

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2011–12 BILL 2011
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2011–12 BILL 2011

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [2.50 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to say a few words about the Treasurer's budget speech that he gave last Thursday. The Treasurer's first budget was an outstanding performance in both its content and the Treasurer's broad depth of understanding of the economy and how people in the community are feeling. The budget has a personal as well as an economic component. It is fantastic that the Barnett government is delivering another surplus and will maintain the state's AAA credit rating in the future. When I look at the budgets that have been delivered over the past 10 years, I get a bit envious of the previous government and the \$2 billion-plus budget surpluses it had in the last three years of government and of the amazing cash position it was in at the time. That represents a lost opportunity to deliver social benefits to the people. It is fantastic that this government is paying back that social benefit.

I have been really disappointed about the way the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, has been prancing around —

Point of Order

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I am finding it very difficult to hear the member for Carine, and I am very interested in hearing what he has to say.

The SPEAKER: The member for South Perth makes a very good point. I will give the call to the member for Carine in a moment. As I, and I am sure previous Speakers, have instructed, if members have business to discuss that is not relevant to the business that is before the Chair or they have other things that they would rather be doing, I would prefer they took them outside the chamber so that members who want to hear what the member for Carine is saying can hear him. Members will give the member for Carine an opportunity to be heard.

Debate Resumed

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: As I was saying, the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, has been publicly berating this government in the media for raising the royalty rate on iron ore fines from 5.625 per cent to 7.5 per cent, bringing it in line with the royalty rate for lump iron ore. He has threatened that Western Australia will suffer by losing a share of the goods and services tax revenue allocated by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. He said that the increase in the royalty rate came out of the blue and that he knew nothing about it. It can be seen by what has been reported in the media that that is not true. He knew more than 12 months ago that this was on the cards. Obviously, he did not share that information with anyone in the government, including the Prime Minister. Maybe he was not sure who would be the Prime Minister and so he thought he would keep it to himself. My constituents do not like to be told by the federal government that the state government cannot change the royalty rate for a state resource or bring it into harmony with other royalty rates. There have been discussions about doing that over the past six to 12 months. We have been saying that we need to charge the mining companies more in royalties. The fact that this government and the Premier have been able to negotiate these royalty increases is a credit to them. It is disappointing that the federal Labor members of Western Australia—Stephen Smith in Perth, Gary Gray in Brand and Melissa Parke in Fremantle—are not standing up for the rights of Western Australians in this debate. They have been silent.

The \$350 million in revenue as a result of the BHP–Rio Tinto bill was a fantastic outcome. This government is working to extract for its constituents through renegotiating state agreements the best possible benefits from royalty rates and payments made by mining companies. The government is making sure that the money flows through to different sectors of the community. It is important to send a strong message to Canberra that it should look after its own budget. The federal government has enough of its own problems with debt, the amount of money that has been wasted at the federal level and the agreements and deals it made in back rooms over the mineral resource rent tax to worry about, rather than be concerned with whether the states have a right to represent their own financial interests and benefit from the resources they own. I want to make sure that my constituents' concern on that matter is strongly noted and that the federal Treasurer knows to keep his nose out of our business as far as that is concerned.

On another front, I will talk about public transport. I was delighted to see in the budget the 45 extra train carriages that the government has ordered. My constituents use the Warwick and Stirling train stations that border my electorate. It is fantastic that the work on the additional parking bays at those two train stations has well and truly progressed and should be completed this year. That will be a fantastic outcome. I am sure that the Minister for Transport will not allow the Department of Transport to put the carriages into storage for a rainy day and will make sure that they are available to be used by the 8 400 passengers who use these trains on those lines each day. I believe the additional trains will add real value. Today we heard that buses are important.

Unfortunately, to date there have not been enough bus routes and the buses have been too infrequent. People want to catch public transport close to where they live. If they can rely on the frequency of the public transport system and on being taken to their destination, that will be a great benefit. The \$134 million initiative will be well spent in providing that service to the community.

The Mitchell Freeway runs along the boundary of my electorate. I regularly drive on it to get home and know that the traffic on it does get congested. When approaching my electorate, it begins to bank up, generally around Cedric Street and Karrinyup Road, and it gets worse from there. The decision to add an extra lane between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue will be a great outcome for the people living in the northern suburbs. It will definitely improve people's ability to get home and will improve safety. That is a very good decision that was well and truly overdue. The Minister for Transport is very conscious of the needs of the community and of the frustrations and stresses that are bothering people. It is fantastic that the feedback from members on this side about the issues that need to be worked on have been taken on board.

The government made a great decision on air conditioning in schools. I was always flabbergasted that new schools and new extensions to schools were built without air conditioning. In a state as hot as Western Australia, I could never understand why the parents and citizens associations had to sell sausages and chocolates and undertake other fundraising activities so that the teachers and our children could have a comfortable learning environment. We all know that it is difficult for children to concentrate after being out in the elements on hot days. The weather can put students off by making it harder for them to concentrate. It distracts children from getting the best outcomes from themselves and their teachers. For a nation that prides itself on learning and building a more educated community, these sorts of things are no-brainers. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier and all the ministers for listening to members on this side of the house about the importance of, and need to, install air conditioners. The previous system was ridiculous. The government's decision has been a very positive outcome.

It is good to see that the \$8.3 million is still in the budget for the completion of Lake Gwelup Primary School in my electorate. It is progressing quite well. I was at a sod-turning ceremony earlier this year with the Minister for Education. The community there is exceptionally happy that it is getting this new school. It is a growing community where there is lots of development. It will be a well-used asset for the community and I congratulate the community for fighting for that outcome.

It is fantastic that funding is in the budget to support independent public schools. Two of my schools—a primary school and a high school—recently approached me about supporting their bid to become independent public schools. They were very enthusiastic about that. They also wanted to take it one step further so that their location could become an education precinct, given they are on the same piece of land. There is real potential for synergies between primary schools and high schools and for opportunities to share resources. Obviously primary schools and high schools have different facilities, so a precinct such as that would be fantastic.

With the \$1 billion that has been allocated to the social services package, it is fantastic to see that those most in need in our society will finally get recognised in a way that I would have expected to happen prior to 2008, when there were billions of dollars to spend and nowhere to spend it. It would have been a great opportunity in those days to use a lot of that money for that social infrastructure. I commend this government for supporting people with disabilities, mental illness and alcohol and drug-related problems; for supporting families generally; and for seeking to help homeless people in the Perth CBD. That is all very good.

I also commend the government for increasing seniors' rebates up to \$150 for singles and \$225 for couples. That will come in very handy. Seniors are definitely feeling the strain; they are finding it hard to budget. The fact that the government has recognised that with an increase in the hardship utilities grant by an extra \$6 million up to \$10 million is fantastic, and will go a long way towards helping people. We will have to monitor that situation over the coming months to see how that pans out.

The decision to allocate money to planning the new sports stadium is a fantastic decision and is a step in the right direction. We have finally got some momentum on this issue. As much as members opposite may criticise that the whole cost of the stadium has not been budgeted for, we need to plan and get things right. We need to take the preliminary steps. We can see the problems that arise from not doing that.

The Perth Arena is a perfect example of a project that was not properly planned. The contracts were badly put together; people did not know what they were building and had to work it out along the way. The budget on that project has blown out by \$400 million-plus, which is a lot of money, especially in the tough times we are experiencing at the moment. We need to put more work into the front end of projects rather than just make announcements about money for infrastructure being in the budget and the forward estimates.

The decision to inject 100 per cent of the money raised from speed cameras and red-light camera fines into the road trauma trust fund is well and truly overdue. We need to improve driver education. People talk about

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speeding fines being revenue raising. I tell people who say that, “If you don’t want to give the government any money, don’t speed; starve the government, please. Don’t give it any money.” I challenge people to starve the government of revenue from speed cameras and red-light cameras because that is a good thing to do.

Members opposite are very passionate about rail travel. The proposed extension of the northern suburbs rail line to Butler is very positive. I am getting the wind-up from members on this side, so I cannot speak for much longer. Infill sewerage is also a very important initiative. In my electorate the single-lane section of Reid Highway between Erindale Road and Marmion Avenue needs some work. Some great work is being done to create an overpass at the intersection of Mirrabooka Avenue and Alexander Drive to increase the flow of traffic. That little section of Reid Highway in my electorate gets very congested. A lot of people use it. It will cost a bit of money to change it but it is very important. Initially, the community was opposed to that extension but has warmed to it over time and now people want to see a dual lane built there.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: I raised it with Treasury in requesting that section from Erindale to the freeway, so with your support we might be able to get it.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I am very passionate about that; I have already mentioned it on a number of occasions. I am very keen for that to happen.

There is some money in the budget, as there has been for years, for underground power. My community, especially along the coast, is very passionate about underground power. I look forward to the Minister for Energy making some changes on that front. All up, can I say that since I have been a member, the last three budgets have been progressively focused on state building, infrastructure projects and building capacity in the state. Now we are moving towards helping people who are suffering as a result of the GFC and other financial problems in not just the state and country but around the world. This budget is heading in the right direction in that respect. I thank the Treasurer and all the ministers for their wonderful work, and I look forward to promoting this budget to the community at a broader level. Thank you very much.

MR M.P. WHITELY (Bassendean) [3.06 pm]: I found it interesting that pages 1 and 4 of today’s *The West Australian* highlighted concerns about improper pharmaceutical company influence. Highlighting big pharma influence has been a focus of much of my parliamentary work. I was even characterised in a recent article as an anti-pharmaceutical activist. Whilst it was a very good article, it completely and utterly misrepresents me. I take this opportunity to put on the record my thanks to the manufacturers of Micardis, Boehringer Ingelheim. Micardis is my blood pressure medication. I have tried everything else to get my blood pressure under control, and if it were not for that wonderful pharmaceutical produced by that pharmaceutical company, I would not be able to do it. I am certainly not anti-pharmaceutical. But I do understand the nature of pharmaceutical companies. They exist for one reason, and that is not for the public good; it is to make a profit. If we understand that, we can understand what to expect from their behaviour. I have also been mischaracterised as not believing in mental illness because I question the validity of ADHD. That is not true. I have seen psychosis and that is real mental illness. I believe there is definitely a role for the cautious use of medications in treating mental illness. I wanted to put those two comments on the record before I started today’s speech.

I will talk about two issues today. The first issue is the growing concerns about prescription drug abuse in Western Australia and how simple I think it is to solve that problem. Most big problems demand complex solutions, but I think we can make a big dent in the problem of prescription drug abuse with some very simple and inexpensive measures. Secondly, I want to talk in greater depth of a far more complex issue; namely, the future of mental health that has been outlined by the federal government and some concerns I have about it.

As I said, the problem of prescription drug abuse is very widespread and growing but I think it is particularly easy to address. An excellent piece was written in *The West Australian* on 11 April by Adrian Beattie. He wrote a two-page spread on pages 6 and 7 with the heading of the main article being “Prescription drug addicts use doctors like dealers”. It highlighted how easy it is for drug abusers to get access to prescription drugs they can abuse or, in some cases, on-sell as a source of funds and, in other cases, abuse for their own lifestyle purposes. A number of speakers are highlighted in the articles. The main article refers to the situation of a couple, “Doug and Valerie”; those are not their real names. I know the real “Doug” well, and I know that he is listening to me today. I congratulate him on the work that he has done and I can assure him that although progress is slow, we will get there. I say to him: hang in there, and we will make progress, but, unfortunately, the world moves a lot more slowly than we might want to be the case. Nevertheless, I think this is a relatively easy problem to address. To put this matter in context, I refer to an article that highlights Doug and Valerie’s situation. I suggest that all members read the article, because it graphically describes video footage that I have actually watched; it is absolutely disturbing to see the impact that prescription drug abuse has had on this family. It describes how —

Over three months, she spent \$2000 on prescription medicines and most of it—\$1400—in just two metropolitan pharmacies.

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“I told the doctors what she was doing,” Dough said. “I told the pharmacies and I even told Medicare. Nothing happened.

“As far as I know, no one contacted Valerie and she continued to get prescription drugs. When I asked Medicare what they had done, they sent me a letter saying they couldn’t tell me because of privacy issues.”

The article goes on to highlight similar stories, one of which is the story of “Craig”—he does not identify himself beyond that—and the way he supplements his income with OxyContin. Another one is the story of Mike Desbouvrie, who actually identifies himself as a former drug abuser and highlights just how easy it is to get prescription drugs. The article also quotes George O’Neil, who highlights the fact that a growing proportion of the people he helps with detoxification are prescription drug abusers and that it is a very serious issue. There is a cost in human lives, but there is also a financial cost, most of it to the federal government. For instance, in 2010, oxycodone prescriptions cost the taxpayers of Western Australia \$5.78 million, and that is one of the drugs that is most frequently abused.

Lenette Mullen, president of the Western Australian branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, identifies in this article a very simple solution that needs to be enacted. She highlights the fact that —

Pseudoephedrine is the only dangerous drug which is tracked in real time. It is found in cold and flu tablets and can be turned into methamphetamine.

Pharmacists are required to ask for photo identification from anyone buying pseudoephedrine and those details are kept on a computer record which all pharmacists can access.

The customer’s details remain on file for several days and during that time that person will not be sold pseudoephedrine by any pharmacist.

“It’s a simple system, but it works very well,” Ms Mullen said. “If that system was widened to include the prescription drugs which are targeted by addicts and dealers, that would go a long way towards stamping out people’s ability to abuse the system.”

I have spoken about this before; I am glad that the Minister for Health is in the chamber. This is a big and growing problem with a very simple solution. It may take some cooperation between state and federal governments, but all that needs to happen is for pharmacists’ computers to be able to talk to each other so that when somebody has a script filled faster than it could possibly be used, assuming that there are adequate identification processes in place, it can be identified that the person should not be prescribed further drugs to avoid potential abuse. It is a really simple solution to a really big and growing problem, and it would not be particularly expensive to implement. There may be some privacy implications that need to be considered, but we simply need computer networks that can talk to each other, and that is surely not beyond our wit and wisdom.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: It should be done across the board with all prescription drugs. If we can do it for one drug, I cannot see why it would be much more expensive to do it for all drugs. I urge the minister to talk to George O’Neil and “Doug”; he will tell the minister about the tragedies that occur. I urge the minister to talk to these people and read the article and see how simply it can be addressed.

Dr K.D. Hames: You do need to talk to Nicola.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: Of course, and it is not beyond our wit and wisdom to get together and solve this problem. It will be a relatively inexpensive system and it will save money for the public system because there will not be the problem of taxpayers subsidising prescription drug abuse, people’s lives will not be destroyed, and, in the long term, it will be of human and economic benefit. That is the first issue I want to discuss, and as I said, it is a relatively easy problem to address.

The second issue I want to discuss is far more complex and will take more than the 22 minutes I have left. I refer to the federal government’s response to mental health in the recent federal budget. Mental health was a centrepiece of the federal budget, with an additional \$2.2 billion being identified over five years for mental health initiatives, of which \$419.7 million was split between the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre, and Headspace. It is interesting that they were the only two programs highlighted in a joint press release put out by the Prime Minister and the commonwealth Minister for Mental Health and Ageing. It reads —

This package includes \$419.7 million over five years to significantly increase youth mental health services including the expansion of two programs pioneered by leading mental health expert Professor Patrick McGorry —

They are the programs I have already mentioned.

Let me be clear up front: an additional \$2.2 billion for mental health is a good thing; it is great that extra money is being put into mental health, and to the extent that people such as Professor McGorry and others, such as Professor Ian Hickie and Professor John Mendoza, have contributed to putting mental health on the agenda, they deserve praise. However, I am concerned that the devil is in the detail. My criticism is not about extra funding, but, in fact, about the lack of an evidence base for the decisions that have been made. I suggest that this response was a political response to a political problem, not a public policy response based on thorough analysis of the evidence. I criticise not only the Gillard government but also the Abbott opposition, the Independents and, indeed, the media. They have all allowed the mental health debate to be dominated by a tiny group—Patrick McGorry, Ian Hickie and John Mendoza. I am not suggesting that those people do not have valuable contributions to make, and I am not suggesting that they do not do some good work. However, I am saying that they are not the independent mental health spokespersons that they are portrayed to be in the media; they are players with vested interests. That has been missed by the media, the opposition, the federal government and even the Independents in federal Parliament.

I do not think that the opposition and the Independents who advocated on behalf of McGorry, Hickie and Mendoza fully understood what they were advocating, and I am certain that the federal government does not fully understand what it has funded. I do not want members to misinterpret what I am saying; those three gentlemen are fantastic advocates and great political lobbyists, but I am not convinced that they have been asked enough tough questions about the programs they advocate—particularly EPPIC and Headspace. I am concerned about the potential for off-label prescribing in expanded EPPIC and Headspace services, and the potential for this to do enormous harm to young people in Western Australia. Before I talk about that, I will talk about the political process involved and highlight how unusual it was.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The process by which this \$2.2 billion was allocated was a political process that circumvented the normal process we might expect. In fact, the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing has the National Advisory Council on Mental Health to give him advice on strategic directions for mental health.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): If members want to have a meeting, can they please go outside.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing took the extraordinary step of sidelining the National Advisory Council on Mental Health and set up a mental health expert working group. That was identified as being a time-sensitive group that was going to come together and deliver quick advice to the minister. Three members of that group—Professor McGorry, Professor Ian Hickie and Monsignor David Cappo—left that group and produced their own \$3.5 billion five-year blueprint for mental health under the banner of the Independent Mental Health Reform Group.

The SPEAKER: Members, I have given everyone a warning. The next person I get for talking, I will call to order. When those members get up and make their speeches, they want everyone to listen of them, and so does the member for Bassendean.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I have to keep going over my material and I am losing time, which is really beginning to annoy me.

These three members of the group that was set up by the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing set up the Independent Mental Health Reform Group. They call themselves “independent”, although it is interesting that both Professors McGorry and Hickie have extensive and longstanding commercial ties to the pharmaceutical industry. In fact, Professor Ian Hickie’s CV identifies that he received some \$411 000 in personal funding from the pharmaceutical industry, so I have some questions about the use of the term “independent”. The blueprint they came up with identified \$226 million for Headspace, which ended up getting \$197.3 million, and \$910 million for Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres, which received \$222.4 million. That was supposed to be matched by state governments. In other words, to fund the extra EPPI centres, the state governments will have to match that with dollar-for-dollar funding. I suggest that state governments around Australia need to have a good think about whether they do that because the evidence base is inconclusive. They have not, in my view, addressed the issues around off-label prescribing. I hope that I have time to identify those issues, as I am one of the few people who seems to be awake to this. There are some other critics, including Professor Jon Jureidini, and the new federal member for Canberra has made an isolated statement, but there are not many of us who have brought a critique to bear on these issues.

I will summarise my main concerns. I am very concerned that we will see through Headspace and EPPIC a potential increase in the off-label prescription of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor antidepressants, despite the fact there is clinical evidence that is accepted by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the US Food and

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Drug Administration that using SSRI antidepressants leads to a significant increase in the prospects of young people under the age of 24 years being suicidal—an increase of 80 per cent. Both Headspace and EPPIC advocate the use of SSRI antidepressants. I am also concerned at the potential for EPPIC services to undertake the off-label prescribing of antipsychotics that have some quite nasty side effects.

I will talk first about my concerns for the potential that an expansion of the Headspace services will lead to a greater prescription of SSRI antidepressants. I turn to this document titled, “Using SSRI Antidepressants to Treat Depression in Young People: What are the Issues and What is the Evidence?” This is a document produced by Headspace in 2009 that has five authors, including Patrick McGorry. The paper concludes by stating —

In cases of **moderate to severe depression**, SSRI medication may be considered within the context of comprehensive management of the patient, which includes regular careful monitoring for the emergence of suicidal ideation or behaviour.

Yet the paper builds a compelling case for not using SSRI antidepressants. It acknowledges that the only SSRI that has positive outcomes in clinical trials is fluoxetine.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr M.P. WHITELY: Even those benefits seem to disappear the longer one looks at the evidence. The paper also highlights the concerns of suicidal behaviour that I have outlined, the fact that clinical trials indicate that compared to taking a placebo, SSRI antidepressants increase the probability of a young person being suicidal by over 80 per cent. One has to bear this in mind against the political process that was used to sell the need for expansions of Headspace services. It was done against the background of candlelight vigils that were coordinated through Get Up to highlight concerns about youth suicide. That was used to create momentum for increased funding to youth-oriented mental health services. However, the very services that the federal government is funding prescribe against TGA and FDA recommendations and against the black box warnings that exist for SSRI antidepressants; they propose the reliance on the use of SSRIs. Therefore, we may see an expansion of services that prescribe more SSRIs, which in turn leads to more youth suicides. I am very concerned that when we have the next candlelight vigil, if this issue of SSRI antidepressant prescribing is not addressed at both Headspace and EPPIC, we may see an increase in the number of candles at that vigil as a result of an increase in the number of youth suicides because of an expansion in these services.

The SSRI issue has not attracted much attention. I have written a blog about it. Professor McGorry took up my invitation to respond to that blog, and in fact Professor McGorry and I are meeting here on 29 June. These are the sorts of issues that we need to thrash out. Until these issues are addressed, I will not stop my advocacy and I will not stop highlighting them.

My concerns about EPPIC are less straightforward. EPPIC is very much Professor McGorry’s baby and is based on the principle that early intervention can prevent later psychosis—the philosophy that a stitch in time saves nine. I support the philosophy of early intervention. Members who have listened to my speeches in the past will be bleeding from the ears hearing me plead for the need for early intervention so that we can identify kids’ real health needs. My concern is not that we do not need early intervention; my concern is what that early intervention will be. I do not have time to outline the whole history in this debate, but I have outlined my concerns in detail about psychosis risk syndrome and the potential operations of EPPIC at my website www.speedupsitstill.com. At my invitation, Professor McGorry replied to my latest blog. We also had an exchange on *The World Today* program on ABC radio on 12 May that was titled “Mental health initiative under attack” in which I outlined my concerns, and on 20 May Professor McGorry responded. As I said, we are halfway through what I believe is going to be a constructive and cordial exchange. However, I want to put on record my prime issue so there is absolutely no ambiguity about it. What we need from Professor McGorry, on behalf of EPPIC, is a very clear unambiguous statement about the circumstances under which antipsychotics will be prescribed at EPPIC, and we need a very clear statement about the future of psychosis risk syndrome. I will not beat around the bush. To date, what Professor McGorry has said and written is confusing for those who follow it closely. It is confusing for one very clear reason: he has contradicted himself too often.

Specifically, I want to begin with the issue of psychosis risk syndrome, otherwise known as attenuated psychotic syndrome. It is a newly hypothesised psychiatric disorder that hypothesises that we can typically identify in teenagers and young people those who are at high risk of becoming psychotic. They have not had a first psychotic episode but proponents hypothesise that they can spot them becoming psychotic. It is a very controversial proposed disorder. Dr Allen Frances, the psychiatrist who led the redevelopment of DSM-IV, the bible of psychiatry, had some very unflattering things to say about psychosis risk syndrome. He said —

... “Psychosis Risk Syndrome” stands out as the most ill-conceived and potentially harmful ...

Of all the proposals for insertion into DSM-5 —

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The whole concept of early intervention rests on three fundamental [flawed] pillars ... 1) it would misidentify many teenagers who are not really at risk for psychosis; 2) the treatment they would most often receive (atypical antipsychotic medication) has no proven efficacy; but, 3) it does have definite dangerous complications.”

They are the words of the man who led the redevelopment of DSM-IV. These are not the words of someone at the fringe of psychiatry. These are words from the very heart of psychiatry.

When I was on *The World Today* on 12 May I said that Professor McGorry is a leading international proponent of a new psychiatric disorder for inclusion in the next edition of DSM-5. On the long version of the audio version on *The World Today* website, Professor McGorry said —

Contrary to Mr Whitely’s statements, I haven’t been pushing for it —

That is, psychosis risk syndrome —

to be included in DSM-5. Now that hasn’t been my position.

...

But it’s a new area of work. It’s only been studied for the last 15 years or so, so you know we haven’t got all the answers ... **I’m certainly not saying that it should go into DSM-5 ...**

So on two occasions in that interview he said that he was not advocating it should go into DSM-5. That is just plain wrong. There is no other way to describe this. I have an article that was published in *Psychiatry update* a year ago entitled “DSM-V ‘risk syndrome’: a good start, should go further”. It begins by stating —

The proposal for DSM-V to include a ‘risk syndrome’ reflecting an increased likelihood of mental illness is welcome but does not go far enough, according to Orygen Youth Health’s director Professor Patrick McGorry.

That is somebody else paraphrasing his words, so I went to the original source document, which is an article available in the *Science Digest* under “Schizophrenia Research”. It is written by Professor McGorry and the opening sentence states —

The proposal to consider including the concept of the risk syndrome in the forthcoming revision of the DSM classification is innovative and timely. It has not come out of left field, however, and is based upon a series of conceptual and empirical foundations built over the past 15 years.

That is absolutely clear-cut. I could build a case in greater detail but Professor McGorry has clearly advocated the inclusion of psychosis risk syndrome, otherwise known as attenuated psychosis syndrome. He has advocated for the inclusion of that in DSM-5. That is of some interest but of more interest is the role of antipsychotics for the treatment of those who have never had psychosis. This is my real concern, and the potential for young people who have never had a psychotic break to be treated with antipsychotics. In the same interview, Professor McGorry said —

Medication should never be the first line of treatment in young people, we should always try to find psychological and simpler ways of treating youth mental health issues, that is where I agree with him ...

He was referring to me when he said that —

but where I part company is where he tried to I suppose confuse the issue by, I suppose, denying any value to these medications. They clearly do have value, the anti-psychotic medications, in people with clear-cut psychosis,

I have never been critical of the on-label prescription of antipsychotics to people who have had a psychotic break. Professor McGorry is quite wrong in characterising me as saying that. But that is not of any great consequence because, after all, it just relates to me being misrepresented. Another misrepresentation is of greater consequence because he has misrepresented EPPIC’s position. Professor McGorry said that —

Medication should never be the first line of treatment in young people, we should always try to find psychological and simpler ways of treating people with youth mental health issues.

I agree with that, but that is not what is in the EPPIC guidelines. The EPPIC guidelines clearly identified that those presenting with —

a *depressive episode* of at least moderate severity should be commenced on an antidepressant

It does not even narrow it down to Fluoxetine, the one selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor identified as having some positive effects. It just says “antidepressant”. I am very concerned about that. That is not the only problem.

Professor McGorry also claimed, in response to my blog, that EPPIC followed the beyondblue guidelines. That is not true. The beyondblue guidelines are far more cautious in its recommendations about the use of SSRIs or antidepressants. It is not accurate to say that EPPIC follows the beyondblue guidelines for the treatment of antidepressants.

I have a number of other concerns. Unfortunately, I will run out of time. My primary concern is that the whole issue—I do not have time to detail it here but I will in my next blog—of the use of antipsychotics in non-psychotic teenagers needs to be clarified. EPPIC’s target audience is young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years. I think it is time that we look at exactly what it is identifying. Professor McGorry and EPPIC have to answer the following very simple question: under what circumstances, if any, will EPPIC either recommend or prescribe antipsychotics to patients who have not experienced psychosis? In other words, they need to tell us when and if EPPIC will do off-label prescribing of antipsychotics and when it will recommend it. EPPIC and Professor McGorry need to make their position clear because at the moment it is not clear. I mistakenly thought it was made clear in a previous blog that I had written when a spokesperson for Professor McGorry, Matthew Hamilton, made some quite promising statements that indicated that they were no longer proposing the use of antipsychotics for psychosis risk syndrome. Since then, we have seen some ambiguous statements by Professor McGorry that have left that door open. We need to have a very clear answer from Professor McGorry on behalf of EPPIC as to when antipsychotics will be used by those who have not yet suffered psychosis.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [3.38 pm]: I rise to speak on the 2011–12 budget. What a disappointing budget it is. It is the most political document ever presented in this chamber. The budget papers are full of contradictions, with absolutely no clear financial strategy and no clear financial plan. I want to make a few initial comments about the presentation of the budget. Rarely do we see budget papers containing some assumptions, forecasts and net debt figures of some sort and then have the budget speech refer to net debt figures that are completely different and based on other assumptions. We have a situation in which the government wants to have it both ways. In the budget papers it assumes a very low share of GST in 2014–15. I think the GST relativity is listed at about 3.3 per cent, yet the budget speech assumes a 7.5 per cent share in that same year. The government is basically saying, “We’re going to create an argument with the commonwealth in one sense, but don’t worry; we’ve got debt under control another way—by increasing the GST share.” Therefore, the government is having it both ways. As I recall, a government should present only one set of budget figures and one set of debt figures. There were two sets of debt figures in this budget. That is absolutely extraordinary! I have never seen anything like it.

I will touch upon the GST agreement, which has had a lot of discussion over recent weeks and recent years. I will go back to 1999 and 2000 when the GST agreement was on the table for the states and territories. I remember that time very clearly because I was working in the Leader of the Opposition’s office for the then opposition leader, Geoff Gallop. I remember where Labor stood on the GST agreement. We opposed the centralisation of power from the states to the commonwealth. We said that Western Australia would be worse off because it would basically transfer revenue-raising power from the state to the commonwealth. The state was always going to be exposed to the calculations and assumptions undertaken by the commonwealth. That was always going to be the problem. Our analysis showed that in the transitional years in particular, the state of Western Australia would be worse off. The then Liberal government disagreed. It believed that GST would be a growth tax for Western Australia—growth revenue, it stated. The then Liberal government accepted the GST intergovernmental agreement with open arms. The state Labor Party pointed out that it was a bad deal for Western Australia because it sent financial power from Western Australia to Canberra. We had seen that happen over the past decades and this would be another element in the transfer of power, particularly financial power, to the commonwealth, and we opposed it. However, the then Liberal government accepted it. It had no guarantees written into that agreement. At that time it could have brought a floor into the GST share, which would have been the wise thing to do, but the then Liberal government did not do that. As a result, we are now in the situation that more of our state revenue, more of the revenue that we need to fund our hospitals, schools and roads, is exposed to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. That is bad for Western Australia because this is a growing state with a strong economy. We have a greater capacity to raise revenue than the capacity of other states, and, as a result, we are penalised.

I just wanted to again outline those facts in the chamber because, frankly, everything that has happened is as we predicted in 1999. If only the state Liberal government at the time had actually done the analysis and really understood what this GST deal meant for Western Australia.

As I said, this budget has no financial plan and no strategy; it is about spending today. That is all it is about—the Premier’s pet projects and spending for today. It is about households having massive increases in household fees and charges. The last part of the trifecta is that debt has jumped out of control. Therefore, households are paying today with increased prices for water and electricity and they will have to pay tomorrow to service the massive

debt that the Barnett government is leaving us. The increases in debt on a per annum basis are astronomical! It is something the like of which I have never seen. Let us go through those three aspects.

There is no financial plan and no strategy. The Treasurer stands and criticises the previous government's surpluses. Yes, they were big surpluses but they did one thing—that is, reduce our debt. Running a strong surplus reduced debt, and we saw debt fall to \$3.6 billion. Now we have a government that just spends, spends and spends with absolutely no concern about what that means for Western Australians tomorrow. The fact is that spending has hit all-time highs. As the Leader of the Opposition outlined in his contribution to the budget debate yesterday, expenditure has grown by 36 per cent in three years. Page 39 of the government's own budget papers looks at expenditure growth over the past 10 years and has an incredible graph. It shows that over the past decade, the highest expenditure growth, about 13 per cent, was in 2008–09—the first year of the Barnett government. The second highest expenditure growth over the past 10 years was in 2009–10—the second year of the Barnett government. The forecasts assume average growth of 5.5 per cent, but the two highest rates of expenditure growth over the past 10 years have been the two fully completed financial years of the Barnett government. The government talks about expenditure control, and in the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* it states —

This reflects the impact of Government initiatives to contain expense growth, including the 3% efficiency dividend ...

No-one takes that seriously. Look at the Department of Education: the efficiency dividend was never met. Although the Treasurer said that 90 per cent of the efficiency dividend was met, the education department did not meet its efficiency dividend. As a result, the government has had to go through this budget and put in what was effectively the efficiency dividend—the structural adjustment. Therefore, the government cut the money out of the budget for the efficiency dividend, it claimed that the efficiency dividend worked, but it had to inject that same money back into the education budget because the efficiency dividend did not work. Then the government includes a massive paragraph in the budget stating how well expenditure control is happening under this government! Again, the graph in the government's own budget papers shows that the two years of highest expenditure growth over the past decade have been under the Barnett government. The government has this great forecast average growth of 5.5 per cent over the forward estimates, but according to the Premier these estimates are just an educated guess.

We have to deal with the facts and the facts are that this government's expenditure has increased by 36 per cent over the past three years. That is an incredible amount. What does that mean for everybody? It means that debt is climbing by approximately \$3 billion to \$4 billion per annum. Let us think back to June 2008. The amount of debt left by the previous government was \$3.6 billion. Therefore, each year the increase in debt equals the absolute amount of debt that was left in 2008. These are massive increases in debt that expose Western Australia on two fronts. The first, which the Leader of the Opposition outlined, is the fact that if something went wrong with our international trading partners or if our housing market did not pick up—any of those sorts of things—the Western Australian revenue base would be significantly exposed and we would find it very difficult to meet the interest payments on a per annum basis. That is one aspect. The second is the financial capacity left to future governments. I believe that the suburbs of Western Australia need improved services and improved infrastructure. When we go through the outer suburbs, particularly growth corridors—the north east corridor, the corridor north through Wanneroo, the corridor south to Mandurah, and the corridor through Serpentine–Jarrahdale—we see the massive increase in population that is occurring. Homes and subdivisions are approved every day and there is massive demand for services throughout our suburbs. This level of debt limits future governments to provide those key services and infrastructure. How will we fund the schools for tomorrow? How will we fund the train lines for tomorrow? How will we fund the public transport routes for tomorrow? This is a government that thinks solely for today—how it looks in the media and the short grabs it gets on TV that night. This government does not care about the capacity to fund future generations. Going to a debt level of \$22 billion in a few years will limit our capacity to fund services and infrastructure in future years. Therefore, that debt level not only exposes Western Australia to vulnerabilities, particularly in our revenue base, but also actually limits our ability as a state to provide funding for services and infrastructure to people in the suburbs. As I said, suburbs are appearing every night; subdivisions are happening every day. As a result, first home buyers are being asked to live tens of kilometres away from the city. This state needs to be able to provide the services and the infrastructure to allow those people to get to work, to get to school and to have a good lifestyle. That is the other aspect regarding what debt does to the future of Western Australia.

The last matter I want to touch on in my general comments on the budget is household charges. The Treasurer said that people are not stupid on this issue and that they recognise that they have to go to cost reflectivity or cost recovery. I agree with one part of what the Treasurer said: people are not stupid. They know that this government had a choice in developing this budget, just as it had a choice in developing the previous two budgets. The choice was putting \$25 million towards the Premier's palace or subsidising households. That was the choice.

Governments always have a choice, and this government chose to pursue an economic argument of full cost recovery in a very short time frame and to not subsidise households. It is as clear as that. The government had a choice, and it chose to impose significant increases in household fees and charges. This is hurting everyone. It is hurting pensioners, with their fixed incomes. It is hurting every household in the suburbs, because everything has increased by such a large amount. Again, the Leader of the Opposition outlined those figures—in three years, a 57 per cent increase in electricity bills, a 45 per cent increase in water charges, plus an enormous increase in other costs; for example, the landfill levy—and how those electricity and water costs are passed on to households in other ways. This budget, I think, outlined a nine to 30 per cent increase in electricity tariffs for business. That will flow on to everyone when they visit those businesses that are paying extraordinary increases in their electricity bills. It will flow on to councils that have to pay increased electricity bills to run their lights at sporting ovals. All these things flow through. Therefore, people get hit not just when they open their Synergy bills and see the massive increases in their bills. Again, these massive increases are raised with me every day. People are trying to use less electricity, but it just does not seem to be working; the bills cost more. People are trying to do the right thing, but when the government increases the electricity price by 57 per cent in three years, it is very hard for people to re-engineer their whole house to try to get a reduction in their bills. It does not matter what they do. This is an issue that is affecting every household throughout Western Australia. Given the impact of the cost of living and given issues regarding interest rates, it is a massive issue for every household. I do not believe that this government fully understands what it has done.

As I said, the government is pursuing an economic argument of full cost recovery. That is all it is; it is an economic argument, because the government can subsidise, and government subsidisation has the same impact on the electricity market. However, this government chose an economic argument, and it has always believed in full cost recovery. Again, this government has shown that it is committed to full cost recovery, and in a very short time frame, too. There is no price plan here. The situation is that within three or four years we are going to get to full cost recovery. As I said, this is impacting everybody out there.

I now want to turn to the budget and my electorate. There has been some positive news for my electorate. I welcome the new bus service that will be extended from Landsdale to the train line. In particular, for the first time Landsdale residents will be connected to the Kingsway City Shopping Centre by a dedicated bus route. That is something which I have been calling for and which Labor committed to before the 2008 election. I am glad to see that this high-priority bus route has been funded through this budget. I understand that there will be a consultation period over the coming weeks for local residents to participate in to ensure that the bus service meets their needs. I will be involved in that because I want to make sure that this bus route delivers extra benefits to the people of Landsdale. Therefore, I welcome that initiative.

I called for a number of things that, unfortunately, were not funded. Initially, I want to touch upon the roads throughout the north eastern corridor. The Alexander Drive–Reid Highway overpass has been finished—well, sort of finished; on Alexander Drive some significant works are still happening—and that is a welcome addition to the area. However, there are major road and infrastructure issues throughout the north eastern corridor that are becoming an increasing problem because of the major housing developments throughout that corridor. I have mentioned those before in this place. I want to talk about St Leonards Estate, Whiteman Edge and Brookleigh Estate.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are a number of housing developments along the Lord Street corridor. That is already placing increased pressure on the roads throughout the area. As people move into those new homes, it will increase the amount of traffic and the amount of congestion throughout the area. As I said, during this period we are seeing a lot of construction traffic, and that is also causing enormous problems on our local roads.

I want to talk about the road improvements that we would like to see in our area. We would like to see the completion of the duplication of Reid Highway between Beechboro and West Swan Roads. That area includes the Lord Street–Reid Highway intersection. That is a very dangerous intersection that services some people in my electorate, but mainly the people in Ellenbrook.

Mr F.A. Alban: That was announced today.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member. I have been calling for that for two and a half years. That is good. I have been lobbying for that for a few years, so I am very happy about that.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Well done, member for Swan Hills.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think people out there know who has been calling for these issues.

The Malaga Drive and Reid Highway intersection is another major traffic black spot that needs addressing, in particular the enormous amount of commercial traffic using that intersection. That intersection is getting worse

and worse. When the overpasses on Reid Highway at Mirrabooka and Alexander Drive are finished, this Malaga Drive intersection will get worse, so that is another priority. There was not an announcement about Gngangara Road today, was there? No. The intersection of Gngangara and Beechboro Roads was rated the worst intersection as part of the RAC survey that was undertaken about two months ago. A number of cars and trucks use that intersection. There is poor visibility, and it is a very dangerous intersection. I believe that the whole issue of Gngangara Road needs to be addressed through a proper strategy of reclassifying that road to a state road. Gngangara Road is a major east–west connecting road, and needs to be a major road for the area. I know that the City of Wanneroo and the City of Swan both support reclassifying Gngangara Road to a state road. The state government needs to put some funding into it. As I said, the intersection of Gngangara and Beechboro Roads is a major black spot, and all of Gngangara Road needs to be upgraded to a dual carriageway.

I also want to mention Lord Street and West Swan Road, which are two roads that go through my electorate. Lord Street is becoming more and more dangerous every day. We need to improve Lord Street, in particular because of the number of houses being developed along that street every day. As I said, more and more people are using those roads. With St Leonards Estate now well underway, a huge mixture of buses, trucks and residential traffic use that road. The Minister for Transport has had a few drinks, has he?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No. I have a sore neck. I was out at Lord Street today watching all those cars go up and down.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, I heard. Thanks for the invite, even though it is my electorate. That was a very classy act again, Minister for Transport.

Lord Street needs to be upgraded. West Swan Road, which carries a lot of residential traffic, is a tourism area. The key issue is Henley Brook Avenue, which is a road that is listed on the Swan urban growth corridor. The construction of Henley Brook Avenue would take a lot of traffic off both Lord Street and West Swan Road. Henley Brook Avenue is designed to primarily meet the new housing developments throughout the area. I believe that the City of Swan, together with the state government, should try to fast-track Henley Brook Avenue. As I said —

Mr T.R. Buswell: What about the Perth–Darwin highway?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Has the minister funded it?

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 4011.]