests outside my electorate door almost on a weekly basis about so-called cuts to education. Indeed, she implicitly and directly told people that the Labor Party would look after schools and the Labor Party would invest in education. The Labor Party understands that. Specifically in her bailiwick, she complained about the former government's lack of investment in schools and, when we did, she praised it—namely at Willetton and Rossmoyne Senior High Schools. I do not know how many graduations she attended with me over the last nine and a half years. Both of those schools have gifted and talented programs. They thought that she would be like the previous education minister, Peter Collier, who respects and will support not only broad-based education that is accessible to all but excellent education, both Australian tertiary admission rank level and vocational education and training. What did we get? I am surprised at the various cuts. I am surprised not only that it was done but also by the nature of it. I can tell members that, as the Premier said, the former government went through trimming expenditures. One of the odd things about the Labor Party's complaints is that on the one hand it says these cuts are needed because of the Liberal Party's debauchery of the finances and at the same time the Premier said, "By the way, they cut the tripe out of education." In the election campaign they were saying we cut this, we cut that, including the education minister, and now at the same time they are trying to say we did not do anything. This is very strange. A political party that campaigns on diametrically opposite actions has ramifications—mistakes are made.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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Our government went through an agency expenditure review. We asked the Department of Education to put in place 3.5 per cent cuts across the board. Do members know the first thing it came up with? The exact same cuts as these. I can remember the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee looking at this. Peter Collier and the director general of Education looked at these cuts. We said, “You must be joking. Go back and do your homework. Absolutely no.” We said, “If you roll up with these types of cuts again, we will do them ourselves. You will lose control over your department.” They came up with other cuts that, by the way, the Labor Party brayed about quite a bit. But they went through and delivered. They trimmed expenditure growth in education and continued to provide excellence in schools. Again, the real mark is that market share in the public sector under us grew more rapidly relative to the private sector than any other time. People were voting with their feet. People were surprised, but the Minister for Education and Training fell for it. Why did she choose these? There are a couple of reasons. One can look at both the type of cut and the need for cuts. Let us face it, the reason the government needs the cut is that it promised in that last budget \$121 million worth of additional spending on education. In a tight budget situation, it promised \$121 million additional recurrent spending on education and a lot more on capital—in the vicinity of \$400 million extra. The government allocated those to its politically sensitive areas, including education assistants, who are all members of United Voice, and others. During the election campaign, the Labor Party targeted expenditure for its political reward.

**Mr D.T. Punch:** It is called election commitments.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes, but that is the government’s problem—it did it! It is in the budget; it cannot hide it. The Treasurer would say, “Listen, we’ve got a tight budget situation. We’ve promised \$121 million in recurrent expenditure, you’ve got to cut something somewhere else.” That is what he said! If the Labor Party did not promise \$121 million, it would not have to do this. Of course it tried to get out of it by blaming the former government. The theme that National Party members have been running is that the Labor Party is still in opposition; it is not in government. Grow up! The Labor Party won the election in a landslide. Start governing. Be responsible for your decisions. We did, right away.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** We did in government. We did not listen to the Labor Party. The member for Kalgoorlie was right: the government says we all have to share this. One thing that this government has not done is say, “Listen, during the election campaign we promised too much in education. We can’t afford it.”

**Ms S.F. McGurk** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** When the Labor Party came to government, it told everybody the books were in a terrible position—in fact, the Premier said “We’re almost in a depression. Everybody has to share.” The Labor Party did not trim the excessive commitments it made during the election campaign, both in education and in Local Projects, Local Jobs, which I will get on to in a minute.

Then there was the Schools of the Air. I have to say thank you for doing that! It was stupid and disruptive to people’s lives. People who use the Schools of the Air had a very tough choice in terms of where their kids would go to school. If a child in my electorate, and in most members’ electorates, cannot go to a local school, there are plenty of other schools a bus trip distance away—not very far apart. These people had no option—it was either the Schools of the Air or leave the area and lose their jobs and the family business. How stupid.

Another one on my list is the gifted and talented program. The gifted and talented program is the key ingredient to improving the expectations of people in our public sector. It is the essence of it. The major aim is to get good academically oriented students and their parents into the public system so they can lift up their kids of course but also everyone else with them. The government tried to cut that program by 25 per cent. How daft. I bet the private schools were laughing.

An issue that the Labor Party brayed about in opposition was level 3 teachers in classrooms. In government, it put that on hold, but of course that was reversed. Then it started cutting the residential college. One thing I did —

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** We invested heavily in them.

One thing government members do not realise is that the Premier is about them-and-us politics. He talks about Peppy Grove and other places. The students at Moora Residential College are generally from very low income families. I spent some time trying to find out the composition of their income and the characteristics of the patients at Moora Residential College and most of them are on incomes —

**Extract from Hansard**

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Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr D.T. Punch:** Patients?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I mean students. Most of the families are on incomes of less than \$40 000 or \$50 000 a year. The Premier says just go to Christ Church Grammar School or Guildford Grammar School or whatnot. These people voted for the Labor Party by the way, largely. They have in the past.

**Mr R.S. Love:** They will not now.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** They will not now; I thank the member.

These people have fewer options for both schools and income. That is why their children are at the residential college. The Premier tells them that they can go here or go there, but have members ever been on a school bus for two hours each way? I had the luxury of doing that when I was a kid. It is not comfortable and it is pretty hard on young children, but that is essentially what the Premier is asking.

I turn to school camps. This is a con. I heard the minister say that they will be contracted out to non-government organisations or they will close. If they are contracted out, who will pay for them? Right now they are paid for by the Department of Education with a vote. Someone has to pay. If they are contracted out to a non-government organisation, the government will have to find one that can and will do it, but they will have to have remuneration, a long-term commitment, investment if there is some risk to health and safety and, most importantly, a long-term contract. Where are the savings? The government has taken them out of the education budget and stuck them somewhere else. That is what the government has done.

My colleague the member for Churchlands has talked about the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre and there is a similar centre in my electorate called the Canning River Eco Education Centre. It was built in 2008 with money from the then Carpenter government to the tune of \$2.5 million. It was the then member for Riverton's great achievement; that was Mr McRae and he bragged about it regularly.

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** It is on the river?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes.

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** I know it; it is nice.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes.

As part of that, in order to underwrite it, the education department gives the centre staff to teach kids about ecology, the environment and other issues on the Canning River. Last year over 1 000 kids visited. It is very popular and very effective. It is integrated with the education curriculum. The government has cancelled that. What? I think the member for Cannington gave a grant to the centre to expand it. The Labor Party brags about it regularly. Indeed, the member for Cannington visited it regularly during the election campaign. Now the government has cancelled it. The hypocrisy of this is that during the last election campaign, the member for Cannington announced that he would give \$200 000 to the City of Canning for unspecified parks through the Local Projects, Local Jobs program. It was \$200 000 to go to unspecified things. The City of Canning did not ask for it and did not know what to do with it. It is undergoing a community consultation process to work out how to spend this money. At the same time, the Minister for Education and Training has cut \$285 000 out of the City of Canning's budget for the Canning River Eco Education Centre.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** It is not in my electorate.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** The member knows that it is in the vicinity of his electorate. The member knows. He goes there regularly. On one hand, the City of Canning gets a \$285 000 hit from the Department of Education and, on the other, the member gives it \$200 000 to do what it does as its main function—that is, building, repairing and maintaining parks. It was just a stupid policy of slush funding. That is all it was.

Then there is Landsdale Farm School and the vacation swimming program. I live in a community with a large number of new migrants from the United Kingdom, Asia and everywhere else. One of their characteristics is that they are not used to water and swimming. To live in Australia, a person has to be comfortable, confident and knowledgeable at the beach and in water. It is just a necessity. It is equivalent to knowing how to put on sunscreen. People have to do it. A lot of communities in my electorate and others do not have that culture and parents are nervous about it; therefore, the vacation swimming program is absolutely essential. It is as essential as maths, reading and writing. In many instances, it needs to be subsidised; otherwise, the parents might not do it. But the government has cut it. It has increased costs from \$13.50 a day to \$30. This is stupid. The theme I detect here is that the government had to make those cuts because it increased recurrent expenditure by \$121 million by handing it out to powerful interest groups in its electorates and its party such as United Voice. Members will notice that

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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most of the cuts affect handouts from the Department of Education and do not affect powerful union groups. They just stop payments to individual groups. In other words, the cuts were designed to minimise the electoral impact on concerned groups and also to preserve the budget of the Department of Education. That the government fell for the same requests that were put to us illustrates that it is asleep at the wheel and is focused on governing for itself and its electorates and not for the community. It is surprising that the government fell for it, but I thank the government for doing this, especially for the cuts it has reinstated. It clearly illustrated to the people in the run-up to Christmas what its nature really is.

The other issue is that when the government brought down its budget, it did not highlight these cuts. They are embedded in the aggregate data. The government did not indicate that they were coming. It did not state or indicate them in any way when responding to questions when we were sitting last year. The government announced them after Parliament rose and right before schools got out. The government was trying to hide them; it was trying to hide massive cuts to education. It was trying to minimise transparency for us, the education department, the community and the affected families. That shows a real problem in the government's nature and culture. The real problem we have is that there are \$41 million of cuts yet to come and we know some of them, but we do not know all of them. The government has still not been transparent about the full nature of these cuts. Some of the cuts, such as the camps, are a con. The government will either close them or get money from somewhere else. The government cannot save 100 per cent of their budget and not close them or get the funding from somewhere else. There are still substantial cuts of an unspecified nature that the government has not told us about and we expect it to come clean. We will dig this out of the government; that is our task.

In summary, this shows a government not prepared for government. It offered too much to win an election, and it won big. It came in and made cuts in the areas it promised to protect, and did so for its narrow-sighted political advantage in its own electorates and to avoid angering powerful interests in the party, particularly the unions. The government has done concerted damage to some of the most vulnerable, exposed families in our state. The member for Geraldton indicated that in regional areas access to schools is vital because there are limited choices and the choices are often too extreme. The government has forgotten about those people, because the government does not think they voted for it and it does not care. This is the nature of the government. I look forward with some trepidation to what the government will do in health, education, child protection and Aboriginal affairs, because this shows a government that is not ready to govern.

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism)** [8.40 pm]: There are few things more galling than having to listen to a lecture on financial responsibility and budget management from the worst Treasurer in the history of Western Australia, the now Leader of the Opposition. However, I can think of one thing that is more galling and more nausea inducing than that particularly painful experience and it is being lectured on the challenges confronting regional public school students by the member for North West Central, a man who has never in his entire life lived in the country or gone to a public state school. To sit over there and lecture this side of the house on the challenges confronting people in those situations is extraordinary. As someone who was born and raised in a small country town and went only to state schools, both primary and high school, I find it a little galling and infuriating to have to listen to lectures on the egalitarian motivations of people such as the member for Churchlands, the former Aquinas boy; the member for Scarborough, the Mercedes College girl; the leader of the National Party —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! The minister generally allowed your side to speak in silence; please limit the interjections.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** They can yell all they want. The Leader of the National Party is a former Methodist Ladies' College graduate. Being lectured about state schools and the challenges confronting state school students in the regions from this mob is pretty galling. However, what it has done is provide an insight into how we have found ourselves in this particular position.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Where did the member for Gosnells go to school?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Sorry? The member for Mercedes College has returned to the chamber. Can I talk about the insight we received?

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The Minister for Tourism used the wrong reference when referring to a member in this house. Mr Acting Speaker, I ask you to call him to order and put him back on track.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There is no need to call me to order. I withdraw.

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** The member for Armadale's kids went to Trinity.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** They were not lecturing us about the challenges confronting state school kids in the regions. Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** Members! On the withdrawal of remark, please refer to members by their correct titles. Minister, you have withdrawn that remark. Generally, it looks as though the minister is happy to take interjections. It might help if you take it in turns so he can respond to them.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Otherwise I cannot hear them.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, if you can keep to —

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members, if you can please keep to the context and reply to the discussion.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It provided an incredible insight into how we came to be in this situation—how the state, having gone through the biggest mining boom in the history of Australia, found itself to be confronting forty thousand million dollars' worth of debt. What we heard from the other side of the chamber was the confirmation that they do not understand that a budget is a plan; it includes the forward estimates. The forward estimates is the plan to achieve a government's outcomes. That is how it is done. If they do not believe in the forward estimates — Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I know the minister does not need protection but I did not hear him interject at all when members on the other side were speaking. Mr Acting Speaker, can you please provide him the same protection.

**Mr P. Papalia:** I confess that I did a little bit.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I did not hear it. It must have been when I was out.

**Mr P. Papalia:** It was not much.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** Wait a minute, minister. It is not a point of order. But, yes, minister, please direct your comments through the Chair.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The forward estimates are the plan that a good government employs to achieve its objectives. The forward estimates give everybody the opportunity to see how we intend to get to our ultimate goal. In our case the ultimate goal is getting the budget process under control so we are spending less than we are receiving in revenue. The problem of course was, and I heard the Leader of the Opposition make the incredible observation, that we did not tell anyone about the cuts in the budget. That was because when the budget was delivered, there was an additional \$400 million worth of revenue measures that the Leader of the Opposition then chose to block. Even when the estimates took place in September, he had not yet determined at that point that he was going to be continuing his wrecking ways and his irresponsible and disgraceful behaviour and get rolled in the upper house by his party room. He did not confirm during estimates that he was going to do that. At that stage he was pretending he had a tiny semblance of responsibility and he was still considering whether he was going to roll over to the fiscal wreckers over there. At that point he had not done it, that is why, obviously, it was not included in the budget, because at that time we had \$400 million more in revenue than we currently have as a consequence of his disastrous decision to follow those fiscal wreckers, to allow the National Party to lead the Liberals into the future.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** He may as well go now. He has conceded leadership of the opposition to that mob, to those disgraceful wreckers, the most irresponsible party in the nation. He has conceded —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I know the member for Churchlands did not have the courage to take on the leadership when you lost.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, so that you can make your contribution, please direct your conversation through the Chair.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I know the leader—a Freudian slip! I know the member for Churchlands did not have the courage to take on the leadership when the Leader of the Opposition first lost the election, but I think he is just building a little bit of Dutch courage. Maybe he is creeping around the corridors. He watched the member for South Perth in Rottneest and he has got a few tips. He has witnessed someone with the courage to stand up to the party heavy men. Someone in his party has at least got the courage to stand up to the numbers men. Maybe he is thinking, “Maybe I’ve got a shot.”

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Mr Acting Speaker, I ask that you to bring the minister back to the debate here. He is trying to get in a punchline rather than debating what he should be debating.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. Papalia:** That is twice you have used that today.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** Minister!

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, I think you are very close. You have already been called to order twice today. Please keep that in mind. Minister, could you please direct your conversation to the debate through the Chair. I would appreciate it.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. You may not have been in the chamber for some of the contributions from the other side, but I can assure you that it was a wideranging debate that touched on all manner of discussions, including leadership of parties and individuals —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I would have great latitude if I were to respond directly to any of those contributions to the debate. However, I will return to making a few relevant points on the amendment, which I think is incredibly hypocritical and demonstrates very short memories. Perhaps it was drafted by one of the newer members of the place who does not recall 2015. They may not recall the time \$185 million in cuts to schools was made right across Western Australia and particularly across the regions.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Does that sound familiar, member? It was \$185 million in cuts. Do members opposite want me to list the schools? At Moora, Central Midlands Senior High School, \$87 000 was cut; \$46 000 was cut from Moora Primary School; in the wheatbelt, \$584 000 was cut from Merredin College; \$419 000 was cut from Wongan Hills District High School; \$217 000 was cut from Wundowie Primary School; \$201 000 was cut from York District High School; and \$205 000 was cut from Toodyay District High School.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will not go through them all because they are in Narembeen, Bruce Rock, Koorda, Meckering, Meekatharra—the list goes on and on. There is no shortage of illustration of the cuts made when the member for Warren–Blackwood was in cabinet. When the former Leader of the National Party was in cabinet, he made cuts to education.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No, I heard what the member said in his contribution and I wrote it down. He said that some things should not be cut, and education is one of them. He has completely forgotten that he cut funding to education. We went to the election and committed to replacing 300 education assistants across the state, including many in regional schools that are in challenging and confronting environments, and another 50 Aboriginal and Islander education officers in predominantly the regions because members opposite cut them when they were in government. There is no denying that. I know that the member for Vasse has publicly stated that it is a waste of money to put education assistants and AIEOs back into the system. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has implied the same, but members opposite cut them. We are putting the positions back because members opposite cut them. Beyond that, our Minister for Education and Training is putting science labs into primary schools and about 25 per cent of the first rollout is in the regions. Do members opposite not like that? Is that something the minister should not be doing?

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Members opposite are saying that we should not keep our election commitments; that was an election commitment. We made election commitments about the education assistants and AIEOs. We went to the election with our list of commitments and members opposite had their list of commitments. Some of the commitments of members opposite will not be done because they were not our commitments. Beyond that, members opposite took \$400 million of future revenue out of the budget's forward estimates. As a consequence, we have to respond by finding savings in a whole lot of other areas that we had not anticipated at the time of the budget, Leader of the Opposition!

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is a consequence of the Leader of the National Party opposing every single revenue-raising measure. For every single budget repair measure that we propose in the upper house, we will have to find something else. As a consequence of that, we will not be able to do other things. We will not be able to deliver on some things. That is why the Minister for Education and Training, just like all the other portfolios, had to look for cuts that we had not anticipated when we went to the budget. There was \$400 million extra revenue in that budget; it is not there now. As a member of cabinet and a member of the government, I would like the opportunity to take other actions to repair the budget mess that we inherited from you clowns. I would like that.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I withdraw. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition roll over before National Party members have even said anything; he has rolled over in anticipation. He is trying to get in front of the budget wreckers in already saying that he will oppose the sale of Landgate as a budget repair measure in advance of the Nationals even stating a position on it.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** We're not selling Landgate.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No, the Leader of the Opposition is not even talking about it. The member for Cannington was not here. A week ago, he said he would not allow the sale of Landgate. Why did you do that?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It was not here.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood. Minister, can you please keep your remarks relevant to the debate.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** He is!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am! Mr Acting Speaker, I do not see any constraint on the debate regarding budget measures. The Leader of the Opposition's entire focus at the moment is trying to keep in front of the budget wreckers and be more irresponsible than them in an effort to avoid being rolled by the members in the upper house. I am worried because my shadow minister is in the upper house and I am about to deliberate with the Leader of the Opposition about some amendments to legislation. Will the Leader of the Opposition be able to give me any commitments on behalf of his party in the other place, because I heard him say he could not guarantee what they will do up there? I suspect that he cannot. I think that is a true indication of the state of the Liberal Party in Western Australia—the parlous state of leadership of the Liberal Party in Western Australia, to the extent that the Leader of the Opposition is incapable of saying what his party will do in the other place. He got out there quickly in an effort to not just get in front of these fiscal wreckers in the National Party, but also the fiscal wreckers who reside in his party in the other place because their determination is to be blockers and wreckers and stop the repair by whatever means they can. That is their motivation.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** What about Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre Aboriginal cultural heritage program?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I appreciated the member for Churchlands' contributions and his vast experience at Aquinas College with respect to state schools. He lectured me about the difficulties associated with education in the country. I appreciated that, member, but I will not pay any attention to it. This was a very revealing debate. It confirmed that the Leader of the Opposition is not leading anything; the National Party is leading, and its intent is

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to block everything. The National Party is absolutely focused on being geographical sectarians, as the Premier indicated.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** National Party members have no responsibility. Their first act when they got into opposition, the moment they lost office having destroyed the budget for eight and a half years, was to say to everyone in the country, “Hate the people in the city.” That is a disgraceful contribution.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member for North West Central—sorry, should it be the member for “Vic Park Vince”?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** “Vic Park Vince”, is that what I should call you?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I know that you do not live there anymore, but it does not rhyme to say “North Perth Vince”.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, please direct your comments through the Chair. Please stick to the debate as you have less than six minutes to contribute to finalise your discussion.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is without an extension; I could go on all night! Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. It was incredible to hear the member for North West Central lecturing anybody about the regions, let alone living in them or going to school in them. It was extraordinary to hear him make a contribution. He criticised —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** If the people in the member’s electorate knew about his background, I would be incredulous if he were re-elected. Nevertheless, I assume the next couple of years will be the valedictory years because I cannot see these guys getting the member for North West Central preselected again. I do not think they will allow the member to do that.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Sorry, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** Everybody, even your own members are wondering what type of background you think they should all have!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I was responding to the opposition’s contribution. In the end, the Minister for Education and Training has shown more courage and integrity than the entire opposition benches. Their behaviour has been appalling, particularly that of the National Party on social media, in social media campaigns and from their supporters, their nastiness, the personal nature of their attacks on Hon Darren West, others in the other place and the education minister. They have been appalling —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** Members, I am on my feet. The debate is very close to being finished. Minister, I would ask you to please talk to the Chair. If you are not going to take all the interjections, please stick to a discussion.

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The nature of the contribution from the other side was revealing. It confirmed the forty thousand million reasons members opposite were incapable of managing the budget. It is extraordinary that they would stand opposite and in this particular debate reinforce their observations and belief that the forward estimates do not exist. The Leader of the Opposition himself demonstrated an incapacity to identify that we had gone through the budget process assuming that we were going to get revenue measures passed through the other place and that is why these particular measures were not included in the budget. It is an extraordinary observation to concede that the Leader of the Opposition did not comprehend that there would be a consequence when he chose to join those wreckers in the other place and block budget revenue measures.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr P. PAPALIA:** We would have to do something else. The Leader of the Opposition did not.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** He was incapable and he did not have proper decision-making process in government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Excuse me, members. It is not part of the wallpaper, I am on my feet. We do not have screaming across the chamber on the first or the last day of Parliament. Honestly, you two just blame each other. Member, you have two minutes to go. Can you please keep engaged with the speaker for that time. No yelling across the chamber, thank you, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I would like to place on the record an observation for the benefit of the member for Vasse, and some in the media, with regard to the pop-up cafe that the member referred to in a derogatory fashion in an effort to suggest inappropriate funding. It is a mobile coffee van. It is designed to train disadvantaged at-risk juveniles and young adults in a minority community in Canning Vale. It is appalling that the member would choose that as an attack on a particular program that the member does not like. I understand the member does not like the program and does not like us keeping our commitments, but just so she knows, in future, that was what she was referring to. Individuals in the media chose to highlight that as somehow being an outrageous inappropriate expenditure. Just so the member knows, it is a minority crew of disadvantaged at-risk juveniles and young adults being given skills so that they can get work in the hospitality sector. It was a disgraceful attack and I hope that she would correct the record in the future.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Vasse!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Clearly, we do not support this amendment and will oppose it. It is a ridiculous suggestion and demonstrates a complete lack of self-awareness on behalf of the opposition.

*Division*

Amendment put and a division taken, the Deputy Chair (Ms L.L. Baker) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (15)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr P.J. Rundle
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K. O'Donnell	

Noes (33)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms J. Farrer	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr D.R. Michael ( <i>Teller</i> )
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	
Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	

Pairs

Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr M. McGowan
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr M.P. Murray

Amendment thus negatived.

*Consideration Resumed*

**MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine)** [9.08 pm]: I, too, would like to make a contribution this evening to the Premier's Statement. First, I will say that it is fantastic to be back here again in 2018. As I was listening to the Premier's Statement I cannot say that I was filled with enthusiasm and belief in the words that he was saying but I can only live in hope that 2018 is much better than 2017 was for the government and its legislative agenda. I know the Premier is hoping that as well.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members, I am finding it really hard to hear the member for Carine. This is the Parliament of Western Australia. Could you have conversations outside this chamber, please. If you want to talk, that is fine. I need to hear, as does Hansard.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was going to say that maybe the Premier has a deliberate strategy of lowering the benchmark at the start of his term so that he can only go up from there. Things were pretty bad last year and the legislative agenda was very thin on the ground, to say the least. I think that is no better reflected than in the decision to bring back the Legislative Council on 13 March 2018—one month after the return of the Legislative Assembly. That is because there is no legislation of any urgency or priority, even though the Premier has indicated there is. I think one of the key areas he spoke about was the no body, no parole legislation, which, funnily enough, was ready to be pushed through last year I think, had it been considered urgent. We were very accommodating.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** It was parked in the LC.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It was parked in the LC and it did not want to debate it because it was not one of the 11 bills that Hon Sue Ellery decided was a priority for Legislative Council Labor Party members to push through.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Is she still there?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Is she still there? Is she still the Leader of the House? She is still the Minister for Education and Training, funnily enough!

She did not consider that legislation to be a priority. It is very interesting that in the Assembly we talk about priorities, but the Council does not seem to have that same level of priority. Of course, like most of the bills introduced by various ministers during the course of last year, when it goes to the Council and gets sent to a committee, guess what? The committee finds lots of problems with it; it finds mistakes that need to be fixed up because things have been rushed through. The no body, no parole legislation is a perfect example of there being a loophole. I think it would apply to murder, but it would not apply to manslaughter. Depending on what someone was charged with, the no body, no parole provisions may or may not have come into force. Those amendments have now been made in the upper house, and it was ready to send it down to the lower house but nobody seemed too interested. I am sure we will hear debate in this house about how important it is. I will not go on too much about last year's flawed legislation because I think we are all very cognisant of it.

I wish to make a point. I notice the members for Kimberley and Victoria Park have disappeared, but today is the special tenth anniversary of the national apology to the stolen generation.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is unparliamentary, and the member knows it, to refer to members in that way. He should have said that the members were on parliamentary business elsewhere, not that they had disappeared.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I apologise. I was not in any way saying that in malice. I wanted them to be here, just to be able to pass on the message.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Excuse me; I just need to say that there is no point of order. Would you please continue with your speech?

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I was just pointing out that they had temporarily stepped out of the chamber. I wanted to bring to their attention that when I was in the electorate of Carine at a function, an Aboriginal elder came to me and raised a concern. I said to her that she should put it in writing, but I said that I would mention it in Parliament. She has some issues with welcome to country. She said that she used to perform welcome to country ceremonies and members of Parliament are now doing it. She is very concerned that Labor members of Parliament are performing welcome to country, but she was not allowed to do them anymore. That is what she said. I obviously have not seen that, but she raised it with me as a serious concern. I told her to put it in writing. I am not sure whether that will happen, but if it does, I want the members for Kimberley and Victoria Park to raise that in their party room. Maybe the leader of the government will raise it in the Labor Party room. That concern was raised by an Aboriginal elder, and if I get an email from her, I will make sure to pass it on and raise it. I wanted to make sure to mention that because I promised I would.

One of the points of debate we listened to tonight was about where the government finds the money. There is debt and deficit, the money is not there and the government needs to look at cuts and readjustments. Members opposite will be very familiar with one of the things I will reflect on. It was to do with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal decision made in December 2016 that came into effect on 12 March 2017 with the new government. That ruling

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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did a couple of things, and there has been previous debate in this Parliament about one of the areas of concern. I want to touch on that very quickly, and then move to the second part of that ruling.

Members will remember that the first part was about motor vehicle allowances. As to ministerial cars, there was obviously an anomaly in the ruling, and ministers were getting paid an allowance, as well as having a ministerial car with a driver. During the course of that debate, there was a lot of “This happened under your term”, trying to imply that somehow Liberal Party ministers were paid the same money. But we know that is not true. We know that ruling came into effect only on 12 March 2017. It was not until it was brought to the attention of the Parliament—it was also identified through Joe Spagnolo in *The Sunday Times*—that we found out that a number of ministers received this allowance. I will quote from Joe Spagnolo’s article of 17 September 2017. He wrote —

Ministers who received the payments were: Fran Logan, John Quigley, Bill Johnston, Rita Saffioti (\$5331 each), Roger Cook, Peter Tinley, Simone McGurk, Dave Kelly (\$5345 each) and Mick Murray (\$4507). Upper House Minister Sue Ellery ...

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** The double dippers.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** The double dippers.

The Premier said that they did not have to pay back the money because there is no legal requirement. We have one debate about money being a little tight, but certain ministers got an extra \$5 000-odd in their pockets. They are on a good wicket —

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** It all adds up.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It all adds up.

They did not have to give it back. That is one double dipping, but a second double dipping is going on that I want to bring to members’ attention; it is to do with the travel allowance. In that same determination, a ruling was made that members of Parliament will no longer have to go through the old process for travel. They will get paid their allowance on a fortnightly basis, it will equate to about \$6 750 a year, and they will have to have that debate with the taxman. Members will no longer have to put a case or report to Parliament or apply for that allowance; it will automatically be paid to them. But guess what? Ministers travel on their ministerial allowances and ministerial accounts. Do members think ministers use any of that \$6 750? I do not think so.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It’s the old imprest, not the —

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You should really use the right term. It’s not a travel allowance —

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It is the old imprest system —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Actually, one of the determinations allowed the use of it for conferences and all those sorts of things.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct; it did have that role.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It was actually expanded under your previous leader.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct.

Funnily enough, I looked at some information that I think stated that just 53 of WA’s 95 members of Parliament travelled under the existing system between its introduction in August 2013 and September 2017—just 53 out of 95. Generally, ministers pretty much never apply for imprest. It is very rare, and lots of ministers I have spoken to said that they would never apply for imprest because they travel with their ministerial office responsibilities and do not need to access that money. Here we have ministers of the Crown getting an extra \$6 750, which under the old system they more than likely would never have used because that is just not the way it is done. Now they get that money, and I 100 per cent guarantee members that that is going straight into their pockets. Why would they be spending that when they are travelling on their ministerial allowances? The interesting part about this is that when this happened —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Wait, wait, wait —

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** When this happened back in —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** So what are you actually alluding to? The fact is that it was a Salaries and Allowances Tribunal determination some years ago.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct. It was in December 2016, and it came into effect in March 2017 when Labor Party members became ministers. This is what Mark McGowan —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** So what are you asking? You want the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to remove the allowance for everyone?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** No. I am saying that ministers are getting the double dip here. Ministers are getting paid the allowance, and they are travelling —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** No, they're not.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Yes, they are. They are getting the \$6 750!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Who's to say that a person won't actually use it as that? That is not your determination.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** On 21 January 2017, the now Premier was reported as having said —

Mr McGowan was more strident, saying he would seek to have the decision changed.

“At the end of the day I don't agree with the decision,” he said.

“If elected, I'll write to the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to ask them to review it.

Back in January 2017, the then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, said, “If I'm elected to this Parliament, there is no way in the world that people are going to be getting this. I'm going to write to SAT and I'm going to tell them they need to look at it again.” Has he done that? Has he written to SAT, as he said he would more than 12 months ago, to reverse something which he thought was a disgrace and which ultimately is potentially—I am not saying that everyone is doing it—a double-dipping opportunity for ministers to get their allowance for travel and not spend it on travel? Under the old system, they had to acquit it to Parliament. They had to put in a report and their expenses and they had to justify what they were doing with it. As a matter of fact, the former Liberal ministers would never use it; the former minister sitting next to me here would not go near it. Why would he use it? He had his ministerial travel.

If the Premier is looking for money, he should go back to SAT and say, “Listen, our ministers are actually getting paid an allowance that they're not using, or probably not using.” It is inappropriate. We need to go back to the old system; it needs to go through Parliament. Members need to be able to justify their travel and they need to put in a report. I can guarantee members to a dollar that ministers will not use that money in imprest accounts. I can guarantee it, because obviously that just does not happen. It is not right and it is inappropriate. I am calling on the Premier to keep his word and prove that he is a man of his word by going back to SAT and saying, “You know what? I said I was going to do this back in January 2017. I haven't done it for whatever reason.” He was very quick to jump on the double dipping for the cars; he did not want that one to be hanging around for too long, even though he did not ask members to pay it back, which I think is wrong. Members stand in this place and talk about the state of the finances, but when they get an extra five grand in the kitty, guess what? “Oh well, I've got it now, so bad luck. It's what I'm entitled to.”

I really think there is a very serious discrepancy here, with the perks of ministers especially, in getting this travel allowance. I would be interested to know whether the member for Mandurah has used any of his former imprest money.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That's for me to determine.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct, exactly. Under this system, it is for the minister to determine, so he does not need to use it. He just needs to argue it with the taxman. The Parliament has given it up —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You would like it all removed. That's what you do: march down to SAT and actually request that it be removed for everybody.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** The Premier said that he was going to do that back in January 2017.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You don't understand the reason behind your own former Premier, why he actually moved to change —

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I do understand. He did not want to change it. He did not support it. He said that he did not support it either.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Then why didn't he ask for it not to happen?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** He did not support it. He said that the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal made an independent decision but that he did not support it. The now Premier came out even more strongly, saying,

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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“I don't support it, but you know what? I'm also going to make sure they change it.” I can guarantee members he has done nothing.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** He can't make SAT change anything.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** He has not written to it. He said that he was going to write to it. It changed the double dipping ruling on the car allowance.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** SAT is there for all members to make submissions.

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** Should add it to the SAT bill.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is right—to the MP's pay. He got the double dipping on the car allowance changed, but he has not done anything about the double dipping on the travel allowance. I really think it is a disgrace that ministers are not jumping up and saying, “You know what? You really need to review this because I'm getting this money, I'm not spending it, I'm travelling on my ministerial allowance or I'm not travelling at all.” I really think that is important and I would like to see the Premier keep his word of January 2017 —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You've changed your tune from what you used to tell me in other places.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It is no different for us. At the end of the day, we just have to go back through the normal process of going to Parliament to justify it. I do not want to talk about this any longer; I think I have made my point.

I would like now to touch on a second point. I am glad that the Minister for Local Government is here because I want to hear his views. I was reading some information about the City of Melville and the inquiry that is going on there. I noted that the Minister for Local Government indicated in a media statement of 29 November 2017 that nearly 300 complaints had been made against the City of Melville since 2014. When we look at the various documents that were around at that time, we can see that somewhere between 200 and 311 complaints had been received by the City of Melville.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I've actually received even more, supporting the inquiry and not supporting the inquiry, interestingly enough.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I am not sure what the right figure is, and I am a little confused. I have a letter here signed by the Minister for Local Government on 16 October 2017 that in part states —

Since 2013, the Department has received more than 200 informal complaints regarding the City. Of this total, more than 100 were submitted by just two individuals.

The reason I ask is that other councils have been saying to me that, from their point of view, the benchmark for Melville seems to be very low in terms of the number of complaints and the veracity of those complaints. I said that I would raise it in Parliament to see what is going on here, because it is very confusing to me. Again, the number of complaints is very low and it was indicated in the minister's press release that the council was supposedly working through this in a proactive way with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries over some period of time. The terms of reference are very, very broad. Basically, anything and everything is under consideration. We have an inquiry into a council —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That's not uncommon for an authorised inquiry. We have authorised inquiries all the time.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** We have an inquiry into a council that received—as I said, no-one can really alight on a figure—anywhere between 200 and 311 complaints. The member for Bicton was very, very precise in her Facebook posts in saying that it was 311, so she contradicted the minister's figures, but she got the figures from the minister's office, so I am not sure where that anomaly came from or why the minister was not given the exact figures. I would assume he would know how many complaints were received.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The number of complaints was not the only determination for the department to initiate an authorised inquiry. Read the rest of the press release.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** No, it was not, of course. I did; I have it here. It is also interesting when we talk about confidence to note how many people complained—68 people out of 107 000 since 2013. Again, that is a small number of people for a big council; 68 people out of 107 000 residents lodged a complaint over a five-year period. That is not a lot of complaints. That is a very small number of complaints. I am not defending the City of Melville in any way, shape or form because I do not understand everything that is going on there. I can only go on the facts, figures and data that have been presented to me. Some of Paul Murray's articles refer to how he has asked the minister for clarification and some detail and nothing has been forthcoming. When we look at the information anomalies between the member for Bicton and the minister, we start to think, “What's going on here?” I know the minister said that he went to a council meeting there and that it was a bit of a shambolic affair. Those were not

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necessarily exactly his words. I have been to council meetings as well, but I believe the people were well aware that the minister was coming. There were Facebook posts stating that the minister was coming with a local member and that everybody who had an issue or complaint with the City of Melville should please come down, and that now was the time to throw it out there so they could put on a nice display for the minister. If that is what it takes, I am sure there are a lot of councils the ratepayers of which would be happy for the minister to come down. They will come down en masse and put on a bit of a show, and if 68 people —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Member, are you aware that nearly 700 or so went to a recent meeting there?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Seven hundred members? Of course; there was the Roe 8 issue —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I wasn't there, so I wasn't the drawcard. There's been a number of consistent issues raised and I think the department was quite within its rights to actually say that there needs to be an authorised inquiry. That's what the department did, and I support what they did.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I would like the minister to give a bit more information about it. Like I said, the benchmark is very low. Anywhere between 200 and 311 complaints over eight years —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** There is no benchmark. You're saying there's a benchmark; there is no benchmark.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** One of the things I have heard debated at times is that the member for Bicton was a councillor at that time as well, so if the council is under investigation, does she fall under that banner if she became a councillor in 2013, or whenever she became a councillor? Is that part of the investigation? Obviously it is not, and why would we do that? It is just interesting to note —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I'm looking forward to the inquiry's outcome, because it will give the council an opportunity to address some of the issues they are concerned about, which includes concerns about what they perceive as vindictive complaints.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I am too. It will, but I suppose all I am trying to do is get a bit of a benchmark for other councils when they have issues and complaints.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** A range of matters are included in the determination for an inquiry.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I do not want to talk about that anymore, but I will say that there are a lot of anomalies there and a lot of questions that are still unanswered. It would not have been hard to have put a bit more meat on what is actually happening. From the point of view of the local government sector, it would like that. I am going to assume that there is no political motive for this inquiry and I am going to assume that the minister was not influenced —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do you support stand-down provisions for individual councillors?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Of course I do. I think it is a good idea.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** So you will support us?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I think stand-down provisions are a good idea.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** For individual councillors?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I would need to see the legislation and what the government is doing, but as a general rule moving forward I have no issue with stand-down provisions so long as there is a fair and adequate process around that.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I look forward to your support.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It is important to do that. I do not have an issue with that. I have an issue with retrospective legislation and other things. I will need to look at the detail, but in general I support the minister. However, I think the setting up of the inquiry into the City of Melville was a shabby display. More thought should have gone into that, because we need to give confidence to councils across the board that the benchmark has not been set very low, and also that there will be no political interference in the process. Obviously, the minister was not happy that the council supported Roe 8. The wave park is another issue. Every council has its issues, especially when it comes to planning. The minister could stand down councils every day of the week if a lot of ratepayers were lining up. I deal with a lot of issues and could get thousands of ratepayers to line up against a council —

**Mr D.R. Michael:** With a big banner!

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is right. I think that has happened at the City of Stirling as well. It is not about having an inquiry; it is about getting good outcomes for the community.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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I will now leave that and move onto Local Projects, Local Jobs; pork-barrelling; and the cash-for-votes exercise. I have a long list. I will not go into detail about where the money has gone. However, a lot of electorates received nothing. I want to highlight one group that has been badly discriminated against. That is Riding for the Disabled in Carine. Riding for the Disabled in the member for Mandurah's electorate—in Dawesville or somewhere—might have received some funding. Riding for the Disabled in Carine is located at Carine Regional Open Space. People come there from as far away as Fremantle, Yanchep and Midland—the entire metropolitan area. Riding for the Disabled in Carine has a desperate need to make the undercover area waterproof for the hundreds of disabled children and adults who go there for rehabilitation and support. It is disappointing that this discrimination is based on the postcode of where a particular group is located. If Labor members are interested in supporting their constituents, the members for Fremantle, Kingsley, Balcatta, Burns Beach and other areas should support Riding for the Disabled in Carine.

I refer to an article in *The Sunday Times* of 10 September 2017 that states —

In a WA first, Carine's Riding for the Disabled Association, a not-for-profit organisation that's usually the preserve of children born with disabilities, has extended its therapy program to injured adults.

It is now providing its therapy program to adults who have spinal injuries or are recovering from serious traumatic injuries. It is fantastic that the program has been expanded. However, I implore the government, if it genuinely wants to help organisations that provide a great service and need money, to support Riding for the Disabled in Carine. The Premier talked today about his support for people with disabilities and how important it is to help those people.

Many examples of this Local Projects, Local Jobs initiative have been mentioned previously. They include Mt Lawley Toy Library, Armadale City Concert Band for an interstate trip, Bassendean tenant booking system, and Mt Lawley Tennis Club at Menora. There is even the example of a lady called Kirsten whose playgroup was given \$20 000. She said that they did not ask for the money and they did not know what to do with it, but they took the money and she was sure they would find some way of spending it.

**Mr R.S. Love:** They could give it to Riding for the Disabled!

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Exactly. People were given money when they did not ask for it. It is called a grant. However, there is no process by which people can apply for these grants. The Labor members of Parliament decide who will be given the money. If it was a grant, there should be a process by which Riding for the Disabled could apply for it. I would like to see some consideration given to Riding for the Disabled in Carine. I would also like to see more scrutiny around these grants. A lot of these grants are not being used to create jobs. That does not mean all the organisations on this huge list are not deserving of some money. Everybody likes to get money.

I also want to touch on political donations. I remember that a couple of years ago, the now Premier made a big deal about the Liberal Party asking people to donate \$25 000 in order to have meetings with ministers. The Labor Party has now started the same scheme and is asking business owners to donate \$25 000 for private meetings with ministers. When the Liberal Party did that, the now Premier and the Treasurer said it was all about buying influence and giving people things that they would otherwise not be entitled to. The now Treasurer attacked the Liberal Leaders' Forum and said that the Barnett government had contracted itself out to the private sector. The Labor Party is obviously doing that now. If people do not get their plans approved, they can pay 25 grand to join the Leaders' Forum and talk to the Premier; that is not a problem. However, if other people want to talk to the Premier and ministers, they cannot do that because they have not paid the money. That is very hypocritical.

I refer to an article in the *Canning Examiner* of Wednesday, 7 December 2016 that states —

The Labor Party would implement radical changes to political donations disclosure systems if elected at next year's March election.

The changes would include the introduction of an online electronic disclosure of the donations system to provide continuous disclosures of donations to the electoral commission and the public.

They would also reduce the public disclosure threshold for donations from \$2300 to \$1000 ...

It went on to say —

Electoral affairs shadow minister Kate Doust announced the changes on Monday and said they wanted greater transparency and accountability in politics.

Obviously the government has not done any of that. Now that the government is confronted with that, it is running at 100 miles an hour in the other direction.

I refer also to a document dated November 2016 and titled "WA Labor: Disclosure and Democracy in the Digital Age". That document states that a McGowan Labor government will introduce an online electronic disclosure of

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donations system; reduce the public disclosure threshold for donations; provide greater transparency around third-party fundraising bodies; implement election campaign spending caps; and promote a greater civics education in primary and secondary schools. None of that has happened. As a matter of fact, when the government is confronted about that, it says, "That's just the way politics is. We sell ourselves and our policies, and the highest bidder gets to talk to us." That is now all okay. However, when the Labor Party was in opposition, that was not okay.

Last year, the now Leader of the Opposition talked about the need to establish a parliamentary budget office. That is a debate that we cannot let go, because the now Treasurer was also keen when he was in opposition for a parliamentary budget office to be established.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** We had that debate when I was Treasurer, and the now Treasurer argued during the election campaign that it was absolutely essential.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Yes—to ensure open and transparent government. We agree. We think that is a great idea. However, again, there has been no movement at all. All the statements by the now Premier about the need for transparency, accountability, and open and honest government were false. The Premier has not lived up to any of those statements.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Did he actually delete those statements?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I was hopeful that he would break only some election promises, and not the ones to do with integrity, honesty and accountability, but obviously there is no limit to how quickly the now Premier will backtrack on these issues. That is disappointing. As members of Parliament, we need to raise the bar. Government backbenchers need to realise that if they do not stand up for those things, they will lose their seats at the next election.

**MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley)** [9.41 pm]: I rise to make a few brief comments in response to the Premier's address earlier this afternoon. I preface my comments by saying how heartening it was to hear the Premier's address in the chamber this afternoon, to listen to a Premier with energy and vision and with a plan for WA, particularly with a plan for WA jobs. It was heartening to sit and listen to a Premier who could reflect on a successful year already passed and who could outline an agenda for the year ahead that concentrates on those key aspects of what good government is about—health, education, transport, investment in infrastructure—in doing all of the heavy lifting that is now required in order to realise the awesome potential of Western Australia and raise up the citizens of Western Australia so that in the spirit of a good Labor government they are all empowered to achieve their full potential because that is what we are about. Can I say how gratified I was to hear the Premier's address earlier this afternoon.

One of the things that was touched on by the Premier was the state of the economy. Sophisticated voters in the electorate of Mount Lawley know that the government is not entirely responsible for the state of the economy, but good government has an important role to play in facilitating the economic environment in which business and consumer confidence can return. If I may, I will refer to a report titled "WA Super — CCI: Survey of Business Confidence" for the December quarter of 2017. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and WA Super stated —

West Australian business confidence is stronger than it has been in four years, continuing the upward trajectory witnessed throughout 2017 as the economy adjusts to the end of the resources investment boom. The increase in WA business confidence is the highest single quarter increase since the end of the GFC.

...

The December quarter *Survey of Business Confidence* indicates that short-term confidence (3-month) is at its highest level in over four years and medium-term confidence (12-month) is well above its ten-year average.

...

The proportion of businesses expecting macroeconomic conditions to worsen in the short-term has declined by 19 percentage points since the previous quarter to 34 per cent ... suggesting that confidence in the WA economy is growing.

Looking to the year ahead, businesses are expecting economic conditions to continue improving, with over half (52%) of respondents anticipating the WA economy to strengthen over the next twelve months, up from 28 per cent last quarter.

That is a remarkable achievement—28 per cent, up to 52 per cent, in the last quarter —

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

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The Business Confidence Index for the medium-term jumped by 16 index points ... to 118.7 .... This is a stark difference to just two years ago in June 2015 when the index value reached a ten-year low of 81.7.

In the analysis, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and WA Super went on to talk about employment —

A quarter of businesses (25%) increased their employment levels this quarter ...

That is more jobs for Western Australians. It continued —

These conditions are expected to continue trending upwards over the next quarter, with 28 per cent of businesses expecting to increase their workforce in the next three months ...

That is more job opportunities. It continued —

There has been a 15 per cent rise in job advertisements in WA over the year to December 2017, the largest increase of all the states ... An upsurge in the number of advertisements is indicative of WA businesses intention to expand. This will be welcome news to job seekers with 14,900 job vacancies in WA and the drop in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate to 5.7 per cent in December ...

Finally, on the question of business confidence, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry talks about production. It states —

Increases in actual production can be a leading indicator of rising demand and future revenue. Production levels over the coming quarter are looking positive, with 40 per cent of businesses expecting to increase production ...

Looking at WA industries, over 70 per cent of respondents from the mining sector indicated that production is expected to increase over the coming quarter, —

I would hasten to add that that is testament to the hard work of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum —

followed by businesses in professional services (59%) and manufacturing (46%) ... Increases in manufacturing activity is a positive indicator for the state of the economy as it suggests strengthening demand for consumer goods, business investment and exports ...

All of which, taken together, boost employment. Members can see there is a recurring theme developing here—a focus on jobs. As the economy improves in all of these facets and as business confidence is restored, we have a corollary effect of greater increases in jobs. Once again the McGowan Labor government, which was elected on a platform of making WA jobs its number one priority, is delivering on that commitment.

Next, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated —

The Profitability Index has risen 5.2 index points since last quarter to 103.6 in December, the highest level in four years. While 18 per cent of businesses achieved increased profit margins this quarter, 21 per cent are expecting improved profits over the next three months ...

Businesses from the mining sector remain optimistic, with 31 per cent expecting to increase profit ...

**CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

While expectations around employment and profitability are emerging as key drivers for development this quarter, capital investment planning is also showing signs of growth, —

I pause to emphasise this point —

which is crucial for returning to positive growth in business investment following the end of the mining investment boom.

To extrapolate that point, members, we now see the confidence in our business sector has risen to the levels that that necessary diversification of the economy through capital investment is starting to take hold—all of which, taking in a constellation of factors, will serve to increase the jobs on offer for working Western Australians.

They were all the comments that were made reflecting on 2017. I will conclude from the business survey on the point that is made by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry when it states —

2018 is starting on a positive note for the economy with business expectations at multi-year highs. The manufacturing and construction sectors appear to be in particularly good spirits as we start the year, which is another positive, signalling the growing underlying strength of the economy.

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This is a phrase that I have used in speeches in this place in the past —

Green shoots are beginning to emerge in the WA economy, with signs of recovery in operating conditions apparent in businesses across all sectors and business sizes.

So, not just confined to large enterprises but to small and medium enterprises as well because these, as we know, are the engine drivers of economic growth. A fantastic picture is painted by none other than the Chamber of Commerce and Industry when surveying business.

But wait—there is more! The CCI has also done its consumer confidence report for the December quarter 2017. It states —

There is growing faith in Western Australia's economy and continued signs of recovery as consumer confidence grows to the highest level in four years.

...

The results for the December quarter continue the string of improved confidence ratings seen in 2017, emphasizing that economic recovery is on track:

- This quarter's Consumer Confidence Index ... has risen 3.8 index points to 111.9 and jumped over 13 index points since last year;

Three out of four consumers—76 per cent—believe that at the very least the Western Australian economy will stay on this same level or will continue to improve. That is 76 per cent. That number has increased 2.4 index points to 115.2 this quarter, making it the highest since December 2013—four years ago. Over one-third of consumers think the WA economy will improve over the next 12 months.

Far be it for me to make the suggestion, but the Chamber of Commerce poses the rhetorical question: what is influencing consumer confidence? Lo, the answer is a stable political environment. That is testament to the hard work of the McGowan government over the last 12 months and the clear signs, the clear confidence-building measures that the McGowan government is putting in place for the future.

Why else are consumers confident? They are confident because they are feeling more assured when it comes to job security. The report states —

There are signs of recovery in the WA employment market, with the Job Prospects Index rising 3.6 index points ... to 102.3—the highest in two years.

There is a dark cloud amongst this silver lining. I would not want to be accused of quoting selectively from this report. The report continues —

While there were improvements in consumer perceptions of job security, there is unfortunately still cause for concern, with over a quarter of respondents (26 per cent) considering their employment prospects to have deteriorated over the past year.

That is 26 per cent. But members, even in this dark tale we have the positive signs of the contribution that the McGowan Labor government is making, because this figure of 26 per cent is in fact down from last year's figure of 31 per cent. Further the report states —

Green shoots are beginning to emerge in the WA economy, with signs of recovery in consumers personal financial situation and confidence in their employment prospects.

I dwelt on that point about people's concerns about their future job prospects, because in addition to the framework that the McGowan Labor government has already put in place to generate and germinate those green shoots, to drive that growth in business and consumer confidence, I look at what this government is doing to further increase people's job prospects. I look at things like our legislative program and I look at pieces of legislation such as our Western Australian Jobs Bill and I see that this is not a complacent government content to sit on its hands, but an activist government with a firm legislative agenda to facilitate all that confidence we are seeing in the economy. It is about government and business working together to create that great environment in which we can grow WA jobs.

Then I look at another consolidation of factors that the government is putting in place in order to make sure that the Western Australia community can properly realise its full potential. Fundamental to securing, obtaining and prospering in the jobs of the future is a terrific education. We have already had great debates this afternoon about education, but there are some things that are indisputable. The freezing of TAFE fees now makes finishing TAFE courses and obtaining the qualifications necessary to seek employment so much easier for so many kids in

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

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working and middle-class families. The 500 per cent increase TAFE fees that was the legacy of the previous Liberal–National government is now being unwound by decisive action on TAFE fees so that people can finally realise the opportunity of pursuing their dreams of obtaining the qualifications to get those jobs of the future. There is a corollary benefit for the community, because one of the other things that the McGowan Labor government is focused on and that resonates when I speak to my constituents in Mt Lawley, Dianella and Yokine is that we need safe communities as well. One of the great things about access to TAFE education is that the evidence demonstrates that if young working men and women are provided the chance to pursue these educational opportunities, they are diverted from potential criminal activity. The evidence of that comes from none other than a Victorian report, which I have referred to previously, entitled “Vocational Education and Training: A Pathway to the Straight and Narrow”. To summarise for members, the findings of that report were that there was a direct corollary reduction, a linear relationship, between access to TAFE and reduced crime. Not only are we focusing on improving education, we are also focusing on skilling people with the skills and expertise they need to take up the jobs of the future and we are also positively impacting on community safety. This is a win–win–win for the Western Australian community and it is exactly the sort of policy initiative, good government and legislative paradigm that the McGowan government will become renowned for, because we see it in all of the policy agendas we are pushing forward. I give the example of something as simple as the Minister for Tourism’s liquor licensing reforms, which have been mentioned today. Once again, we are building on the great work of the previous Labor government, with transformational legislation creating vibrant communities in places near and in my electorate like North Perth, Leederville and Beaufort Street in Mt Lawley and Highgate. We are building on the work that has been done and through this legislation we are creating a business environment in which entrepreneurial tourism operators, small bar operators and licensed outlet operators have the opportunity to realise the potential of the businesses that they have invested time, money, effort, energy, skill, experience and resources into growing and developing. Once again, a reform designed to improve the amenity of life in Western Australia will have the corollary effect of increasing WA jobs. Again, that is a recurring theme.

The Minister for Culture and the Arts today talked about the new WA Museum being constructed. In addition to the thousands of construction jobs that this museum will generate, we will also have all of the creative jobs connected with the Museum when it is completed and we will also have all of the tourism jobs connected to this wonderful feature of Perth. There will be jobs in construction, creative jobs and jobs in tourism through one activity, building the museum. An activist, determined government, a government prepared to roll up its sleeves and get on with the hard work of changing society and making it a fantastic opportunity for people to get involved recognises that it is not just a better environment that is created by building a museum, there is also an environment in which jobs are created. Again, exactly the same principle is repeated with the Broome port redevelopment—construction jobs and more tourism jobs. We can see it is a recurring theme.

Much has been said about investments made into local communities through the Local Projects, Local Jobs initiative of the WA Labor government. One of the greatest investments that has been made in my electorate of Mount Lawley through this program is investment in educational institutions. The McGowan government has committed to \$350 000 to refurbish the admin block at Yokine Primary School. There is \$50 000 for an outdoor play space at West Morley Primary School, \$50 000 to refurbish the undercover learning area at Sutherland Dianella Primary School, \$50 000 for the outdoor playground at Coolbinia Primary School and \$20 000 for the robotics program at Mount Lawley Primary School. I think it was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition herself who said that outdoor activity is healthy for our community, a sentiment with which I agree. That is why investments in tennis clubs, outdoor playgrounds or adventure playgrounds in our schools are so worthwhile. I am happy to stand by the commitments I have made to my community and I am proud of the fact that we have delivered on those commitments. Can I add that these investments in education make the educational experience of the students in the Mount Lawley electorate at schools like West Morley, Sutherland Dianella, Yokine, Coolbinia and Mount Lawley Primary Schools so much more rewarding. A \$20 000 investment in the robotics program at Mount Lawley Primary School shows that this is a government that has got its eyes on the prize and knows that this is where we will see the—wait for it—jobs of the future. Furthermore, I am extraordinarily proud of the success of one of those schools in the electorate, Sutherland Dianella Primary School, which was selected as one of the first tranche of schools to qualify for a science lab.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Sutherland Dianella Primary School was one of the first schools to be successfully rewarded with a new tranche of science labs, once again promoting, facilitating and prioritising the teaching of science to our local community. We could not ask for a more worthwhile or laudable objective than that, yet members

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opposite criticise us for those sorts of policies and initiatives. It seems as though they are still getting used to the idea of being in opposition.

I want to make one final point. A Labor government is committed to not only legal justice through things like the no body, no parole legislation, lifting the statute of limitations on child sex offenders and increasing sentences for rapacious and detestable meth dealers, but also economic reforms. That is why our jobs agenda has featured so prominently in my remarks this evening.

Finally, we are committed to making sure that we put in place a proper social justice safety net. Today, the Minister for Water discussed the support the Water Corporation has put in place for people struggling with financial hardship. Bev Jowle from the Financial Counselling Association of Western Australia authored an article, published on the WAtoday news website, titled "What do Water Corporation, sharks and family violence have in common?" Ms Jowle stated in her article —

On Friday, the Financial Counselling Association of WA, of which I am chief executive, was asked to elect a financial counsellor to attend a press conference with Water Minister Dave Kelly.

The minister was announcing revolutionary changes to the way Water Corporation was working with people in financial hardship.

We were thrilled to support it. Water Corporation, led by the minister, recently undertook a review of their financial hardship policies and in consultation —

That beautiful word —

with financial counsellors in WA introduced a raft of changes to more actively support people who are struggling.

What could be more fundamental to making sure that the most vulnerable people in our society are adequately supported than taking this active role that the Minister for Water is taking, working with the Water Corporation and those who are suffering from financial hardship, to put in place minor administrative changes that will have profound effects on the daily lives of people struggling with financial hardship? I read that article and those comments and I thought, "This is what it means to be a Labor member of Parliament." I stand here proudly in a party in government that is committed to the fundamental tenets that make Western Australia such a great place: fairness, equality, and commitment to education, health and social justice.

I conclude my remarks by saying this: throughout the Premier's address today, throughout the last 12 months of the McGowan Labor government and indisputably over the future of the Labor government, I know that I will be extraordinarily proud of all the things that we turn our minds to, because I know that with an activist government committed to those principles, we can achieve real, lasting and worthwhile change for the people of Western Australia so that they can all realise their full potential.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [10.03 pm]: I would like to contribute to the debate in response to the Premier's Statement and echo the comments and remarks of the preceding speaker, the member for Mount Lawley. The speech made by the Premier today was very impressive about what we have achieved and what this government seeks to achieve in 2018 and beyond. However, I want to focus on what has been achieved so far in my electorate. I also wanted to talk about the debate and commentary on the Local Projects, Local Jobs program. I am very proud to stand by every single one of those projects, which I will talk about. Hopefully, I will get through all of them.

For years I sat on the opposition benches under the previous government, constantly seeking a better deal for my electorate and constituents, but it fell on deaf ears. I kept arguing that we needed a 24/7 public access police station in my electorate. The former Minister for Police would not listen. What has happened since this government was elected? We have a 24/7 police station in my electorate. My argument always was that that should be the catalyst for Armadale becoming a new policing district. Having a policing district covering Victoria Park all the way past Mundijong, towards the Murray district, with the hub, the main police station, located in Cannington was absolutely absurd. What do we have now? We have a 24/7 police station in Armadale and, sure enough, Armadale is now the focus of a new policing district.

Under the previous government I constantly called for some resolution to the problems at the Denny Avenue level crossing in Kelmscott. The former Minister for Transport, Hon Dean Nalder, would not agree to meet me on site. He would not even agree to meet the late Don Randall and me on that site. Sure enough, what did we have in the last budget? We received a commitment and an allocation of funding for Denny Avenue. It will provide great economic stimulus in my area. People do not understand how the current situation prevents the free flow of traffic. We also have had the announcement of the duplication of the Armadale Road to North Lake Road bridge over the

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freeway and a commitment to extend the metropolitan rail service to Byford. They are commitments that we have made in the first year of the McGowan government.

In the eight years of the previous government, six of which I was in this place, I received constant knockbacks from the previous government. I asked the former Premier to come on a tour of Armadale with me. He would not do so. He said, "If I come to Armadale, I won't be meeting with you." How absurd that the Premier would not meet with the local member.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** The Premier came to Geraldton but he did not meet me.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** But did the member for Geraldton invite the Premier to meet him?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** No.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I invited the Premier to meet me, and he said, "I'll come to Armadale and I won't meet you."

Credit where credit is due, I acknowledge that the former police minister committed to the new justice centre in Armadale, but this government under the stewardship of the police minister is ensuring that Armadale has a much-needed, great new justice centre. The local court in Armadale is completely out of date. I also acknowledge the former Minister for Education for the science, technology, engineering and mathematics laboratory at Cecil Andrews College and the new commercial kitchen at Armadale Senior High School. However, I sat on the other side for six years and, apart from those things, my constant advocacy for my electorate fell on deaf ears. I have already mentioned the commitments that have been made in the first year of this government.

I would now like to go through the various projects delivered under the Local Projects, Local Jobs program and the commitments to my electorate. I stand by every single one of them. I believe that the media have been sniffing around and saying that some of us are members of school boards and that we have ensured money goes to those educational institutions. Damn right they go to those institutions, but they go to all the educational institutions in my electorate whether I am on the board or not. What am I supposed to do? As a local member, if I am invited to go on the school board, should I or should I not go on it? Should I say I will go on and as a result of going on, I should be prohibited from allocating money to that school? How absurd! I also believe some journalists are sniffing around and asking if we are members of local clubs. Yes, I am a patron of a number of clubs in my electorate and they have also benefitted under the scheme. But many, many clubs that I am not a patron of have also benefitted.

Let me go through the various projects. I will start with the community projects and move on to the education projects. I start with the Armadale Community Men's Shed. We all know the great work that men's sheds do. As I go through these, I would like any opposition members to tell me which ones I should not have allocated the money to.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** The question is: should you have done the allocating?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes. Does the member know why? It is because I know my electorate. I have lived in my electorate for nearly my whole life. I do not need a bureaucrat to tell me what to do.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** What was your process?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The process was —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Why wasn't there an open call?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Of course there was an open call.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** No, there wasn't.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** It was not a grants system. I am in contact with my electorate. I know what they need. No-one was forced to take money, I can assure the member. No-one was forced to take money. The Armadale Community Men's Shed received \$2 000 for equipment purchases. The Camillo Action Group received \$1 000 to create garden beds with disability access. Should I not have given it that funding?

I heard the member for Moore; the National Party's hypocrisy is unbelievable. The greatest sectarian party in Australia! What did we have under its watch? Royalties for regions involved building musical toilets! It also —

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I am not asking for interjections, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Don't attack my party and not expect to get a response!

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member knows better than that. If you want to ask for an interjection, you are more than welcome to, but the member on his feet has said that he does not want to take any interjections. You might not agree with what he is saying, but can you wait until you are on your feet and then you can disgorge all of that in your half hour, member.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Under the previous Liberal–National government, the royalties for regions scheme enabled upgrades or new community facilities to be built in rural areas. In addition, in at least one or two years, nearly half of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund grants also went to the country. As well as the royalties for regions scheme, around 40 per cent of the \$20 000 grants went to the country when demand for recreational facilities in the expanding outer metropolitan areas was very intense. We had a lack of public open space. A senior public servant said to me —

**Mr R.S. Love:** Will you take an interjection?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I said no. A senior public servant said to me that royalties for regions amounted to institutional corruption. In my electorate of Armadale, a number of sporting clubs had to share one oval, whereas in country areas, AFL-style floodlights were installed for sporting clubs. I am not saying I am against that, but members opposite cannot now say that we should be criticised because we are giving funds to our electorates. How absurd! I will continue my list. Crossways Men's Shed is allocated funding as part of the Crossways Community Services' charitable organisations. For equipment at the men's shed, \$1 000 was provided. headspace was provided \$5 000 for equipment purchases. Should I not have given money to headspace, which does a great job for youth? For Dale Cottages, a retirement village in my electorate, \$5 000 was provided for gym and garden equipment. Hope Community Services, which provides services for alcohol abuse programs, had a facility in an obscure location; \$5 000 was provided for signage. Mundarda Child Care Centre, which provides a great community service, was provided \$2 000 to establish a community garden. Riverdale Child-Care and Community Centre in Kelmscott was provided \$2 000 for a much-needed upgrade to the bathroom. Kelmscott community garden was provided \$1 000 for improvements to its facilities. The Citizens Advice Bureau, which provides a great service to people in my electorate—I am the chair of that organisation—was provided \$5 000 for much-needed office furniture. Cecil Andrews Police Rangers, which underwent a great deal of uncertainty under the previous government when money was taken away, was provided \$1 000 for equipment. The ARKS Rugby Union Club, a great local rugby club that has now moved to Harrisdale, but was fiscally in my electorate—a lot of the players are still from my electorate—was given \$10 000 for sporting equipment. The Stephen Michael Trust Fund, which was set up by South Fremantle Football Club to help Indigenous and other marginal youth make life progress, was provided \$110 000. Champion Lakes Residents Association was provided \$1 200 for equipment. Armadale junior and senior football and cricket clubs were provided \$9 600 for equipment. Kelmscott Junior Football Club was provided \$2 000 for equipment and uniforms. Kelmscott Roos Soccer Club was provided \$3 000 for soccer equipment. Kelmscott Junior Cricket Club was provided \$1 500 for equipment. I was there on the weekend and I was talking about the so-called controversy over this program. One person said to me, "I can't believe, Tony, that you'd be criticised for ensuring that money went to our local community." He also said that it would not have happened under the Liberal Party.

Dale Little Athletics Club was broken into and a lot of its equipment was stolen; \$10 000 was provided to replace that equipment. Dale gymnastics club nearly went bust because the police and community youth centre left the Armadale region because of the previous government's policies; it was provided with \$10 000. I am a patron of Dale Hockey Club; \$1 000 was provided for uniforms. Champion Lakes parkrun was provided \$1 000 for a defibrillator. Armadale Bowling Club, where I am a patron, was provided \$5 000 for solar panels. Armadale Soccer Club was provided \$35 000 for undercover seating, of which I contributed \$10 000. The City of Armadale does not have a local dog park. If we talk about Local Projects, Local Jobs, a lot of these projects will be done by locals. Also, in trying to establish a sense of community, a vibrant community needs to be established with recreational facilities, including where people can take their dogs. The City of Armadale was provided \$40 000 for a dog park. Save the Children's City of Armadale One Step Closer program, which is for youth intervention—the Minister for Police is very supportive of this program—was provided \$220 000. That is incredibly important in my area. The PCYC, which moved out of my area because of the previous government's policies, was provided \$110 000 for youth intervention programs and to come back to my area. Forrestdale Men's Shed was provided \$5 000 for solar panels. Armadale Community Animal Rescue Group, which works completely on voluntary contributions, was provided \$15 000 for equipment and signage. Armadale's Girl Guides was provided \$3 800 for concrete flooring. The George Jones Advocacy Centre, which the Minister for Child Protection is very well aware and supportive of, and which the former Premier opened in Armadale, was provided \$30 000 for renovations. It is a fantastic, much-needed facility. Armadale Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service was provided \$10 000 for a van upgrade. Armadale State Emergency Service was provided \$3 000 for remote area lighting. Starick, which is

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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a refuge for family and domestic violence victims, was provided \$110 000. Should I not have given it funding? Does it not deserve this money?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You just don't get it.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I am hearing, although I am not inviting interjections, that I should not be the one to allocate that funding.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** No, you shouldn't.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I know my community better than any public servant knows it. Can the member tell me any programs I should not have given funding to? Go on, can the member tell me?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** No.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No; therefore, the member's argument has no —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Have you heard of accountability?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There is accountability. It has been through the department and through the minister's office. The minister has signed off on it.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You don't get it.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes, I do get it. I get it because Starick, which needs these funds, has received it. I have got it very much.

The member for Carine—I notice it was also in *The Sunday Times* in an article by Gareth Parker—mentioned that I gave \$3 000 to the Armadale City Concert Band to go on a trip to the eastern states for a competition. Do members know how that came about? That came about because one Saturday morning I was walking on Jull Street and two of its members were sitting there asking the public for money. They were playing their music and asking for money because they had no other options. They are not flush with money. Maybe the member for Geraldton does not understand my electorate very well, but a lot of people are not flush with money. This was one of the rare occasions that the Armadale concert band was invited. It was one of the few community bands to be invited to this competition, so I contributed \$3 000. I am a patron of that organisation as well. Those are the community recreational commitments I made.

Now to the schools. The Armadale Education Support Centre at one stage had a toilet situation that was appalling. We were able to rectify that through advocacy, but there was still a major need for staff room renovations and it received \$10 000.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Armadale Primary School, of which I am on the board, received \$11 000 for a covered walkway. A lot of these jobs will be done by local business operators. Dale Christian School, of which I am not on the board, received \$10 000 for outside seating and a wi-fi upgrade. Kelmscott Primary School, of which I am not on the board, received \$10 000 for ceiling fans and air conditioning. Westfield Park Primary School, of which I am on the board, received a renovation upgrade of the art room or science, technology, engineering and mathematics lab worth \$10 700. Willandra Primary School, of which I am on the board, received \$10 000 for the purchase and establishment of a boy's shed. I am on the board of Grovelands Primary School. This is an interesting one. Its undercover area where it holds its assemblies and presentations was in a shocking state. It was just awful. I would love to take any member of the opposition who wishes to criticise our program out there and show them what the \$18 000 that I contributed did for the resurfacing of the undercover area. I could bring it into Parliament. I should have brought before and after photographs and dare any of them to criticise it. Their argument is that I should not be the one to contribute the money. I can assure them that if I was not the one who contributed this \$18 000, they would have never received it, because when they tried to receive it under the previous government, they did not get a cent. The best the opposition could do is say that I, as a local member, should not be contributing this money. How absurd. The Pioneer Village School that I am not on the board of received \$5 000 for the library.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** It is all on his whim.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** It is interesting that when we were in opposition, we were not in government. Let me get this right from the member for Geraldton. In opposition, he expected us to give our commitments to him to vet. What does he think the government of the day would have said? Does he think they would have ticked off on our promises? Does he? Would he have ticked off on our promises?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You still don't get it, do you?

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I am asking the member for Geraldton a question. Would he have ticked off on our promises? Of course he would not have. His ministers would have ensured that our policies were not ticked off on. We were not in government. We went to the election. It was transparent; we said what our commitments were.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** There was no transparency at all.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Okay, at the next election, I want to ensure that every single promise that the opposition makes is vetted by all the ministers and departments. Let us see whether all the promises in Geraldton that the member goes to the next election with are vetted and approved by the departments. Do not be so silly. We were not in government. We had a process in which we had to put our commitments through. They were then approved by the Leader of the Opposition's office and then as ministers in government, their departments approved them. They could have knocked them back once we were in government.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** How many did they knock back?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I do not know. I know that as far as I am concerned, none, because all of mine were worthwhile. The member for Geraldton has not picked one that I should not have given. All he can say is that I should not have been deciding, but I tell members one thing: I decided better than any bureaucrat did. Challis Primary School received an \$11 000 contribution to the construction of a mini basketball court. I am on the board of Cecil Andrews College, which received \$26 000 for a TV studio. It is also the focus or the centre for the Follow the Dream project. Anyone who knows about the Follow the Dream project would be inspired by it. The Follow the Dream project received \$3 000. I stop there because I saw the member for Moore having a chitchat to the member for Geraldton. I remember speaking to the federal Attorney-General, Christian Porter. I met him after he left this Parliament and before he entered federal Parliament. He said that under the former government, the former Leader of the National Party had so much money, he did not know what to do with it. He was just signing off on projects. I would like to know how many of the royalties for region projects were being stringently and forensically examined before the money went out? If they were, I am sure the former Premier or the former Treasurer would not have approved of some of them. A senior bureaucrat has said it was institutional corruption. I do not think any senior bureaucrat has said that anything I have committed to and have honoured is institutional corruption.

Armadale Senior High School, which I am on the board of, received \$26 000. Gwynne Park Education Support Centre, a great school to assist people with disabilities, received a \$10 000 contribution to the construction of an outdoor playroom. Gwynne Park Primary School received \$1 000 for a native playground. John Wollaston Anglican Community School received \$10 000 for a native playground. Kelmscott Senior High School, of which I am not a board member but a former pupil, received \$26 000 for the resurfacing of the Pries Centre, which is an outdoor assembly area. Kingsley Primary School, of which I am not on the board but a former pupil, received \$10 000 for upgrading and renovations of the school. Neerigen Brook Primary School, of which I am a member of the board, received \$10 000 for the native playground. Xavier Catholic School received \$10 000 for patio shade construction and fitness and sporting equipment.

No-one in the opposition could argue that any of these projects were not worthwhile. The only criticism I can get is that I, as a local member, should not be deciding on them. I, as a local member, know what my community needs. I have lived most of my life in my community, I live in my community now. I am a member of a number of school boards, about eight or nine. I am a patron of a number of clubs. They should be jeopardised or I should not be a member of them? How absurd. I thought that as a local member we become a champion for our community. If there was another colleague who was seeking funds for his community, I would try to ensure that my community got funding first, because that is what we do as local members. We seek to obtain the best possible deal for our area and during my time in opposition, my advocacy fell on deaf ears. My clubs and schools have never experienced this sort of contribution from a local member, because during the six years that I was in opposition, which was eight years that the former government was here and I came in two years into that, they received nothing. The statement by a member of the Kelmscott Junior Football Club that under the Liberals they would not have got nothing is very telling. The best that the member for Geraldton can offer is that I should not have been the person making the decisions and that we should have had our election promises vetted by the government—how absurd. It is absolutely absurd. I look forward to three years' time—when that rabble over there that could not even work out a division today, when that rabble over there that had punch-ups at Rottneest and who do not even know when to divide—when it is the opposition's time to put their election promises to the test at the next election and they are all vetted. The member for Geraldton will be very happy to give the promises to his electorate to the minister concerned—be it the shadow Minister for Local Government, the shadow Minister for Child Protection or the shadow Minister for Police. I will look forward to that for the member for Geraldton.

The member for Geraldton does not understand the way the process worked. We had a pool of money that was promised to our electorate for worthwhile projects. It had to be a worthwhile project. It had to be approved by the

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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opposition's leader's office. Then, once we won government, it still had to go through a process of government. What else could we do? The best thing the member for Geraldton could say —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** And how many of them got knocked back?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Which projects were rejected?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** None!

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Well, because they were all worthwhile! That is why they were not rejected. They were more worthwhile than musical toilets in Bunbury. Bunbury has some great projects now because of the member for Bunbury. I was down in Bunbury the other day and I could not believe how it is going ahead under the new member for Bunbury. The local member for Bunbury is an absolutely brilliant champion. He is ensuring that there are proper projects going on, not musical toilets. Would the member for Geraldton have put in musical toilets down in Bunbury if he had the chance?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** To be honest, I do not know anything about Bunbury and its musical toilets.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There you go! It was not just in Bunbury, I think it was also in Karratha or somewhere else up north. How absurd! So that went through a proper vetting process, did it?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** I would have thought so. Royalties for regions went through six stages.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** We also had the member for Churchlands or others saying that we go with our big cheques. What did the National Party do? It had signs in yellow and green! "What colour is that? Oh, it's the National Party colours. Royalties for regions." The former Premier even said that was wrong. So do not talk about the giving of grants or making commitments to the local community. The National Party, which was supposedly the Liberal Party's junior party in government, engaged in pork-barrelling that no-one in this society has ever seen. Brendon Grylls had so much money that he did not know what to do with it.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** This is because this mystical bureaucrat told you that, is it, or something?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No. This person is a very serious bureaucrat—no, Christian Porter told me! Christian Porter told me that Brendon Grylls had so much money he did not know what to do with it. The bureaucrat said it was institutional corruption. But Christian Porter is not a bureaucrat, and he is the one that said Brendon Grylls had so much money he did not know what to do with it.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You go and show us the projects.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Come down to Armadale, mate, any day you want! I will take you to Armadale community men's shed, I will take you to the community action group and I will take you to Kelmscott Senior High School. Any time you want to come to my community, come; all my projects are supported by the community. The only problem I have is the possibility that some community groups have missed out.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** I'm sure there's plenty.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** So should I be criticised for that now?

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Because you chose; that's the point. What qualifies you to say, "They can get money, and they can't"?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Because I am the local member! Do you want to know what happened, member for Geraldton? I actually went and asked them, or they came to me —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** "How much money do you want?"

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No, I didn't, mate! Get your facts right.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** "Vote for me; I've got big cheques."

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have a very strong relationship with my community groups. They actually come to me and say, "We need X, Y, Z." For six years I could not say anything because the former government did not care about Armadale. It never has; it never will. Only a Labor government will.

Government members: Hear, hear!

**MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton)** [10.33 pm]: I rise today to add my reflections on the year that was and the vision for the one that is just beginning. Not quite a year ago I became the member for Bicton—a new seat; one that was hard-fought and resulted in a symbolic victory for WA Labor. My victory, like that of all my colleagues here on this side of the chamber, was shared. It was one that came from a solid grassroots community campaign

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

p25e-79a

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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populated by community campaigners, first-time doorknockers and booth volunteers; a community drawn to action by belief and purpose. In Bicton that belief was that a road—one that was to cost over \$1 billion, would be our state's first toll road, would have an undeniable impact on one of WA's last remaining remnant wetlands and would not reach its intended destination—was a flawed, short-sighted and unacceptable solution to freight movements on our local roads. My community of Bicton told me that it wanted a sustainable long-term freight solution. My community told me that the Perth Freight Link was the wrong plan, and it campaigned alongside me in rejection of that plan. Many were campaigning for the first time, compelled by an issue that was affecting them deeply and motivated by their belief that this was the wrong plan.

We shared their belief, we made a promise, and on 11 March 2017 the people of Bicton elected me as their Labor member of Parliament, and the McGowan Labor government into office. We kept our promise and we stopped the Perth Freight Link. The people of Bicton want a permanent solution to local road congestion and safety, not a bandaaid fix, and the McGowan Labor government is committed to realising that solution. As member for Bicton, I am also committed to this purpose.

On this issue I welcome the creation of the Westport Taskforce to begin the important work of planning the development of the outer harbour; a development that will eventually see freight movements off local roads. Unlike the previous Liberal–National government's make-it-up-as-we-go-along approach to major infrastructure, the McGowan Labor government has taken a critical step to better ensure major infrastructure projects developed in Western Australia are the right ones for this state by supporting the creation of an independent board, Infrastructure WA. Infrastructure WA's broader purpose is to better develop the state and secure commonwealth funds for major projects, and therefore more jobs for WA.

Big infrastructure projects bring opportunity and jobs to WA. I congratulate the Premier and cabinet on getting on with the job of getting more jobs for Western Australians. The McGowan Labor government is committed to delivering on its commitment to jobs for West Aussies. The Premier in his statement to this house earlier today spoke of the initiatives this government is implementing to grow WA jobs. We are well on our way, with 40 000 new jobs having been created since the state election.

This government recognises the opportunity to grow the fortunes of this state for the benefit of all Western Australians, through a focus on local content on government projects. We will back this up with a program to support local business to have the best chance of success in tendering for these projects. It is an incredibly important and positive move towards growing our state's capacity to do, as the Premier stated earlier, "Great and wonderful things into the future".

As the local member of an electorate with a constituency of up to 42 per cent small-to-medium business owners, I am keenly aware of the importance of economic recovery—an economic recovery that is being driven in no small part by the small-to-medium business sector. The implementation of the WA Jobs Bill, in conjunction with the government's industry participation strategy, will see SMEs like those owned by constituents of my electorate access an invaluable opportunity to participate, prosper and contribute to continued economic growth.

I am proud of this government's commitment to supporting small and medium businesses. We know that when businesses grow, jobs are created. In Bicton I am proud to be delivering on the McGowan Labor government's commitment to jobs through the Local Projects, Local Jobs program. My approach to my role as the local member is one that is unapologetically grassroots and community centred. The Local Projects, Local Jobs program is a fantastic example of how this government is delivering on its election commitments with this grassroots, community-building program. My commitment is to the people of my electorate, and I am very happy to see much-needed funding go to my local schools, sporting clubs and service organisations throughout the electorate of Bicton. The recipients of the Local Projects, Local Jobs program funding in the electorate have made good use of the funds, not just for the benefit of their group or organisation but in many cases also to the benefit of the local community. For example, the resurfacing of the two basketball courts at Bicton Primary School has seen the students of the school access a much safer and cooler sport and play space. It has also meant that the local netball club has courts to train on and that the local community has a place to meet and exercise. I would also like to note that Bicton Primary School has been successful in its application for a science lab and I extend my congratulations to the school and school community.

The Local Projects, Local Jobs program has created valuable opportunities and work for the businesses of my electorate. Some examples include Palmyra Primary School's playground works by Nature Play Riverscapes in Melville; Palmyra Junior Football Club's new storeroom's electrical needs were met by Palmyra's Ecogrid Electrical Services; and the Bicton–Palmyra RSL Club had its carpets replaced by Melville Carpets. A local

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 February 2018]

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Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Simon Millman; Dr Tony Buti; Mrs Lisa O'Malley

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contractor was also engaged at the RSL to replace the ceiling above the bar area, which was in serious danger of collapse.

The electorate of Bicton will also benefit from the government's agenda of reform. The people of my electorate have told me that it is time for local government reform and that they feel shut out of the processes around development decisions that have the potential for major and permanent impacts throughout their local communities and open spaces. They feel that the legislated checks and balances around planning and development decisions are out of step with community expectations and that there are serious inadequacies within the act around local government and community interactions. This year the Minister for Local Government's continued work on the review of the Local Government Act to bring the legislation into the modern day and allow for commonsense reforms is welcomed by the people of the electorate of Bicton.

Finally, my electorate will benefit greatly from the McGowan government's commitment to the environment. The Swan River is an important focal point for my electorate and, in common with all waterways and oceans, its protection is vital. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in partnership with the World Economic Forum, predicts that by 2050 plastic in our oceans will outweigh fish. This is a truly shocking statement and I congratulate and thank the Minister for Environment for bringing on legislation that will see lightweight single-use plastic bags banned in WA. There is much to be proud of in the achievements of the McGowan Labor government in our first year in government, and even more to look forward to throughout 2018. Thank you.

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

*House adjourned at 10.42 pm*

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