

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — PERFORMANCE

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [3.08 pm]: I ask the house to condemn the McGowan government for its arrogance in its first 100 days, particularly for its failure to disclose increases in household fees and charges —

The SPEAKER: Member, you have to say, “I move”.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan government for its arrogance in its first 100 days, particularly for its failure to disclose increases in household fees and charges in a timely manner and its failure to deliver against its election commitments.

Depending upon whether it is the anniversary of the election or the swearing in of the McGowan government, this week marks the 100th day of the McGowan government. We can clearly see that it had a very concerted and well thought out set of plans to get into government, but no plan to govern. It stems on its commitments, particularly in the major issue facing the state, which was the condition of state finances. In the run-up to that, for six years the now Treasurer—he was at least the shadow Treasurer for that period—and various members opposite scrutinised and thoroughly understood the state of the state’s finances. I might add that every move that we made to restrain expenditure, they criticised. In the run-up to the election and throughout the election campaign, the Labor Party, quite rightly, made a great deal of that issue. In fact, I remember the rap on election day—a \$30 billion deficit and a \$40 billion debt. In the run-up to the election, the Labor Party said that it had put together a fiscal plan for this state, which the then shadow Treasurer, the now Treasurer, claimed to be a sensible, credible financial plan subject to the most robust and rigorous independent assessment that any opposition had ever put its costings process through. It brought together a group of eminent experts from outside and they gave a tick of approval to the funding. The Labor Party thoroughly knew what the state of the finances was. First, it said it would produce a budget surplus, pay down debt, impose no new taxes or tax increases on Western Australians, keep wages, electricity and other fees to the forward estimates and pile on \$5 billion worth of additional expenditure. It was clear to anybody who really scrutinised this that this was a magic pudding and the figures did not add up. That is what the Labor Party put to the people and it won the election in a landslide on that basis. We also know that many of the Labor Party’s promises—we heard about them during the speeches from the new backbenchers—were not included in those commitments. The Labor Party made a whole raft of often small, sometimes huge, promises throughout the electorate to acquire or lure votes. Then it came into this place and almost immediately said, “This is unusual, woe is us, things are worse.” It trotted out the Under Treasurer to make a statement. He did not sign the statement. He basically said that it was a set of parameters that Treasuries always make in the run-up to the budget but they do not release those publicly. The Labor Party trotted out the Under Treasurer to make those statements. At the time the Premier said that it was the worst set of books since the Great Depression.

The Labor Party had a plan to get into government but it did not have a plan to govern. As a result of that lack of planning, it put off the budget to 6 September—the longest period that it has been postponed. The budget had to be brought down later than May because of the election in March but it did not have to be brought down that late. The reason for that is that the new government had no clue what it was going to do. It put the budget off as long as possible for two reasons: first, it did not have a clue what it was going to do; and, second, it was going to figure it out on the run. It wanted to keep the public in the dark about what it was going to do. We see that it has been floating a whole bunch of balloons on certain issues. Of course, the government is softening up the public. For every issue that has a negative connotation, it blames us. Everything that is a positive, such as the Forrestfield–Airport Link project, the government claims was its idea. The Labor Party created the Aubin Grove train station! The stadium was the Labor Party’s idea! I can remember that the former opposition fought that tooth and nail for years. That is by the bye. It is creating a new reality.

One of the biggest issues that the Labor Party promised was a gold standard of accountability. My colleagues will highlight many of the transgressions of that promise. Abraham Lincoln once said that if you want to know the character of a man, give him power. I think we have seen the character of the Premier and other members today. Whether it relates to the double dipping of car allowances or stacking the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Premier is arrogant.

Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr David Templeman; Speaker; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

One of the major issues that I want to deal with in the time that I have allotted myself is the government's promise of tax increases. The Premier repeatedly swore that there would be no new taxes under his watch—no new taxes or tax increases—full stop. The reason for that is that he knows it kills jobs, and he said he is a job-creating Premier. He has flagged in no uncertain terms that taxes will not go up. That is a clear breach of his promise. He is hoping for two things.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: First, the Premier can blame us. He says it is our fault and he did not know what was going to happen and everything fell in a heap after 11 March. That is false. As the shadow Treasurer pointed out, on handover, the fiscal position was better than he thought it was in the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* or the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. That is what it showed. Since then iron ore prices have gone down. They are not as low as they were under my watch but GST is higher because we put in, with the assistance of the Turnbull government, a floor of 37.6 per cent. Quite clearly, the unemployment figures are improving. The government repeatedly promised no new taxes. We will hold it to account for that promise for four long years. It will blame us and hope that people forget. Maybe there will be a windfall to allow that to be clawed back. Also, there is the issue of electricity prices. I will let my colleague the member for Bateman go through that. All I can say is that this time last year, when we increased electricity prices by 33.5 per cent, our forward estimates were seven per cent but we cut it in half. At the time the then Leader of the Opposition said it was intolerable and showed an arrogant, out of touch government. If those figures go up by anything like the tech shows, of 11.3 per cent, the government will definitely be out of touch. Things are tough out there. That is why the Labor Party was elected. Household budgets are tough. That is why it was elected. If the government hits consumers with 11.3 per cent or anything near that, it will be held accountable for it.

Another issue that was flagged in the media the other day is the clawing back of benefits of the Seniors Card. Two years ago we carried out a wholesale review of the Seniors Card. We targeted it closely. We cut back the benefits of the Seniors Card. The largest beneficiary was the cost-of-living rebate. It was cut in half because the commonwealth cut its half share and we did not make up the difference. We also capped the local government rates rebate. Seniors were always getting 25 per cent but we capped the rebate at 25 per cent. The former opposition screamed murder. In fact, it joined a protest organised by 6PR, Channel Seven and the Council on the Ageing Western Australia at the Perth Town Hall to protest about those changes. If the government applies a means test to any of those payments, I look forward to working with 6PR, Channel Seven and the Council on the Ageing for a parallel or remake of that.

Mr D.J. Kelly: And they look forward to working with you too.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: They do. The real issue here is that the state does not have the capacity to benchmark.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, I call you to order for the first time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The state does not have the capacity of information and other instruments to income test these things. We have to rely on commonwealth ones. The commonwealth ones are very low. The people who, by definition, meet the requirements for commonwealth cards and other things are on very low incomes; indeed, they are on welfare. If those cards are just used for local government rates or the cost-of-living rebate, the government will eliminate benefits to self-funded retirees on substantially lower incomes than some of the people on welfare benefits. That will harm those people in the community who have worked all their lives, saved and tried to be independent of government in their retirement years. It will hurt them dearly. We will stand up for them, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because in government we avoided hitting them that hard. Members opposite pilloried us and campaigned about the reforms we put in, at the same time saying that we did not make any efficiency reforms. We will hold them to account for four long years if they make the changes that they mooted.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.18 pm]: I want to go back to one of the biggest broken commitments of this government—its commitment to gold standard transparency. I am also going to go back over the appointment of members to the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission of this Parliament. This is a really important committee. We went through the types of reports that that committee has placed on the table in this place. The Premier, disinterested in this matter, has just walked out of the chamber. I went through some of the reports that that committee tabled in this place.

Point of Order

Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr David Templeman; Speaker; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I wonder whether there should be consideration that the Premier has not walked out of the chamber; he is simply getting information from an officer. I do not think it is appropriate for the member to use that tone.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order, but it is not generally a standard of address that we use in the chamber.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I was following the Speaker's earlier order to address him directly. When the Premier moved to the back of the house, I assumed that he was walking out. If he has not left the chamber, I apologise.

The Corruption and Crime Commission oversight committee of this Parliament makes recommendations to Parliament and government around changes to the act, reports on the integrity framework, has oversight of the operations of the Corruption and Crime Commission and appoints the commissioner. I want to clarify this matter because it has been implied during question time that somehow the Liberal opposition has been complicit in and agrees with the appointments to that committee.

The SPEAKER: Member, is this to do with this motion because there is nothing in there about the CCC?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Absolutely, Mr Speaker. We are talking about broken election commitments in the first 100 days of office, and the Premier went out and promised the community gold standard transparency. The appointments to the CCC committee go to the heart of a lack of transparency with this government. The opposition in the Legislative Assembly has been denied the opportunity to be part of the deliberations of the Corruption and Crime Commission committee of this Parliament. Our job as an opposition is to hold the government to account. Everyone who has been involved in committee deliberations knows that members of committees are not allowed to discuss the inquiries, witnesses or any committee discussions with any person other than another committee member until the moment the report is tabled—and then committee members are allowed to speak only to the tabling of the report. We have one member in the other place, Hon Jim Chown, on the CCC committee. None of us in this chamber will have any input into any of the CCC committee inquiries. When a report is tabled in this Parliament, two government members will be able to get up and speak to that committee report knowing what is in the report and understanding the issues behind the findings and the recommendations and they will have the benefit of having interviewed those witnesses. The chairman will get to speak to that report for 20 minutes. The other committee member will get to speak to that report for 10 minutes. That means that as an opposition we will get 30 minutes collectively to examine a committee report of the Corruption and Crime Commission oversight committee, and, if we can, seek leave of the house to speak to that report—but, as an opposition, we have been denied the opportunity to interrogate via that committee. That goes to the heart of the transparency and integrity framework of our system in Western Australia. It is the integrity of the government and the integrity of the police. I say that this Parliament—this Legislative Assembly—has been denied gold standard transparency because the government has made the decision.

Let us go back to the placement of those members on the committee. The tradition has always been to appoint two members from the Legislative Council from the government side and two members from the party led by the Leader of the Opposition, which is the Liberal Party in this state. One member from each house from the government party and the party of the Leader of the Opposition has been the tradition for years since the establishment of that committee. It has been the tradition in order to allow the standard of transparency and integrity that this community demanded after the scandals of the 1980s in this state. We are furious about this. In the other place, the leader of government business, Hon Sue Ellery, moved a motion that the Labor government support Hon Alison Xamon as its placement on that committee. The opposition member put forward was Hon Jim Chown. The tradition in the other place is that the opposition nominates its member and the government nominates its member, and then those two members are put to a vote. The understanding we have is that Hon Sue Ellery discussed the placement of Hon Alison Xamon on that committee with the rest of the government, and that the government agreed with the Labor government's nomination to that committee—being Hon Alison Xamon. We have no problem with Hon Alison Xamon being on that committee as the choice of Hon Sue Ellery and Labor government members in the other place, but we want our member in the Legislative Assembly to be part of the CCC committee in order to scrutinise the activities of the Corruption and Crime Commission, to participate in the appointment of a commissioner should that be required, and to be able to talk to the reports, inquiries and investigations of that committee. We have been denied that, and the Premier refused to even get up and speak when we debated the appointment motion in this place last week. Knowing that he has the numbers, he has tried to weasel out of this appointment to that committee by saying that we are somehow complicit. We are not. We talked against this appointment in private members' business last week, and we tried to get some kind of answer in question time today, but it did not satisfy our demands. I say that this government has failed its first test of gold standard transparency. We are disgusted and so should the community be.

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MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [3.25 pm]: I stand to support the matter of public importance motion and to talk about the first 100 days of the McGowan government. Some of the thought bubbles and things that have been put into the community for consideration by this government have been a surprise to a number of members on this side of the chamber, particularly given the stance now government members took whilst we were in government and during the election period. I would like to remind members of what the Premier said at the Labor campaign launch. He said —

“There will be no new taxes on West Australians, full stop. If we are elected, there will be no new taxes on West Australians or increases in taxes on West Australians. If we’re elected, full stop,” ...

In the three months following, we have heard a considerable raft of ideas and thought bubbles about what the government is considering. The challenge is that we do not have a budget at this time, and the budget will not be handed down until 7 September, yet the government is talking about increasing taxes on electricity by a substantial amount. The Treasurer has talked about increasing power prices by a minimum of seven per cent and the idea of cost reflectivity. The Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union shut that down, saying that it is not Labor policy and that if the Treasurer wants to think like that, maybe he should join the other side. Those comments were made by the head of the AMWU. When questioned, the Premier said that he supported the Treasurer. In supporting the Treasurer around cost reflectivity, the Premier is talking about power increases to the tune of a seven per cent minimum this year and upwards of around 15 per cent to get towards cost reflectivity over a two-year period. Only last year, the then Liberal government increased power prices by 3.5 per cent, and the current Premier came out and said how mean-spirited it was.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Did this Premier say that?

Mr D.C. NALDER: This Premier said that we were mean-spirited, member for South Perth. He said it.

He said that the community could not tolerate increases in power prices. In October 2016, in *The Sunday Times*, McGowan said —

“I know families cannot afford higher power bill —

The SPEAKER: Member, you will not call the member “McGowan”; it is either Premier or member for Rockingham.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I apologise. I was quoting the article. On 23 October 2016, in *The Sunday Times*, the Premier said —

“I know families cannot afford higher power bill increases.

However, since coming to government, they have talked incessantly about large power price increases. In fact, the Treasurer admitted last week that the government has made a decision on power price increases for 2017, effective from 1 July—yet they will not tell us about them. We have asked the question.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for South Perth, the member for Bateman is doing a good job; do not spoil it.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I cannot afford to get called again; I will go home.

The Treasurer has admitted that power increases have been decided upon by the government, but in its arrogance it does not feel that it is necessary to tell the public. If it has made the decision—it is only two weeks until the new financial year when they will have to be implemented—I cannot work out why it cannot tell the community what those increases will be so that the community can plan for them. Why leave it to the last minute? It seems to be symptomatic of this government that there are rules for others and rules for themselves. We have seen appalling behaviour by this government, and it has been seen not only in this matter. I could go on and mention many: the Perth Modern School issue and the thought bubble around Kitchener Park are absolutely disgraceful. Now we have the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission issue. We are continually adding to that. Why the government would want to stack the CCC committee confuses me greatly. I do not understand why on earth it would want to do such a thing when, since its formation, there has been a bipartisan arrangement between the government and opposition to have equal representation on that committee. It is very clear that Labor nominated a Green in the other place as its representative, and we put forward our representative. It must conform to the act and the standing orders or we should change the standing orders. That is what we are calling on the government to do; yet, in its arrogance it has decided that it does not need to. It has the numbers. It is just going to ram these things through. That is not how things should operate. That should not happen in Parliament. There are standing orders for a reason and we should be held to account on the standing orders.

I am going to close off here. This side of the house has a number of concerns about some of the government’s undertakings and what it is talking about so far as potential new tariffs and taxes, and increases in charges and so

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forth are concerned when it had indicated that it would not do such things. If the government is going to break its promise, then it misled the community at the election. The Premier has stood in this place and talked about the mandate that he received based on the commitments and issues he took to the election. One of them was that there would be no new taxes and no tax increases. If the government breaks that promise, I think it will have let down the whole community of Western Australia.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [3.32 pm]: I rise to support the motion. One hundred days have gone by: 100 days in which we have seen the new government backflip on its commitments to regional Western Australia and backflip on its commitments to people in Western Australia concerning not increasing fees and charges. At the eleventh hour, before the election, the Labor Party released its costings on royalties for regions. We saw a \$2.3 billion cut in royalties for regions—\$650 million committed to by the Labor government, the then Labor opposition, for regional WA. I want to know, like all people in regional Western Australia want to know: Is the government really going to change the royalties for regions legislation to suit its needs? Is it really going to show the people of Western Australia that it does not believe that 25 per cent of royalties for regions should go to regional WA, but that probably more in the order of 10 per cent or less should go to regional WA? That is the real truth of this government. The real truth is that it hoodwinked people in regional WA—hoodwinked the people of the Pilbara. It needs to be held accountable because it has falsely indicated that it will keep royalties for regions, but we know that it is cutting royalties for regions to suit its cloth to pay for the promises in Perth.

Several members interjected.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [3.34 pm]: I was unsure whether the member had sat down or whether a point of order had been taken. The member for North West Central took me by surprise. I apologise. That finished rather rapidly. I rise, somewhat unexpectedly, to respond to the motion.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That member's contribution finished rapidly.

Unsurprisingly, the government will not be supporting the motion. I am interested in the motion simply because of its construction. I start by making one point for both the Liberal Party and the National Party. Their underlying philosophy seems to be that the people of Western Australia did not know what they were doing when they were voting on 11 March, and that somehow the people of Western Australia were hoodwinked, or boondoggled, into voting for someone other than a National or Liberal Party member of Parliament.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The performance of the member for North West Central—his angst, anger and grief at the loss of Brendon Grylls —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

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

Mr B.S. WYATT: I note the performance of the Leader of the Opposition and his proposal that we never had a plan and that therefore the people of Western Australia were apparently fooled overwhelming into voting for this new government. At some point, they are going to have to accept that the people of Western Australia looked at what was being proposed and made an informed decision. While the opposition rages against the people of Western Australia, it cannot move on from the electoral result. One thing I learnt while I sat on the opposition benches for a long time is that the electorate is always right.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The opposition can continue to rage against the people of Western Australia—I am not fussed; it can go ahead—but, ultimately, it will be the opposition that fails to understand that the people looked at the record of the Leader of the Opposition, they found the fingerprints of the Leader of the Opposition all over the performance of the former government, and found the former government wanting. That is the decision the people made.

I am surprised—I do not think it is 100 days into the new government; I think we are five or six days out from 100 days—at the condemnation that the government is failing to deliver against its election commitments. Can I say something to the opposition that I have been saying to some of my ministerial colleagues, and it is this: the government does not have to deliver on all its election commitments in the first budget. It does not have to do that. In fact, I am begging that some of my ministerial colleagues, perhaps, maybe not try to deliver in the first budget as we go about finding space in the budget to deliver on our commitments over the course of the term of government. I note the particular concern—the shadow Treasurer has raised this issue a couple of times—about our failure to disclose increases in household fees and charges in a timely manner. I make a couple of points about that, because once every four years this is going to be an issue. Now that we have fixed terms—I had an exchange with the Leader of the Opposition on this matter a few weeks ago—there will inevitably be a late budget. That

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 June 2017]

p1154c-1163a

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means inevitably the issues around fees and charges that come in on 1 July every year will be delayed from the ordinary budgetary course. I accept that that is not ideal, but they are the circumstances we face every four years. There is nothing sinister about that; that is just how it is.

This week we will announce not only fees and charges, but also the concession framework. That has taken some time, but, as I have already said, I make that point because the Leader of the Opposition has said that the gap between the election and the budget is the longest ever on history—except, of course, for the 2009–10 budget after the September 2008 election. At that time the budget did not come down until 14 May 2009—quite a considerable time later, members may recall. The opposition may recall that the government at the time brought in two power price rises that were not mentioned in the election campaign. On 23 February 2009, some five months after the election, the Liberal–National coalition announced that on 1 April 2009 people were going to get a 10 per cent power increase and on 1 July 2009, just a couple of months later, that they were going to get another 15 per cent increase—a 26 per cent increase straightaway. There was no mention of that during the election campaign in 2008. There was not one word about a 26 per cent increase in power bills even before the budget. The budget was months later, well before any commitment.

I remind members of the fiscal circumstances that the former government faced when in one year it increased power bills by 25.6 per cent, followed the next year by 16 per cent, when that government faced huge surplus positions. I hark back to those days. I, on the other hand, am making these decisions in the context of—last year; a \$2 billion deficit; this year we are looking at a \$3 billion deficit; next year, according to the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*, a \$1.5 billion deficit; the year after about an \$860 million deficit; and the year after that a \$535 million deficit. That is the context we face. During the Liberal–National government there was a 25.6 per cent increase followed by a 16 per cent increase in the context of significant budget surpluses. That is the context in which we find ourselves. I note that the opposition likes to run the line that the finances are better than when we went to the election. I again remind my friends in this place of what has happened since the election. There has been an \$882 million writedown in mining revenue, an \$800 million writedown in goods and services tax, a \$325 million writedown in land tax revenue and, of course, the friends of members opposite in the federal Liberal Party have taken a further half a billion dollars from the forward estimates for schools and hospitals. I can pretend that has not happened, as the previous government did. However, the previous government was awash with revenue at the same time it was increasing power and water bills. In combination—I take members back to 2009—Western Australians copped not only a 25.6 per cent increase in their power bills, but also a 10 per cent increase in their water bills. In the next year, 2010, they copped a 16 per cent increase in power costs, plus a 17 per cent increase in water costs at a time the government was awash with budget surpluses—a fundamentally different fiscal circumstance than we face now, and members opposite created those fiscal circumstance. That is what we have to deal with in government.

I want to reflect on some of the comments made by, I think the Leader of the Opposition, or it might have been the shadow Treasurer—either way the opposition commented about speculation around the various benefits the Seniors Card provides to people. I note that over the course of its term in government, the previous government made a range of decisions about Seniors Card benefits that stripped out entitlements. I quote from a debate I had during the election campaign with the Leader of the Opposition when he was Treasurer, which was reported in the *Canning Examiner* on 1 March. Pertinently enough, the debate was hosted by the Association of Independent Retirees (A.I.R.) Ltd. The Leader of the Opposition had come under some critique at that event about his three increases in land tax, which I will come back to in a minute. The Leader of the Opposition said —

“We were losing \$200 million a year through the grants commission process in addition to that land tax we weren’t earning.

“So we substantially increased land tax for three years.

Dr Nahan said with the reduction of the ST and collapse of iron ore royalties they had to increase land tax in 2014 ...

The Leader of the Opposition went on to say —

“I think self-funded retirees going forward want a state that doesn’t build up debt not only for yourself but for your children,” ...

I think the Leader of the Opposition was right when he said that and when he said, “I was looking at all these writedowns in my revenue and I broke that 2013 election promise”, the one he is refusing to acknowledge of no tax increases under a Liberal government. Do you know why? The Liberal Party’s election commitments were fully funded and fully costed! It did not need to increase taxes, so Troy Buswell, in my debate with him at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia breakfast made the point that there would be no increases in taxes under the Liberal government. But we saw a range of increases by that government elected in 2013—obviously the land tax increase of 12.5 per cent, followed by an increase of 10 per cent, followed by a large change to the land tax base, which saw some people’s land tax liabilities increase by 100 per cent with no increase

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in the valuation of their property. That is what members opposite did on the back of their commitment to not increase taxes in the 2013 election, let alone the other taxes they raised around the landfill levy, the transfer duty on non-real assets, payroll tax, motor vehicle concessions and the first home buyers' grant. There were dozens of tax increases by the former government after its commitment of no tax increases. I think—this is what drives me—that every dollar we save now is a dollar we do not have to borrow. Thanks to the former government, we have been left with a significant operating deficit position that is very likely to stay across the forward estimates.

I am surprised—perhaps flattered would be the best way to describe it—that the opposition would expect us to have delivered on our election commitments in their entirety before we have reached 100 days in office. I note the condemnation “failure to deliver against its election commitments”. I take members back to the Premier's top 10 priorities. These were reported in *The Sunday Times* of 26 February 2017, which members will recall was very much in the heat of the election campaign. It is a piece with a lovely photograph of the Premier and his bride; the Premier is clearly airbrushed but his bride looks wonderful! I will take members through the Premier's top 10 priorities. One, tear up the skilled migration list on his first day in office—Premier, done; two, immediately stop work on Roe 8 and begin work on Labor's road projects—tick; three, initiate a commission of inquiry into secret government deals—tick; four, freeze TAFE fees—tick; five, create a dedicated team to plan, build and manufacture Metronet rail lines and trains—tick; six, legislate to protect victims of crime and deal with methamphetamine traffickers. How are we going, Attorney General?

Mr J.R. Quigley: It's on today.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is on today—tick; seven, fast-track education assistants back into WA classrooms—tick; eight—are we there?—start planning medihotels—tick; nine, fast-track Labor's Joondalup hospital expansion.

Mr R.H. Cook: Almost there.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Watch this space. I think 100 days roll around at the end of this week some time, but watch this space. Number 10—I say this to my friends in the National Party—keep royalties for regions but redirect funding towards projects such as fixing regional roads. I want to give that a tick because I have been involved in some of that already. It is not bad that we can give the Premier's top 10 priorities all a big tick. I want to acknowledge that the opposition's condemnation of our failure to deliver against our election commitments is somewhat misconceived. It is most unfair given the Premier's very ambitious agenda, which he is working his way through very, very efficiently.

I want to make another point before I sit down. There was some conversation across the chamber during question time and during debate from the Leader of the Opposition around the tariff equalisation contribution, which is, effectively, on everyone's Synergy bill. As far as I can tell, the argument is that because the amount of the TEC for 2017–18 at \$167 million is 11.3 per cent higher than the TEC for 2016–17 at \$150 million, Synergy bills will go up by 11.3 per cent. That is not quite how the TEC is calculated. The TEC—I will be very broad in my explanation—is calculated, effectively, on the cost of supplying the regulated customer by Horizon Power on a cost-reflective basis. That is done by assessing a particular cost stack, which includes wholesale, retail and environmental, plus a net worth, plus a rate of return. Horizon's cost is compared with Synergy's cost to do the same thing and effectively an assumption is made about the amount of energy to be sold by Horizon and then we come to the figure. The point I want to make is that the tariff equalisation contribution is not driven by what is happening with Synergy bills. It is driven by a range of things, including the cost at which Horizon provides its own services and the cost for Synergy in driving its own services. It is not driven as such by the bills of Synergy customers on the south west interconnected system. I want to point that out in case there is any confusion around what the rise in the TEC may be from one year to the other and what it may mean as we try to extrapolate from that what the bills may be from Synergy, because that is simply not the case.

In conclusion, obviously we will not be supporting this motion. As we are shortly about to announce the 2017–18 fees and charges both broadly across government and as part of the representative household, which are reported on with particular focus at budget time and no doubt will be in the media, I am mindful of what has happened over the last decade and I am mindful of the significant increases under the former government and the cumulative impact of those increases. I accept that the scenario we are faced with about the timing of the announcement is not ideal, but I think the electorate understands that once every four years, this is going to be an issue that we face, as we saw in 2013 with the government and as we saw in —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Three and a half per cent.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No; I am talking about the timely announcement, Leader of the Opposition. As we saw in 2008, when the election was in September, there was no announcement until February the following year. These are not ideal things, but they happen infrequently. Now we know, with fixed four-year terms, that they will be announced. The added complicating factor with the timing of the announcement of fees and charges is that I am very keen to ensure that the concessions that will flow, if you like, are also announced at the same time and not separately, so that people can understand the impact that will have on their particular household. I am surprised to hear the Leader of

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the Opposition critiquing the concept of means testing. As a person who, for the better part of his life, advocated for means testing and very recently advocated in radio and media performances that we should support those on low incomes and vulnerable people, he apparently no longer holds that view. That is my view. We are looking and have looked at a range of the concessions that are in place. Some are generous; some are adequate. The mix will be announced at the same time as we announce fees and charges. I make it clear that there has not been delay for any particular purpose, other than the fact that it has taken time to land on that final position.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Premier) [3.52 pm]: This is an interesting motion. It goes to the issue of arrogance and to the issue of election commitments. Of all the people in the world I will not be lectured on election commitments by, it is that mob over there. I remember asking the very chap who stood in this place not long ago, Hon Kim Hames, where the solemn election commitment was on the \$200 million redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital that the Liberal Party won so many seats over. I remember asking him in the first term of his government and he said, “No, it is not a problem. That was not a first-term thing.” Despite the fact that the Liberal Party campaigned on it almost singularly in the 2008 election, it was not a first-term thing. After the first term, I rather naively went back to Hon Kim Hames and asked him where his election commitment was in the second term and he said, “Don’t you worry about that; we’ll get onto it.” We now have a group of folk on the opposition benches who are asking us why we have not completed all our election commitments within 100 days.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The motion refers to the government’s arrogance in the first 100 days and its failure to deliver against its election commitments. The opposition is essentially saying that we have displayed arrogance in our first 100 days and that we have failed to deliver our election commitments. In relation to our election commitments, we have been running full bore to make sure that we deliver them. As the Treasurer said, we have made announcements about the early development of medihotels. Of course, today we have made announcements about the sustainable health review. The sustainable health review was one of our election commitments, but it goes to one of the reasons why we might have been a little distracted from our election commitments in the first 100 days. The sustainable health review is an exercise that we have had to undertake since we took office to clean up the mess that has been left behind by one of the most incompetent governments in history. Day after day, I am having briefings from the Department of Health and Treasury about the most appalling management of, and the ridiculous state of affairs at, Perth Children’s Hospital.

Dr M.D. Nahan: How’s that going? I thought you were going to open it a month ago?

Mr R.H. COOK: It is going particularly well now that we are in charge, Leader of the Opposition. We have displayed how unarrogant we are by providing information to the public that the previous government refused to disclose when it was in office because it was too busy trying to cover up its incompetence!

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr R.H. COOK: The other thing we have done is take control. We are getting people on the ground in the building to undertake the commissioning process. Thank goodness we have someone who is now trying to resolve the lead issues in the water.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr R.H. COOK: Now that we have taken control of that project, we are looking forward to the commissioning of a hospital that the previous government said would be opened in December 2015.

Dr M.D. Nahan: What have you done? You’ve been talking for a while and criticising us.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have been talking for a while. It does not matter. I call you to order.

Mr R.H. COOK: The Leader of the Opposition asked what we have been doing in our first 100 days. As I said, we have been cleaning up the mess and trying to unscramble the mess that was the incompetence of the previous government’s administration. We have applied ourselves assiduously to our election commitments. As the Treasurer pointed out, we have undertaken a significant program to implement our election commitments in the first 100 days. To the extent that we have been distracted from that task, we have been applied to the other task of cleaning up the mess. A bigger mess than the budget finances cannot be found.

The sustainable health review is an election commitment to not only implement significant changes to the health services to make sure that they run properly, but also clean up the mess of the state’s finances left behind by this sorry mob who are now on the opposition benches. The reason we have to do that is that the health budget is significantly out of control. If it is not the recurrent account of the health budget that is out of control, it is certainly the major hospital projects that we now have to rectify because of the mismanagement of those on the other side.

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We will undertake government that is not arrogant. We will work with the people in our communities, which is the reason there is a consumer nominee and an employee nominee on the sustainable health review. It is the reason I stood in front of about 200 angry doctors and nurses just last week as we confronted the morale issues at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. The last thing this government could be accused of is arrogance and not committing to its election commitments. The last person we will be lectured by on election commitments is the Leader of the Opposition.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [4.00 pm]: I rise to speak to the motion. I will give the opposition a tip: if members opposite put a motion, they should actually address it and make the case. The opposition did not make the case. All the opposition did today was take us on a wander through the forest. It did not address the allegations that it made in the motion.

Members of the opposition talked about transparency. Let us go through the transparency of the former government. Did the former government tell everybody that it was going to cancel the *AvonLink*—that is, before we saved it? No, it did not. Did the former government tell everybody that it had options on Roe 8 but it had taken the most expensive option—the scorched earth option? No, it did not. Did it tell everybody that it had a plan to extend the metropolitan region improvement tax into Peel and Bunbury? No, it did not. Did it tell everybody the truth about the footbridge to the stadium? No, of course it did not. When it comes to transparency, the former government failed every time.

This government is almost at the end of its first 100 days in government—we are a few days off—and we have achieved so much. We scrapped Roe 8, and we got the funds from the commonwealth—something that the secret source of the opposition said could not be done. We started on the taxi reform. We have a total of \$2.3 billion in commonwealth and state funding for 18 new road projects. We have funding set aside for Metronet. The list is long. That can be compared with what was done by the former government. Ministers in the former government used to work only between the hours of 9.00 am and 2.00 pm. That is what everyone tells us. The people of this state know exactly the effort that we are putting into delivering our commitments across this state.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You're going on leave for about four weeks! How long are you going on leave for now?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What—the member does not expect me to spend time with my family?

Mr D.C. Nalder: That's not what I asked you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member does not want me to spend time with my seven-year-old and my five-year-old twins? The member does not want me to spend time with my family?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Who will be governing the affairs of the state?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member is arrogant!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Minister, members, thank you! In what remains of the time, I would like to hear from the minister in silence.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The opposition has refused to ask me a question in this place. We have been in government for nearly 100 days, and no questions! The opposition now dares to question my work ethic! Look around the opposition! The former government was the laziest government that has ever existed. That is what everyone tells us. The ministers worked only between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm. That was their working hours.

Let us go through it. Let us talk about transparency.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member should sit in his own seat and stop talking like Kermit.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Yes, member; I remind you that if you want to speak, you have to sit in your own seat.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Let us talk about transparency. At the Liberal Party's campaign launch, they talked about value capture. Do members remember that? Do they remember the attack on Labor about value capture—that we will put a tax on every new home? That is what they said throughout the electorate, in every suburb. Member for Scarborough, what was the former government doing in the Scarborough redevelopment? It was applying a value capture scheme. The former government misled the public every time on that issue.

I understand that the former government also told everybody in the electorate, through its postcard campaign, that Labor would not rule out increasing government fees and charges or introducing new taxes. Did the former government lie then, or is it lying today? The opposition is all over the place. The former government campaigned on value capture. It was planning to scrap the *AvonLink*. It was planning to implement a new tax for Peel and Bunbury, but it never disclosed that to the public. It withheld a lot of information. Therefore, we will not be lectured on transparency from this opposition. The former government was the most dishonest government that has ever existed in this state. It also put the finances of this state into the worst position in this state's history.

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MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [4.04 pm]: The hypocrisy of this Labor Premier and this Labor government knows no bounds. We have a part-time government that is asleep at the wheel. The government will be leaving the wheel for about four or five weeks over July and August. I hope the backbenchers are ready to step up and lead this state of ours, because it needs leadership, but all their leaders will be heading off somewhere. I do not know who will be running the state over the winter recess, but it is not the Labor government that the people of Western Australia elected recently.

This Labor government is full of hypocrisy. Government members stand in this place—we heard the Treasurer say it—and give themselves a lot of ticks. I can tell Labor ministers and members that the people of Western Australia are not too pleased about some of the crosses that they are giving the government right now. One of the really big crosses, Treasurer, is the statement that there will be no new taxes on Western Australians—full stop. However, within this government's first 100 days in office, the government is already canvassing the idea of a \$270 property tax and a Metronet value capture tax, just to name two.

The Minister for Health mentioned all the commitments that the Labor Party took to the election. A lot of ministers spoke about the election commitments that were made by the former government. I want to give members an indication of what the people of Western Australia are interested in. They are actually not interested in the last government. They are interested in this government. They are interested in what members of this government are doing. They are not interested in members of the former Liberal–National government standing in this place and lecturing the government on what they were upset about when they were in opposition. The people of this state are interested in what this government is doing right now for them. I can tell the government that the people of Western Australia are not too pleased about the biggest commitment that the Labor Party took to the election—that is, that the Labor Party would sort out the finances of this state. The Labor Party said it would do that without increasing taxes. The Labor Party went to the election with what it called a debt reduction plan, under which the GST ratio would have to increase by 100 per cent, Treasurer, and the price of iron ore would have to go up to \$US85 a tonne. It is currently \$US54.80 a tonne. That is an impossible pipedream. It is what they call magic pudding economics. Members opposite know they took that plan to the election. They know they won the election of the back of the finances of this state. However, they are now lying to the people of Western Australia by not holding true to the commitments that they made before the election. The people of Western Australia will hold this government to account very quickly. They know the government said there will be no new taxes, yet the government is planning to increase taxes. They know the government said it has a plan to reduce debt, yet that the government has no plan whatsoever to reduce debt.

Furthermore, today the Premier said on radio that this state's financial situation is so bad that this state is going down the toilet. That is how the Premier communicates with the people of Western Australia. The Premier said that under his leadership, the finances of this state would be turned around. We are now hearing that the Premier cannot turn that around. The Premier even used the phrase that he does not want to see Western Australia become a “failed state”. That is the rhetoric that is coming from the Premier. It is one thing for the Premier to say that type of stuff when he is in opposition. It is another thing to communicate to the people of Western Australia and to the international investors in this great state of ours that this state is going down the toilet! The government has decided to increase taxes and charges, and to freeze public sector wages for four years, while at the same time its hypocrisy knows no bounds. The government has allowed ministers to collect on a \$2 000-a-month car allowance. That is absolutely outrageous. The government knew before the election the situation that it was going into. The government sold to the public of Western Australia before the election that it had a solution for debt and a solution for deficit. However, all we have seen so far is that the government's solution for deficit is to increase taxes—which is what it said it would not do—and its plan for debt reduction is no plan whatsoever.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (17)

Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr V.A. Catania
Ms M.J. Davies
Mrs L.M. Harvey

Mr P. Katsambanis
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love

Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr J.E. McGrath
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr K. O'Donnell

Mr D.T. Redman
Ms L. Mettam (*Teller*)

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 June 2017]
p1154c-1163a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr David Templeman; Speaker; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Sean L'Estrange

Noes (40)

Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr J.N. Carey
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J. Farrer
Mr M.J. Folkard
Ms J.M. Freeman
Ms E. Hamilton
Mr T.J. Healy

Mr M. Hughes
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr K.J.J. Michel
Mr S.A. Millman
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Mr M.P. Murray

Mrs L.M. O'Malley
Mr P. Papalia
Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Punch
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms C.M. Rowe
Ms R. Saffioti
Ms A. Sanderson

Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr B. Urban
Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms S.E. Winton
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.R. Michael (*Teller*)

Question thus negatived.