

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Michael Sutherland; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr David Templeman; Acting Speaker

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## **PREMIER'S STATEMENT**

### *Presentation*

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [4.59 pm]: I rise today to briefly outline the government's agenda for this forthcoming year. I do so briefly because this is somewhat of a unique situation. The calling of the early election and the swearing-in of the Liberal-National government on 23 September last year meant that the Governor outlined the government's legislative priorities and policy agenda for this coming term on the opening of the first session of the thirty-eighth Parliament of Western Australia on 6 November 2008. Given that this happened only four months ago, I intend to provide an update on the decisions and actions of the government and briefly reiterate our policy and legislative priorities for 2009.

We enter this parliamentary year in not only a different political environment, with a Liberal-National government, but also a very different economic environment—with the world, the nation and Western Australia facing immense economic challenges.

The global financial crisis has sent many of the major economies of the world into recession. Yesterday, the World Bank predicted that in 2009 the world economy would shrink for the first time since World War II. The United States is in decline and is forecast to record negative growth in 2009. Europe is likely to move into negative growth of two to three per cent or more, and Japan's December quarter result showed a contraction of 3.3 per cent, which is the country's worst economic result since the oil crisis of the 1970s. Growth rates in developing economies such as China and India are also falling, albeit from a much higher base. Figures released last week showed that the Australian economy contracted by 0.5 per cent in the December quarter and grew by only 0.3 per cent through the year. It is likely that Australia will experience a period of negative growth.

Clearly, Western Australia is not immune to the effects of the global financial crisis. The government is acutely aware of the impact the crisis is having on the lives of Western Australians and their concerns about their jobs, the value of their assets, including the family home, and the future of their children. In response to these concerns and to the global financial crisis, the Liberal-National government's approach is to make practical, commonsense decisions that will build confidence, thereby ensuring that we emerge from these difficult times with an economy that is stronger and better placed than when we entered the recession.

The Western Australian economy is fundamentally different from the economies of most other states and those of other countries. Our economy is driven by primary production—predominantly in mining, petroleum and agriculture—and in the export of those commodities.

In 2008 Western Australia exported \$84 billion worth of product. That equates to an extraordinary 38 per cent of Australia's total exports. As a result, however, our economy is highly dependent on commodity prices, which have declined over the past two years. For example, base metal prices have fallen by 55 per cent since a peak in May 2007. This has been partially offset by the reduction in the value of the Australian dollar. However, the net result will be a significant loss of revenue, which could be around \$1 billion a year.

It is the responsibility of this government to ensure that the state's finances are not put at risk as a result of declining revenues and to continue to provide for economic growth. We will do that by ensuring that government operates efficiently and effectively and by ensuring that the taxpayers' dollar is well spent. We have asked government CEOs to save three cents in every dollar spent to improve the efficiencies and operations of their agencies. I acknowledge the tensions that identifying these savings creates, but it is a necessary and worthwhile exercise in this economic environment and one from which the government does not resile. Government advertising has been reduced by 15 per cent and government media and marketing functions have been cut by 25 per cent.

The government has already established the Public Sector Commission to restore and reinforce the professionalism and independence of our public service. Public servants continue to work hard to deliver quality services to our community.

We have also announced a ceiling on the number of full-time equivalent positions in the public service. The public service has grown by 22 000 people over the past eight years. The Liberal-National government has placed a ceiling on the size of the public sector at around 99 000 FTEs.

We aim to reduce the number of boards and committees to around 500. Interestingly, we do not know exactly how many boards and committees currently exist—that is an issue in itself—but there are at least 1 000. Boards and committees play an important role in providing advice to government, but we must examine how many of them have outlived their relevancy and their usefulness.

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In its determination to responsibly address the state's finances, the government has also made the difficult decision to increase electricity tariffs for residential customers by 10 per cent from April and by 15 per cent from July; price rises for business customers will similarly apply. Although regrettable, these price rises are an effort to stem the unacceptable level of Verve Energy losses, which could total more than \$1 billion over the next five years.

All these measures are focused on ensuring that the state's finances are not placed at risk in these difficult economic times and show that the government is acutely aware of the need to balance prudent fiscal management with the need to stimulate the economy to ensure Western Australia's continued development through government and private sector investment and through job creation.

On the government side, \$7.7 billion of capital works are underway this financial year; it is a significant program, up 28 per cent on the previous year. We have also re-ordered our capital works priorities to focus on essential services—schools, hospitals and housing. The government has brought forward the building of a new children's hospital, Kalgoorlie hospital and Albany hospital; fast-tracked the building of 1 000 new public houses at a cost of \$316 million; committed to extend the northern suburbs rail line to Butler and to Brighton; taken the building of a new football stadium off the agenda for two years; scrapped the previous government's plan for a new museum at the old East Perth power station in favour of a new museum on the existing site within the Perth cultural precinct; scrapped Labor's plans for the Perth foreshore in favour of a more modest redevelopment with greater private sector involvement and investment; and, finally, re-committed to an additional \$300 million for new schools.

Two important regional projects that had stalled under the Labor government, the Muchea saleyards and the regional prison at Derby, have also been progressed by the Liberal-National government. The Muchea saleyards are already well into construction.

Regional Western Australia will also benefit through royalties for regions funding, particularly the country local government fund—\$100 million for minor capital works throughout the state that will generate jobs, stimulate investment and improve amenities in regional communities.

The government's priorities for Infrastructure Australia funding—Ord Stage 2, Oakajee Port, the sinking of the rail line through Northbridge, roads around Perth airport, and Pilbara housing—also reflect our commitment to invest in our future and will underpin economic development beyond the short term.

I will briefly outline the first three of these priorities and why they are so important. The transformation into reality of the long-held dream of expanding agricultural production in the Ord River region has begun. Ord stage 2 will more than double the irrigated area and advance agriculture in this state so that we can better capitalise on the opportunities presented by the global demand for quality food and other agricultural produce.

The development of a deep sea port, the associated rail infrastructure and a purpose-built, world-class industrial estate at Oakajee is, in my view, the single most important project for Western Australia's economic development for the next 50 years. Oakajee is about far more than iron ore. The region is rich in a variety of natural resources and the port will provide an important stimulus to the establishment of a new mining-based industry in the region, the economic spin-offs of which cannot be underestimated. The building of a world-class industrial estate adjacent to the port and the development of rail infrastructure will also allow us to take a further step towards economic maturity. It will provide the opportunity to finally make more of our natural resources through value adding. Western Australia has lacked a site for sophisticated processing of our vast reserves of mineral and gas resources. Oakajee is a chance to build something that this state does not have; namely, an industrial estate adjacent to a deep water port, close to an established city in a resource-rich region. It provides the opportunity to attract our customers, mainly manufacturing companies, which can bring some of their production capacity to Western Australia to transform our natural resources into higher value products. As such, it will finally enable us to broaden our economy from the selling of raw materials to the production and export of a wider range of processed and semi-processed products. Oakajee will provide Western Australia with a more sophisticated future with a wider range of industry and employment.

The third priority for Infrastructure Australia funding is the sinking of the rail line through Northbridge—a project that has been talked about for a century. Doing so will open up Perth by removing the barrier between Northbridge and the central business district and provide for a centrally located civic square or park. Although these projects will be funded by the state government and, hopefully, the commonwealth government, they will also attract private investment, create jobs and have the capacity to meet the future demand for industries that underpin the future of the state's economy. The private sector will play a pivotal role in helping the government to keep the economy moving forward in these difficult economic times. Last year business investment in Western Australia rose by 18.3 per cent. Although this government recognises that decisions by the private

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sector are largely based on commercial grounds, we also recognise that government action can affect those commercial decisions. The Liberal-National government is unashamedly pro-development and will strive to attract sustained investment in this state through bold thinking and brave decision making.

We have lifted the ban on uranium mining in Western Australia. We are the world's leading mining economy, and banning the mining of uranium was nonsensical. Lifting the ban on uranium mining will unlock tens of millions of dollars in royalties revenue, provide significant employment opportunities and allow the state to respond to the growing global demand for cleaner energy by sovereign nations wanting to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We are working hard on a number of fronts to streamline approvals processes to encourage investment, rather than stymie it, while properly considering environmental, Aboriginal heritage, native title and planning issues. These important issues are currently being considered in the development of a liquefied natural gas precinct in the Kimberley. A precinct will stimulate the development of the massive Browse Basin and other gas resources off the Kimberley coast. The government has announced its preferred site for the LNG precinct at James Price Point and will aim to secure relevant approvals before mid 2010. Our preference is to secure the site through negotiation with Aboriginal people, and that negotiation is underway. If that cannot be achieved, we will use existing powers under the Native Title Act to acquire the site.

A host of private sector projects worth billions of dollars and many thousands of jobs are already under construction or poised to come on stream. These include the CITIC Pacific mining project at Cape Preston; Woodside's Pluto 1 project, which is about halfway through and, hopefully, Pluto 2; the Gorgon project on Barrow Island; Apache's Devil Creek domestic gas project; BHP Billiton's and Rio Tinto's iron ore expansion in the Pilbara; and Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers urea project at Collie. There is an extraordinary period of advancement ahead for Western Australia, despite the economic downturn. This state has the opportunity to be counter-cyclical. Nevertheless, in the past six months, jobs have been lost and more will be lost this year. The government does not underestimate the effect that this has on people's lives and the communities in which they live.

The most important thing the state government can do to ensure jobs are protected and those who do lose their job can find other suitable employment, is to stimulate the economy to create more jobs. We are demonstrating that at Ravensthorpe, following the closure of the nickel operations in that community. The government has committed \$5 million to the community to maintain local services and provide grant assistance to affected businesses. We are also proposing a road between Bremer Bay and Hopetoun to promote economic development through the growth of managed tourism in the region. A strong economy will see benefits flow to our community. A strong economy will ensure we can provide Western Australians with services that directly improve their quality of life: better hospitals and hospital care, a world-class government school system that gives all children the opportunity to succeed, a safer community, greater support for the most vulnerable in society, protection of our unique environment and improvements to local government.

In health, the Liberal-National government has already committed to improving services and facilities at existing hospitals throughout Western Australia and committed to building new hospitals. This includes \$229.8 million to expand the Joondalup Health Campus, effectively doubling its size; \$135 million to build a new hospital for Albany; \$55.8 million to redevelop Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, with work beginning next week; \$10 million to upgrade Nickol Bay Hospital in Karratha; as stated earlier, bringing forward the construction of a new children's hospital to replace Princess Margaret Hospital for Children; and we have appointed a builder to get on and deliver the \$1.76 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital project. The Liberal-National government has embarked on an aggressive program of reform of the way we deliver health services in Western Australia. One of the most important changes is to improve services to patients presenting at hospital emergency departments. The aim, as outlined by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, is to ensure that 98 per cent of patients arriving at emergency departments are seen and admitted, discharged or transferred within four hours. This will be a benchmark within Australia.

The government will provide an additional \$84 million for the Friend in Need—Emergency initiative to help the elderly and the chronically ill stay out of hospital and remain in the familiar surrounds of their own home where they can receive appropriate treatment. This will help reduce the demand on emergency departments. An extra \$30 million will be allocated over two years to reduce hospital waiting lists. In addition, we have appointed a waitlist advocacy committee, chaired by Professor Bryant Stokes, to increase transparency of waiting lists and provide advice to government on these issues. The government has also taken action to improve health services in the regions by providing the Royal Flying Doctor Service with \$68.5 million over five years to purchase three additional aircraft and operate more medical crews. We have improved the patient assisted travel scheme by providing an additional \$30.8 million over three and a half years using funds from the royalties for regions

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program. Our changes will cut the red tape previously associated with the patient assisted travel scheme, improve access to the scheme and increase support to patients.

In terms of legislation, the government re-introduced the Surrogacy Bill 2008 as a priority in the last parliamentary session, which has been passed. We have also introduced the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill 2008 to ensure the retention of a central city hospital. In education, the Liberal-National government settled the teachers' pay dispute with an immediate six per cent pay rise for 21 000 public school teachers and school administrators. This was part of a \$1 billion salaries and conditions package that was endorsed overwhelmingly by more than 90 per cent of state school teachers. The long-running teachers' pay dispute was resolved by the Liberal-National government in just over three months of coming to office; and for the first time in a long time schools across the state were fully staffed at the beginning of the 2009 school year. To improve the support and care provided to students at government schools the government has committed to a \$19 million pastoral care package to provide all schools with access to chaplains and psychologists. This includes more than \$8 million to recruit 50 additional school psychologists over four years.

The Rudd government's economic stimulus package focuses on improving facilities at schools and the state government will work with the commonwealth to ensure funding is well targeted and realises real benefits for our school communities. This will complement the state government's own capital works program for schools, including an additional \$300 million for new schools and an additional \$50 million for refurbishments committed to at the time of the election.

The Liberal-National government is committed to making our communities safer. The government has introduced legislation for mandatory minimum sentences for people convicted of assaulting police officers; committed to the construction of a new \$113 million Perth police complex in Northbridge; established a new rural crime unit to help combat the theft of livestock and deal with other regional crime issues; and re-established the graffiti task force, which was disbanded by the Labor government in 2001. The Liberal-National government takes seriously the threat posed to the Western Australian community by organised criminal networks, including bikie gangs. The government will use seized criminals' assets to further bolster police investigations and criminal prosecutions against organised crime, including outlaw motorcycle gangs. Labor's poorly named "truth-in-sentencing" laws compelled sentencing judges and magistrates to provide offenders with an automatic one-third discount on their custodial sentence. This significantly undermined community confidence in the justice system, eroded the authority of the judiciary and failed to deter or adequately punish criminal behaviour. The government is proud to have repealed the one-third sentence discount through the Sentencing Legislation (Transitional Provisions) Amendment Bill 2008.

Law and order will continue to be a policy and legislative priority for the Liberal-National government in 2009. In particular, the government will introduce the following legislation —

Criminal Code Amendment (Graffiti) Bill 2009 — to increase the penalties for unlawful damage, including a sentence of up to two years' imprisonment, and the introduction of a new offence and penalty for the sale of spray paint to minors.

Stronger anti-hoon measures — the government will introduce legislation to provide police with greater powers to impound, confiscate, and, if necessary, crush the vehicles of recidivist hoon drivers.

Stronger anti-drug laws, including the repeal of the Cannabis Control Act 2003 and amending the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 — to criminalise cannabis possession and cultivation, reduce cannabis possession limits and introduce harsher penalties for drug dealers who endanger children.

Prohibited behaviour orders — to provide courts with powers to prohibit offenders from engaging in particular kinds of antisocial behaviour, including bans on associating with other known offenders, banning the consumption of alcohol, imposing curfews and banning offenders from being in certain locations.

As a result of the previous government's inaction, our prison system now holds 700 prisoners above its designed maximum capacity. We recognise that our strong law and order policies will mean that more offenders will serve custodial sentences. That is why expanding the capacity of Western Australia's prison system, including expanding the capacity of work camps to ensure offenders have an opportunity to engage in meaningful and rehabilitative work, will be among our top priorities in the corrective services portfolio in 2009. Additionally, the government will endeavour to make our system of community-based work orders among the most stringent in the nation.

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As I said earlier, the focus on strengthening our economy and securing our economic future will allow us to deliver better services and support to the community. This is particularly important for the most vulnerable in our society. In this vein, the Liberal-National government has extended free public transport for seniors, veterans and disability pensioners between 9.00 am and 3.30 pm on weekdays; funded a \$100 cost-of-living rebate to seniors; focused on long-term needs-based planning for people with disabilities; approved a respite house for Broome with a further four to be delivered over the next four years; established an Indigenous Implementation Board to assist government decision-making on Indigenous issues; and introduced guardianship legislation to provide foster children with stable placements.

This government will engage with the non-government sector to address the challenges confronting the delivery of services to Indigenous people, people with disabilities, vulnerable children, the homeless, seniors, and others. The aim is to make real, tangible and long-lasting inroads in improving the lives of the less fortunate in our society.

While the Liberal-National government is a pro-development government, we will never be a “development at any cost” government. The protection of our environment for future generations is a significant responsibility and one that we take seriously. This government is committed to protecting its natural heritage values and meeting the many challenges that we will face this century, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and managing the impacts and demands of a growing local, regional and global population.

One of the first things we did on coming to government was to begin the long overdue clean-up and removal of stranded lead from the town of Esperance after the shameful lead contamination experienced by the people of Esperance under the Labor government. We have also imposed stringent conditions on the export of nickel through the port and have committed to a long overdue \$110 million upgrade of the infrastructure at the Esperance port.

The state government has already supported World Heritage nomination of the Ningaloo coast; increased funding to address the spread of cane toads; provided new grants for local environmental programs; and committed to the development of renewable energy including our recent announcement on grant funding for wave power at Albany.

I have also had a broad range of discussions with environmental and community groups on the long-term protection of the Kimberley region as one of the state’s great natural assets and one of the world’s last great wilderness areas.

The grassroots delivery of services to the community often falls to local government. This government is committed to ensuring local government is sustainable and delivering the best services possible to ratepayers and residents. Western Australia has 139 local government authorities—almost double the number of Queensland, which has twice our population. Eighty-five of these local governments have less than 2 000 adult residents in their boundaries. Maintaining the community’s faith in their local governments and assisting Western Australian local government authorities to reform their structures, including through a process of voluntary amalgamations to better meet the needs of their residents and ratepayers, will be a priority of this state government.

To assist in the process of providing better accountability and community engagement, we will introduce legislation to amend the Local Government Act 1995 to revert back to a first-past-the-post system of voting in time for local government elections in October.

The issue of retail trading hours has been the subject of much debate in this house over the years and yet little progress has been made on extending shopping hours. During the election campaign, I said we would look at extending weeknight trading. I have been meeting with key groups over the past few weeks to discuss such an extension and those meetings are continuing.

I am proud of the Liberal-National government’s achievements over the past six months. On coming to government I said we would be a government that makes decisions, fixes problems and improves the quality of services and access to those services by the community. I believe we have demonstrated that we are doing that and that the people of Western Australia should feel confident they have a government that can deliver.

Finally, Mr Speaker, this year will present many challenges and tough decisions will need to be made. In this environment, the Parliament will play an important role as a forum for robust debate and inquiry, and, when required, cooperation and bipartisanship. I wish everyone well for the coming year.

*Consideration*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson):** The question is —

That the Premier’s Statement be noted.

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**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [5.26 pm]: I rise to respond to the Premier's Statement. The global economic crisis is hitting people hard. It is hitting many Western Australians and it is hitting people in the electorate of Gosnells. The loss of jobs, the risk of homelessness and concerns about essential services being cut back are things that my constituents bring forward to me. People are particularly concerned about community safety. On this front, I can report that there has been some good news—indeed you could say that the fruits of the work of the Carpenter government have come to fruition. Gosnells no longer rates in a list of Perth's 30 worst crime hot spots. In the past six months, burglary is down by more than 31 per cent. I commend the work of the officer in charge of the Gosnells police station, Phillip van Nieuwburg, and I also acknowledge that this policing success has been supported by the good sense and watchfulness of residents combined with initiatives such as the City of Gosnells program Eyes on the Street, and Neighbourhood Watch. People in my electorate are worried that this progress in crime reduction could be threatened by the proposed budget cuts. This is not a time for complacency when it comes to tackling crime. This is the very time to invest in policing methods that work. Such an improvement shows that the previous Labor government's investment in extra police officers has been proven effective. Spending on police increased by 18 per cent per capita to what is now 80 per cent per capita more than the average rate in other states.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** If members want to have a meeting, go outside, please.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I hope the three per cent cut now being threatened by the minority Liberal government does not take us backwards. Now is the time to take the campaign against crime and antisocial behaviour to a higher level. In my electorate we have conducted local forums on hoon hot spots. Local residents have voiced their ideas and suggested places where chicanes or roundabouts might be placed, but we need the funding to be able to do that. It is worrying that the three per cent cuts could reduce the chances of such initiatives and practical ideas being put in place.

Another form of proactive police work is that done by the police and citizens youth clubs. The Gosnells Police and Citizens Youth Club does not know whether it will have a future. It is concerned that its budget may be cut and that the programs it would like to work up for the next one or two years may be thrown into jeopardy. PCYCs organise activities in which young people can talk to appropriate peer role models, and adults, about things that concern them. The Gosnells PCYC is important to our local community because it helps youngsters to avoid falling into the wrong company or getting onto the wrong side of the track. Yet we have heard that PCYCs may not be considered part of front-line policing, as proactive as they are. The minority Liberal government should invest in the future of our youngsters by providing sufficient resources to ensure our PCYCs will stay open. There is no room for budget cuts when it comes to securing a positive future for the young people in our community.

Another important issue is the need for programs to help people manage the rising cost of electricity. We see no sign that these measures are in place. We are told that electricity prices are set to rise. However, although one remedy to that situation—the provision of insulation materials—is being provided by the Rudd government, the state government has not put in place any initiatives to ensure that homes are better designed and more energy efficient, thereby reducing people's reliance on expensive and environmentally unsound heating and cooling systems.

In these difficult economic times, many people are seeking emergency relief as their employment situation becomes more perilous. The concern about homelessness is one issue that people are already approaching me about; and there is then the reality that comes with that. My electorate of Gosnells is made up mainly of young working families. There are also many Indigenous and migrant people in my electorate. This is a priority concern for many of those people. It needs to be said that this Liberal government has shattered the dreams of many first home buyers in Western Australia. In my electorate of Gosnells, the changes made by the Liberal government to the First Start shared equity scheme have shattered the home ownership dreams of many residents. Gosnells residents Ms Charlotte Jolley and Mr Lee Stark were entitled to a shared equity home loan under Labor. However, when the Liberal government came into power, they were told that they earned \$5 000 more than the threshold. I wrote to the Treasurer and Minister for Housing on behalf of Ms Jolley, urging him to review the eligibility requirements.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson):** Order! I will call to order the next members who decide to have a little chat in the chamber. When members get to their feet, they want everybody to hear what they have to say. I think members should give the same courtesy to other speakers.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** The response from the Treasurer and Minister for Housing was disgraceful. The letter from the minister suggested that my constituents should wait and hope that interest rates will fall further—effectively asking them to speculate on interest rates—and that property prices will fall further so that they may

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be able to purchase a property outright. Despite media reports, falling interest rates and falling property prices will not make home ownership a reality for my constituents, many of whom earn less than \$65 000 a year. I am very concerned that the Liberal government will remove a scheme that is intended to help struggling home buyers, thereby forcing them to remain in the private rental accommodation trap.

Another issue that has come to the fore in recent times is the fiasco with the seniors rebate. Many seniors have phoned my office asking for information about how they should go about acquiring the rebate. The situation with the promised free transport for seniors is also totally unclear to seniors in my electorate.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It is pretty good—nine o'clock to three-thirty!

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Nine o'clock to three-thirty is disappointing to many seniors. They have been waiting for this for a long time and were expecting to get it a lot sooner.

It is vital that the Western Australian government ensures that there is a high level of economic activity in this state. I applaud the initiative of the Rudd government in its \$42 billion economic stimulus package. The Western Australian government needs to play its role in managing our new economic circumstances. This is not the time to be doing further reviews and to be cutting corners on the assessment process that ensures that projects are sound and not socially, environmentally or economically harmful. The government should continue to implement the recommendations that are contained in the excellent report titled "Review of the Project Development Approvals System". That review committee, which was chaired by Dr Michael Keating, released its final report in April 2002, well before the boom began, but in economic circumstances that were similar to those that we are going through now. The report highlights the importance of timeliness in assessments; the importance of having a proponent-driven system, and for the proponents to be ready when they put their projects forward for assessment; and the importance of assessing the cumulative impact of projects. It also highlights that although a major concern is that a project may be lost to the state, that should not become an excuse to cut corners in the assessment process, because robust assessment of proposals leads to better proposals and ultimately faster assessment of projects.

Another key recommendation in the Keating review was the need for government to support community engagement in the assessment process. We have heard the Premier talk about the engagement of non-government organisations in our society in general. I am not sure whether he was referring to the environmental sector. However, I am aware of definite cutbacks—indeed, the elimination of funding—to organisations such as my former employer, the Conservation Council of Western Australia. The Conservation Council of Western Australia was receiving money for a mineral resources liaison officer. However, there is now no funding for that position. The supposed excuse is that the three per cent budget cuts need to be implemented. However, that will be extremely damaging for the environmental sector. We know that during the boom there was a tendency for some people in industry and in the Liberal Party to say that every project had to be approved because the demand was so great, even though the Department of Environment and Conservation did not have the capacity to assess every project that it was being asked to approve. We are now being told that every project should be approved because of the global downturn. I hold that Labor did a brilliant job of managing the boom and ensuring that projects gained approval without giving in to the pressure that would have allowed projects that were socially, environmentally or economically irresponsible to be put in place. What has this government done? It has organised yet another review. Hon Norman Moore has announced the establishment of an industry-affiliated mining industry working group to advise on ways to improve the state's approvals process. The members of that working group are Mr Peter Jones, as chair; the member for Kalgoorlie, John Bowler, as vice chair; and Derek Carew-Hopkins, Mark Gregory, David Parker, Richard Ellis, Ian Wight-Pickin, Ian Fletcher, Tim Shanahan, Chris Clegg, Doug Koontz and Noel Ashcroft. I have the utmost respect for many of those people. However, it needs to be said that none of those people are from the community sector. None of those people have the contacts, the network and the knowledge that resides in the community sector. Community consultation is vital to the success of our resources sector. Without community representation we cannot have the community consultation that we need.

I also applaud the work that has been done by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA, including work done by Tim Shanahan, David Parker, Reg Howard-Smith and Aileen Murrell, and by representatives from various resources companies, and from my former employer, the Conservation Council of WA, to form the NGO Industry Environment Forum. That forum is facilitating a constructive and productive relationship in which corporate knowledge can be brought to the fore. Corporate knowledge does not reside just in the corporate sector. Indeed, in many cases, because of the high job turnover that we have in this state at the moment—although that may be slowing—the knowledge about many projects resides in the community sector. Therefore, by getting the input of people who are working in the community sector we were able to bring that corporate knowledge to the fore. Being able to access corporate memory is essential to achieving successful projects. Yet

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what has the government done? It has eliminated funding that the Carpenter government had provided to the environmental community sector. One example of that is, as I have mentioned, the elimination of the position of resources liaison officer in the Conservation Council of WA.

Community engagement is vital, but so too is transparency. The WA community has every right to be fearful of comments made by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum suggesting to uranium miners and explorers that they should go quietly and not talk up their proposals. I notice in the Premier's Statement that there was much optimism about and enthusiasm for uranium mining. However, we need to bear in mind the key problems with uranium mining. One of those problems is displacement. One form of displacement is that when we enter the nuclear fuel cycle, we may be supplying nuclear materials that may create future global security risks. Another form of displacement is that although we may be selling our nuclear materials only to signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, other countries may be selling their nuclear materials on the free market to countries that are not as scrupulous about who they are buying their nuclear materials from. There is also another form of displacement. We all know that there needs to be a dramatic increase in investment in renewable alternative forms of energy. If money goes instead to the nuclear sector, it will distract from the urgent need to put energy investment funds towards more durable forms of energy production. It should also be borne in mind that of the 440-odd nuclear power plants in existence in the world today, not one was built using private sector funds. These plants require massive government subsidies. If we are to condemn ourselves to supplying the nuclear fuel cycle, we are in effect forcing upon other countries a strange obligation to go into a very subsidised form of energy production—a dirty, risky form of energy production that produces waste that will be around for 250 000 years.

At the same time as asking uranium miners to play a game of hush-hush, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum saw fit to announce an \$80 million handout to miners and explorers to help obtain further data for Western Australia's mining industry. At a time of economic downturn, when there are cuts being made all round, especially to government agencies, it seems a bit rich for a sector that already benefits from many subsidies to receive an additional \$80 million handout. Indeed, the people of Gosnells would have very much liked to see that money go towards a program such as the shared equity scheme. Where is the benefit in further taxpayer-funded exploration when perhaps it would be better if it were done when the economics are right? If exploration is needed in a field because of the need for a particular mineral, surely it indicates that that mineral's economic value is such that the cost of undertaking the exploration work could be easily paid for. The government should be spending taxpayer funds to ensure that the community and the environment are safe from the next Esperance and the next Ravensthorpe. It should not be adding to the massive list of subsidies. As I said, the money could have gone towards bolstering the first shared equity scheme.

I will finish on a more positive note. I record my participation, along with 120 others, in the Life Cycle for CanTeen from Bassendean to Busselton over the weekend. We started on Saturday morning in Bassendean and rode our bikes down to Busselton. We covered a distance of some 400-plus kilometres. We raised sponsorship funds of around \$60 000, although the final count is not yet in. I especially acknowledge the contribution made by the coordinator, Jenny Aramini. The Life Cycle ride is becoming an annual event that is attracting a lot of attention and is enjoyed by all participants, especially because it is such a worthy cause.

I will conclude by saying that the global economic crisis must not become an excuse to allow cuts to the sorts of services that I have outlined; nor must it be allowed to become an excuse for diminishing the quality of assessment that needs to be undertaken before a project is approved. These difficult economic times are actually an opportunity for us to refine our processes and to make sure that we are in a position to fully assess and provide the quality of services that Western Australia needs. Perhaps much of the state government's work should be towards ensuring that service quality is maintained, not cut back.

**MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara)** [5.43 pm]: In my response to the Premier's Statement, I want to firstly acknowledge that it was International Women's Day on Sunday, 8 March. I congratulate Edith Cowan University on its inaugural Edith Cowan Lecture on Monday, 9 March, delivered by Dr Penny Flett. A number of my colleagues attended the lecture. Dr Flett outlined the astonishing life of Edith Cowan, who was the first woman elected to an Australian Parliament. She remarked upon her capacity as a leader to focus on society's obligations to its members. It seems a sad indictment that one of the most pressing issues still facing working women in Western Australia is the fact that, although the pay gap continues to grow, the current state government intends to abolish the pay equity unit. The gender pay gap in Western Australia is currently 28 per cent. This means that, on average, for every dollar earned by a full-time male employee, a full-time female employee earns 72c.

The pay equity unit was established in response to one of the 34 recommendations of a review of the gender pay gap commissioned by the former Labor government in 2004. It has made a valuable contribution, but it is now

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yet another casualty of the three per cent cut. The complacency of the Barnett government in announcing the policy to cut three per cent from public expenditure without assisting government departments to establish priorities and procedures will discourage government departments from finding efficiencies. Instead, they will opt for the low-hanging fruit—relating to ideological issues, such as the pay equity unit—without regard for the long-term consequences.

This lack of vision and direction in identifying government agency efficiencies will destabilise long-term planning and is manifesting itself in the axing of long-awaited capital programs that could provide Western Australian companies and workers with income. Although the federal government has implemented a response to the financial crisis in the form of the financial stimulus package, which will ensure the long-term health of our national economy, the Barnett state government will deliver a budget deficit without any vision for the future. It is a government of cost-cutting without scrutiny that undermines the efficient delivery of Western Australian public services through the removal of public sector positions, discontinues “shovel-ready” infrastructure projects and has no thought for the jobs that would otherwise have flowed for businesses and Western Australians in general.

In my first speech to the house I spoke about the demographics of the electorate of Nollamara, where the median individual income in 2006 was \$407 a week—almost \$100 less than the \$504 minimum wage at the time, and significantly less than the 2006 average weekly earnings of \$879. In September 2008 the unemployment rate in the Nollamara electorate was 4.8 per cent; the average Western Australian unemployment rate was 3.3 per cent. I spoke then about the serious implications of these figures and about the fact that the experience of many Nollamara constituents was remote from the experience of other Western Australians. It is important that vulnerable Western Australians are not disadvantaged in these trying economic times. They need work in their communities.

As we contemplate the first budget deficit since the Court government, I ask: what will happen to the vital projects that have been planned for areas of need, such as Mirrabooka? These projects are not protected in the way that royalties for regions scheme projects are. For example, the Mirrabooka regional centre improvement strategy is a plan to revitalise the commercial, retail, recreational and residential precincts bounded by Yirrigan Drive, Northwood Drive, Mirrabooka Avenue and Reid Highway. Significant research, planning and investment has taken place in recent years, but the state government has now put this essential redevelopment program on hold. Although funding has been committed by the private sector towards the redevelopment strategy, the government has delayed this important infrastructure project. This seems inconceivable when the economy is crying out for shovel-ready projects that would create jobs during a critical period of the economic cycle. Furthermore, the government is set to benefit from the redevelopment, as it could gain a return on the Department of Housing’s development of vacant residential land close to the regional centre. Redevelopment improvements will include traffic and parking management, public transport, better use of land and recognition of the community’s need for safety and security. Problem areas that are to be addressed by the plan include poor commercial performance, pedestrian and cycle access, integration of land use and buildings, the appearance of the regional centre, and security and safety concerns.

The redevelopment of Mirrabooka bus station is vital to the creation of a safer and friendlier on-street facility. The current bus station is like a giant dark barn. A measure of its dysfunction is the fact that two permanent security officers are rostered at the station. There are legitimate concerns among many local residents about the level of crime at this bus station. The Mirrabooka centre is used by many surrounding suburbs as a transport hub—areas such as Morley, Wanneroo and Mt Lawley. The failure to upgrade this substandard public facility impacts on all the users, as well as the local community. It is vital at a time of concern for our climate that the Western Australian community be encouraged to utilise public transport. Unfortunately, the bus station is associated with much of the crime in the area and it gives a pervading negative perception and image of social problems in the local area. The redevelopment of the bus station is a key feature of the Mirrabooka redevelopment plan, which aims to create an economically, environmentally and socially more sustainable commercial and public centre for Mirrabooka. I acknowledge that the problem lies not only with the bus station. Indeed, extensive public consultation identified that the entire Mirrabooka regional centre needs a strong, positive image and identity. However, much of this could be achieved by redeveloping the bus station.

Key to the Mirrabooka redevelopment is the inclusion of the techniques and principles of crime prevention—which is something that all members hold dear to their heart—through environmental design. The Western Australian Planning Commission defines designing out crime as the planning and design of places, spaces and buildings that can assist in reducing crime by the application of improvements to lighting, fencing, landscaping and surveillance of the area from buildings and land use. It states that people’s behaviour, particularly in terms of

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the possibility of offending, as well as people's perception about their safety, can be influenced by the design of their environment. Good design can reduce opportunities to offend and improve feelings of safety.

I am reminded of the study of a post box with what was obviously a bank letter hanging out. The study found that when the post box was clean and the surrounds tidy, nobody removed the letter, but when the post box was covered in graffiti and the surrounding area was unkempt and littered, an overwhelming majority of people who passed it removed the letter. Perhaps this is a lesson in human and criminal behaviour: we are impacted upon by our environment and we need to redevelop facilities such as the bus station.

The purpose of the Mirrabooka redevelopment is to create a town centre that is owned by the public. It should be a centre that provides a shopping, lifestyle, business and residential focus for the region, while offering a sense of wellbeing and inclusion for the diverse community of Mirrabooka. The redevelopment of the Mirrabooka town site and bus terminal would give the area a focal point for activity and interaction, drawing together the diverse social and cultural groups of the surrounding suburbs and offering attractions for and accessibility by all residents. Therefore, as the first point of contact, the bus station needs to be accessible, attractive and well designed to provide a welcoming and comfortable arrival point. A modern bus station is vital to improving and encouraging use of the centre by all members of the community.

Most importantly, the redevelopment would generate local employment opportunities and provide vision and optimism for the community. It seems a waste of effort, time and taxpayer funds not to proceed with the project. The project will improve the economic and community infrastructure in the Mirrabooka area. To not proceed with the project would mean that the jobs that would be gained by the construction phase and later by the predicted increase in retail trade would be lost. To not continue with the project would mean that a community facility and all the associated economic and community developments it would provide would be lost. This project provides an important opportunity to significantly improve the local amenity and safety of the area. However, this government has placed the project on hold without giving any thought to the positive impact that this shovel-ready project would provide.

Mirrabooka is the hub of the provision of services to the people of Mirrabooka and surrounding areas and the people of Western Australia, and I am concerned that the Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre, which provides a pregnancy support project, is run by Community Midwifery Western Australia, will, as we heard today, cease to be funded by the government. It is concerning that Minister Castrilli did not give any consideration to continuing government support for this project or advocate funding for it through the Department of Health. I understand that the project was directed to obtain funding from the Lotteries Commission. It cannot access funding through this avenue because its funding did not continue to 30 June.

Again, as we contemplate the first budget deficit since the Court government, what will happen to vital projects planned for the metropolitan area, particularly in areas of need such as Koondoola? The Koondoola and Parkwood Integrated Service Centres at each respective primary school were established two years ago through funding from the Office of Multicultural Interests at the Department for Communities. As I outlined in my first speech, the whole-of-government approach at Koondoola provides onsite assistance for health, social and trauma issues suffered by children and ensures that students get the best start to their schooling. Well over 200 people, both children and family members, have been assisted by the integrated service centres over the past two years. Torture trauma counselling is provided by ASeTS, a community organisation that services trauma and torture survivors and whose patron is the well-respected Janet Holmes á Court. ASeTS provides specialised psychological support and has a well-developed understanding of trauma sufferers. The Koondoola multicultural liaison officer provides a vital service to families and children at the local schools and ensures that they have the best possible integration into WA schooling. This service is provided by the Edmund Rice Centre at Koondoola. Children at these schools and others need the assistance provided by the integrated service centres because many of them suffer grief, anxiety and fear from the violence perpetrated upon them and their families; they are insecure, having been displaced from their homes; they suffer chronic health problems and limited previous education; and they experience some of the worst circumstances of children in our community, combined with families also having to cope with the impact of trauma and stress over a long period. These children require government assistance, and the integrated learning centres are vital to meet their needs and the needs of the schools that have high numbers of newly arrived Australians. Both the Edmund Rice Centre and ASeTS have an ongoing relationship with the communities they assist through these schools. These two impressive organisations are an additional positive to the public education system.

I welcome the recent inspection that Minister Castrilli and Minister Constable made of the Parkwood Integrated Service Centre. It must be clear to them from that visit, as it is to me, that it is a valuable and vital service to the multicultural children of Western Australia. I am concerned that this vital front-line service is about to suffer

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from the three per cent efficiency dividend, even though there is no efficiency to be made and the students at the school will suffer the consequences. Integrated service centres ensure outcomes to students that lead to a better transition into language centres and mainstream schooling where the focus can be wholly on teaching and not on dealing with the crises that these children have been exposed to before their migration to Australia. I understand that a recent report to government by Edith Cowan University on this integrated service centre found it to be effective and recommended ongoing funding for this facility and an extension of its programs. I acknowledge that the programs were funded on a project basis, but it is evident that the project is successful and ongoing funding is necessary for these children, schools and organisations to deliver these vital services.

Previously I spoke about the Mirrabooka redevelopment project. I also draw the Barnett government's attention to the Koondoola shopping plaza and request that the funding granted for its upgrade continue. The residents of Koondoola deserve better facilities than those that exist. It has a pothole-ridden car park—when I refer to potholes, I am talking about potholes that are the size of pools—barred and boarded up windows and a poor layout that does little to discourage antisocial behaviour, yet the local residents have little option with no other shops within a reasonable range.

It must be recognised that this centre would certainly have been part of the Department of Housing's land development when Koondoola was opened in 1973 to first home buyers. The WA government has a responsibility to this community to fix this failed urban design. The previous government recognised that the deteriorated state of the public facilities around the centre needed to be improved, committing \$1 million to upgrade public spaces within the shopping precinct. Please be assured that the people of Koondoola rise above the impression the Koondoola shopping plaza gives to those people who do not live in the area. Examples of that abound in the remarkable schools in the area—Mercy College, Koondoola Primary School, Waddington Primary School and the Burbridge School. It is also apparent in the well-kept homes of many residents I doorknocked in the area and the children I have met at many awards ceremonies. Neither is it reflected in the many parks and reserves and the pristine nature of the Koondoola regional bushlands. The pride of the Koondoola residents in their community must be sorely tested by this shopping centre. I acknowledge that the disgrace of the buildings must be borne by the owners—the vast majority of them do not live in the community but hold the properties as part of their superannuation or other investments. The state of such premises would not be acceptable in more affluent areas, particularly in areas where many of the owners reside. However, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the City of Wanneroo continue to work with the owners to reach an agreement that can deliver to the Koondoola residents so that the much-needed funds allocated by the previous government to public space can be utilised. The ongoing funding of this project is vital to ensure a liveable community and shopping precinct for Koondoola and deliver jobs to a community with high unemployment.

As we contemplate the first budget deficit since the Court government, what will happen to vital projects planned for the metropolitan area, particularly in areas of need such as Alexander Heights, that are not protected like the projects that come under the royalties for regions scheme? The intersection of Alexander Drive and Reid Highway is the most notorious black spot in the metropolitan area. Approximately 75 000 vehicles travel through this intersection each weekday, and to the end of 2007 there had been more than 71 crashes a year. In five years, crashes at the intersection have cost the Western Australian community about \$10.3 million.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** Before the suspension, I was speaking about Alexander Drive and Reid Highway.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** In 2008 the Labor state government announced that this significant project, the Alexander Drive-Reid Highway overpass, would be brought forward by several years, with \$62 million in state government funding and \$10 million from the federal government. As well as road safety and efficiency benefits, the Labor announcement about the interchange recognised the many other benefits that would flow, including a reduction in delays—fewer delays will deliver environmental and economic benefits through reduced emissions—and also a reduction in the risk of trauma and public frustration. Anyone who has driven along Alexander Drive recently and tried to get into the city would recognise the importance of transport in that area and access roads into the city.

I heard on the radio yesterday that there has been a significant increase in the number of cars—I cannot quote the number—in Western Australia, as there has been a significant population growth over the past couple of years. Those roads, Alexander Drive and Reid Highway, are bearing the brunt of this. Therefore, this project is very important and it is shovel ready—I love the phrase “shovel ready”. It means ready to go, and we need these sorts of projects at this time. Therefore, it is vital for our economy at this time of global financial crisis that we do not suffer from delays and indecision by the government over such projects as the Alexander Drive-Reid Highway

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overpass. It has been needed for years. The constituents of Morley, Swan Hills and Nollamara are tired of being told that it is needed and that the government is committed to it. They want action.

In the lead-up to the election, it was almost as though it was better to not commit that the project would happen, because people in the area are completely cynical. It is needed and they know it. The area is a black spot. The project needs to be done, and we need to ensure that the project, which was committed to by the Labor state government, continues. The residents of the area are also tired of the commitments of past governments to the Mirrabooka Drive-Reid Highway overpass. When is the last time that members drove through double traffic lights less than 50 metres apart? It means, in the case of Mirrabooka Drive, that people could not even do a lap of a swimming pool before they have to stop again. It causes a lot of tension. There are frequent deaths of pedestrians around that area that seem to be omitted from the statistics. It is itself a black spot. It has the high hills on both sides that are ready for an overpass. It needs government commitment. Again, it is a project that would ensure jobs and money in an area that has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. Action is needed—action that this government is failing to take and action that is easy to take. However, we are caught not in a state of excitement, but in a state of delay. We have a state of inequity as the government sits by and watches fundamental services in the community threatened with funding cuts, such as those provided by the Employment Law Centre of WA, whose existence is being threatened as it confronts the cessation of its state funding.

The Employment Law Centre is a community legal service governed by volunteers, of whom I was one before entering this place. The centre is staffed by dedicated workers earning less than they could as lawyers or advocates in the private sector. They ensure vital services are provided to non-union members. As an ex-union official, I know that some would ask why we should provide this service. However, these people have needs in the workplace. The centre also provides services to small businesses, and is vital in ensuring that we have fair workplaces and understandings between employers and employees in our community.

Without any vision, the government cuts are creating deep wounds in the future of this state, and damaging important and successful processes—for example, the abolition of funding support for the WA Commission for Occupational Safety and Health, a foundation of the successful occupational safety and health policies and programs in this state. The occupational safety and health system in WA is a bipartisan process based on the well-established and time-proven Robens' policies. Robens was a grand old man in the United Kingdom 20-odd years ago who wrote about the bipartisan process and the fact that this is the most fundamental way to achieve safety in the workplace. The commission has delivered that to this state. It has delivered many of the regulations and codes of practice that ensure our workplaces are safe and healthy. However, it has done that in a bipartisan and consultative manner—a process that is now under threat, given the removal of funding to both the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and UnionsWA for resourcing the commission. Codes of practice and regulations for occupational health and safety need hours of work, hours of research and hours of consultation. These things need to be resourced. If we want community participation, and the Premier says he does, we need to ensure that that participation can be afforded by the organisations that provide it.

The commission is the last of such systems in Australia and is now under threat through the funding cuts running riot in agencies such as WorkSafe, which are not as prominent as health, education or police, and so suffer accordingly. These are important public services, and I welcome the government's reversal of the decision to close the WorkSafe library. However, I say to the government that this should not be a closure by any other name and that up-to-date materials and staffing should continue to be provided in what is a very important resource for many occupational health and safety employers and workers in this state. The commission should not be strangled in terms of its resources. It is a very important resource for many of the employers in this state to ensure that they understand the codes of practice and the regulations with which they must comply. It is a service to which they can go and get help from the staff to find out about these things—something that we are all committed to. We all know that when we send our loved ones off to work, we want them to arrive home safely.

I have had the opportunity of looking at the Premier's Statement, and I will make a few brief comments on it. The Premier talked about reducing the number of boards and committees. He should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. In 2007 I was involved in the formation of the Women's Advisory Network of Western Australia—a process that was done in a manner to ensure that all sectors of women in the community came together at regular times to enable the government to consult on issues of greatest importance to women, and often children, because of the role that women play in our community. Therefore, it is not enough to look at just the numbers. The government must look at what these committees and boards do and what they contribute. It might look like there are lots of committees, but if they are doing the job, they deserve to stay.

I will also talk about the fast-tracking of the building of 1 000 new public houses. Certainly, there needs to be an increase in public housing, and 1 000 is probably not enough. The lesson of the past that I learnt when I had the

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privilege of working with Homeswest was that we should not put all those houses in areas where there is no public transport, because they end up as enclaves of social problems and difficulties. We need to ensure that those houses are distributed around the community, so that low-income people in social housing live amongst all the community, and not just in certain areas where they have no access to transport. I have experienced this matter previously when I had to deal with Hon Graham Kierath, who previously represented the electorate of Riverton. He felt that Homeswest housing was inappropriate for his area. We need to keep it in all areas and ensure that it grows. We need also to make sure that it is part of all our communities.

I concur with my colleague the member for Gosnells that uranium mining is too risky. I have dealt with workers who have been exposed to asbestos and have contracted mesothelioma and with some who have died as a result. We should not invite the type of damage that can be caused in those industries by allowing such risky and dangerous products into our community.

In terms of the introduction of legislation for mandatory minimum sentencing for people convicted of assaulting police officers, why not introduce similar legislation for other public officers such as ambulance officers and nurses, in accordance with the Liberal Party's election commitment? I have talked to ambulance officers who have had to deal with the issues dealt with by everyone else who serves on the front-line. They deserve the same protections as police officers and they deserve to receive what the Liberal Party committed to introduce.

With respect to the recognition that under a Barnett government more offenders will serve custodial sentences, we must ensure that services will be provided to assist offenders to break the cycle of prison. Many children in some areas—including some of the areas that I represent—grow up believing that prison is a natural part of adulthood. They need support to ensure that prison is not part of their reality.

I can assure members that the funding of the \$100 cost-of-living rebate to seniors caused some concern in the electorate. An anomaly exists whereby people are limited to access to a Seniors Card on the basis of an hourly limitation. A senior who earns a high income from working 20 hours a week can access a Seniors Card and get a rebate, whereas another senior who earns significantly less, such as a cleaner who works 38 hours, is ineligible.

The government says that it will engage and work with the non-government sector agencies to address the challenges facing them, such as confronting the delivery of services to Indigenous people, people with disabilities, vulnerable children, the homeless, seniors and others. I welcome that. Most of my comments have been about that. The Koondoola Integrated Services Centre is about that, the Ishar pregnancy support project is about that, and the Mirrabooka project is about that. It is about growing communities. Over the past two or three years, the electorate I represent has received some 70 per cent of the newly arrived Australians because that is where the support services are. If the government is to engage with those people, it must also engage with the area in which they live. The government must engage with them and provide services and transport. As I said, transport is a major issue in the north-eastern suburbs. That issue needs addressing.

I am concerned that a state of inequity is now before us as the government sits by and watches fundamental services fall by the wayside. Low-hanging fruit is being picked because government departments must deliver cuts of three per cent, without any vision or direction from government. Vision is needed to deal with the global financial crisis. It will be tough. However, Western Australia is best placed to be able to deal with it. We have projects ready to go and the capacity to fund them. We need to do that to ensure that employment continues. We do not need rhetoric or overseas lobbying trips to look into telescopes when we should be going through the bottom lines. We need ownership and leadership of the economy, and we need someone who can navigate us through this crisis so that all communities and not just the mining sector and regions can benefit and therefore not suffer the extreme adversity that comes from increasing unemployment.

**MR M.W. SUTHERLAND (Mount Lawley — Deputy Speaker)** [7.14 pm]: I rise to speak about the vexing problem of graffiti and vandalism. Recently, the Minister for Police appointed me to serve on the Graffiti Taskforce. The Graffiti Taskforce is another Liberal-National Party election promise that has been honoured and is desperately needed and wanted by the citizens of Western Australia. The task force will be responsible for implementing the government's tough-on-graffiti initiatives and will oversee a general shake-up of anti-graffiti measures in Western Australia. Unfortunately, the vandals are inside the city gates. They violate the property of all and sundry. This is not a problem that is germane to any one area and it moves across all socioeconomic lines. I am having great difficulty in my electorate with the ever increasing spate of graffiti and vandalism.

I recently sent a survey to approximately 5 000 residents in Dianella. The main items of concern to those people were graffiti, vandalism and hooning. The issue of vandalism and graffiti may seem insignificant to some members in this house, considering the other pressing matters such as the current economic climate, but this matter affects the daily lives of citizens. I have written to the local councils in and around my electorate and

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asked them what amount they have spent on graffiti in the past financial year. The amounts that they have spent are quite amazing. The City of Perth spent approximately \$460 000, the City of Stirling \$700 000, the Town of Vincent \$63 500 and the City of Bayswater \$150 000. That totals \$1 373 500. I am sure that all members would agree that in the current economic climate when we should be saving every dollar we can and putting it to positive use, that this is an absolute waste of money. It would be just as good to take \$1 373 500 and throw it onto a bonfire. The amount to which I have just referred has been spent in the immediate inner city area and is compounded by the many millions of dollars that are spent by the state and other parastate organisations because of the damage caused to property and graffiti on their premises.

At a recent meeting of the Graffiti Taskforce, we were informed by a representative of the Public Transport Authority that bus scoring on windows costs approximately \$1.5 million per year. As members know, the best way of dealing with graffiti is to remove it immediately. Of course, it is absolutely impossible to replace bus windows or bus stops whenever people score them. The problem becomes even worse when people who are starting a small business, cafe, boutique or new shop have their windows scored or the buildings graffitied even before the tenants have moved into the shops. This waste of public money is tantamount to thieving from the public purse of taxpayers and ratepayers.

It is very disturbing to have to ask ourselves whether we have lost the fight against vandalism and graffiti. In Mt Lawley, two business people started an art gallery and before it could be opened the walls of the building had been graffitied on two separate occasions. Other businessmen have shown me terrible photos of graffiti in and around their businesses. It was interesting to note that *Media Watch* last night highlighted a case in which 6PR used an example of someone being caned on the television. There was an outcry that that was cruel and unusual punishment. The interesting thing is that most of the callers who phoned 6PR supported the use of caning as a deterrent to antisocial behaviour. I for one would not support caning unless it was a last resort. I must say that the results from the use of conventional methods in trying to prevent graffiti and vandalism have been a dismal failure.

The government now has a strategy in place to work towards reducing vandalism and graffiti. The Graffiti Taskforce comprises representatives from many public instrumentalities and government departments, together with the police. The task force realises that the problem is multifaceted. One has to find out what the motivation of these offenders is, where they come from, the police must cooperate, there must be a central database where all these tags can be reported, and of course hopefully when people are apprehended they will be made to clean up the mess that they have created. It is interesting to note that the mayors of Stirling and Bayswater are very strongly in favour of instituting civil action against people who have been caught vandalising property or undertaking graffiti. That means that they would institute a court summons on those people and seek to recoup the money that has been spent on the removal of graffiti.

The constituents of Mount Lawley and the inner city area can be assured that while I am a member of the Graffiti Taskforce, I will be advocating a no-tolerance approach to vandalism. It is not only the damage that has to be cleaned up by the local authorities, but think of the buses that are sent to schools—both public and private—which have their windows scored, and then some poor unfortunate has to use those buses to go to work the next morning. One wonders what goes through people's minds when they are getting subsidised transport and yet they are abusing the facility.

This constant low-level terrorisation of the population by these vandals disrupts orderly behaviour in any area. It brings down the tone of the area and it is not limited to electoral seats in any particular area or of any socioeconomic group. Graffiti is integrally tied up with the coarsening of culture we are suffering in Western Australia. As an example, the Perth City Busport toilet facility, run by the City of Perth, costs approximately \$300 000 a year to man because it has to have two security guards there at all times because people abuse and assault the staff. There have been groups that have tried to instigate programs against graffiti, such as People Against Vandalism, which is very active in the northern suburbs and Armadale in assisting local groups to fight the scourge which is now besetting us. The problem is widespread and must be tackled. There should be a no-nonsense approach to it. A waste of taxpayer and ratepayer money in any circumstance is bad, but more particularly due to the economic constraints that we find ourselves in.

I would like to touch on the Premier's undertaking to review committees. I have noticed that many committees have sitting fees that are out of line with the workload of the members of those committees. It is very interesting, having been in local government for many years, noticing that local councillors receive about \$7 000 a year, and very often a councillor is appointed to a board, which could be on the planning commission or elsewhere and they get more money by going to one meeting a month than they do for serving on a council for a whole year.

**Mr V. Catania:** You need clothes and handkerchiefs, socks —

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**Mr M.W. SUTHERLAND:** The clothes, handkerchiefs and socks do not make up for what people get on boards, so let us not get into that.

The sitting fees are very often out of line with the workload and it is high time that we looked at it. I will take my views on city councillors receiving proper remuneration—especially now that they are considering realigning council boundaries—to the Minister for Local Government.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do you have any idea of what sort of remuneration you support?

**Mr M.W. SUTHERLAND:** I have a very good idea about what remuneration I support. Every time it comes up in Parliament, people talk about full-time councillors; I do not believe that councillors should be paid a full-time salary, but one must consider that councils such as the City of Perth have a budget of \$140 million—I do not know what Joondalup has, but it would be more than \$140 million—and Wanneroo has \$140 million, as do Stirling and Bayswater. In New South Wales, councillors in a small council like Marrickville get about \$40 000 a year. I would have thought that a reasonable amount to be paid as a member of a big council should be about \$40 000 or \$50 000 a year, which would make its councillors spend a certain amount of time on their duties and encourage them to focus and be proactive, rather than reactive. It becomes even more interesting when one considers the amounts received by chief executive officers who are running these councils—they get more than the Premier gets. The whole thing is skewed. Be that as it may, the thrust of my speech this evening is that I commend the Premier for examining these boards and committees to get them under control.

Another thing we should be looking at in these times of economic constraint is all these feelgood weeks and days that we have on every single activity. I think we have to tighten our belts and we must stop bureaucrats spending their time writing reports that mould on shelves and look good on their curriculum vitae. I listened with interest to what the member for Nollamara said about the government allowing public services to go by the wayside. That is not what this government is all about. It does not intend to let public services go by the wayside, but it intends to monitor very carefully how the money is spent. The bureaucracy over the past number of years has been like Topsy. It has grown exponentially and it is time it is brought under control.

Members must look for savings in their own constituencies, and parents et cetera must encourage their children and others to behave in a responsible way to cut the amount of money wasted on the clean-up of graffiti and vandalism.

**MS A.R. MITCHELL (Kingsley)** [7.26 pm]: I rise to highlight two iconic Western Australian organisations that have achieved significant milestones in the past few months. The first one is the Constable Care Child Safety Foundation, more affectionately known to all of us as Constable Care. It celebrated its twentieth birthday the other week and members may have read much about it in *The Sunday Times*. The Constable Care program was launched in 1989, and the focus of the organisation was based on two aspects, that of road safety and stranger danger. Many of us will remember that and many young children we know went through those programs.

In the early 1990s these programs reached 8 500 students in Perth city—but only that metropolitan area. They did not go any further than that. In 2009 Constable Care plans to visit about 500 schools and make contact with 170 000 students around the state, but not just in the metropolitan area as it will go to regional and rural Western Australia and communities. It also has specific programs for Indigenous communities.

This organisation has developed a number of strategies to convey the extensive messages that must get to young people, and it provides a unique environment for this to occur. It uses things like puppet shows and interactive plays, and the famous Constable Care figurehead still exists and works. The only change made to him in 20 years is that he had a shave in 2005 and he no longer has a moustache. But this simple method of message delivery is outstanding, and it works because it is interactive and people have a chance to ask questions, seek clarification, and certainly feel comfortable about the messages conveyed to them.

The educational programs have expanded also. Yes, road safety is still there; yes, stranger danger is still there, but they have also devised programs which address issues that primary school children are now facing, things that we did not think they would have to do; namely, bullying, drugs, alcohol, sexual abuse and graffiti. It is also now going to childcare centres; its audience is getting younger and younger.

Constable Care has also provided young people with the opportunity to develop in the areas of live theatre and acting as they work in the organisation. I will highlight a couple of significant contributors. Rove McManus was once a puppeteer with Constable Care. Rhoda Lopez was a puppeteer in 2006. She went on to star in *Miss Saigon*. Many people who have been associated with Constable Care have appeared in advertisements or performances in Western Australia, Australia and other parts of the world. It is a wonderful training ground. The work of this organisation has been outstanding over the past 20 years. It is planning for the future and it is

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certainly not sitting back on its laurels. It is supporting issues that our children are facing and it is dealing with them and responding to them. Constable Care develops people. It develops young people and it educates young people. It deals with issues that many families are not addressing at the moment. It can influence children in a most positive and proactive way.

I would like to acknowledge the Western Australia Police, the police commissioner, schools and educational centres, local governments and the corporate supporters of this organisation because that is how it gets its money. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and the dedication of the board, the staff, under the chief executive officer Vick Evans, and the volunteers who are passionate and energetic in all aspects of this organisation and most amazing outfit. It is a unique and highly successful program. I am confident that this organisation will continue to make a difference to the lives of Western Australian children for another 20 years.

The second iconic institution that I would like to highlight tonight is the Hopman Cup, which celebrated its twenty-first birthday in January this year. This event was developed in Western Australia. It is a unique event on the international tennis calendar, and one of the few annual international sporting events in Western Australia over many years. It is part of the International Tennis Federation family of teams events, alongside the Davis Cup, which is the world's largest annual men's sporting competition, and the Fed Cup for women. In fact, the International Olympic Committee has contemplated introducing mixed doubles into the Olympic Games based on the fact that the Hopman Cup has a mixed teams competition event. It may not occur in the next couple of Olympic Games but it has been discussed at IOC board level. This event showcases tennis, it showcases Perth and it showcases Western Australia through 40 hours of free-to-air television coverage broadcast by ABC television. That broadcasting has been going on for 15 years. This coverage ensures that all Australians, particularly all people in regional Australia—I emphasise regional Western Australians—have the opportunity to see this event live, not delayed. This is a unique situation in broadcasting sporting events. It is of concern to the International Tennis Federation and the board of directors of the Hopman Cup that the ABC has indicated that it has not yet committed to renew the broadcast arrangement with Hopman Cup. Despite delays in the construction of a new venue, the Perth Arena, the Hopman Cup board is committed to retain the Hopman Cup in Perth; however, it may be forced to consider alternative options if the broadcast arrangements cannot be agreed to with the ABC. This is because of the honour contracts that are currently in place. The Hopman Cup board anxiously awaits the outcome of the deliberations of the ABC board as it determines its funding arrangements for the next triennium. That should occur this month. The Hopman Cup board is certainly looking forward to the Hopman Cup continuing to be part of that. The ABC staff are absolutely committed to broadcasting this event because they receive unique professional development opportunities in broadcasting and distributing the feed to other countries and stations. The outside broadcasting facilities are based in Perth. Support has been received from many areas and many persons for this contract to be renewed. The Hopman Cup board acknowledges that support from these areas. It looks forward to serving the people of Western Australia and Australia with a world-class tennis event in Perth for many years to come.

**MR V. CATANIA (North West)** [7.35 pm]: I welcome back members. It is disappointing that we are back for only 17 weeks this year.

**Mr A. Krsticevic:** Eighteen.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Is it 18 weeks? I think this government is trying to avoid a bit of scrutiny. The daylight saving referendum will be held in May. A very important budget will be handed down in May, probably one of the most important budgets that this state has faced in a long time. The government has arranged for the daylight saving referendum to be held in the same week that the budget will be handed down. Why? To escape a bit of scrutiny and to avoid all the promises it has made.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The flip-flop.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Yes, the apologies, the flip-flop et cetera. I do not think the public will be fooled.

I am here to talk about the North West electorate and how the National-Liberal government is affecting that electorate. On the one hand, we see the National Party giving the electorate of North West a dollar and, on the other hand, we see the Liberal Party taking away \$20. The promises that the Liberal Party made during the election campaign in my electorate, which were not many, have been fulfilled through the royalties for regions program. A total of \$10 million was to go to Nickol Bay Hospital, but \$7 million of that is going towards housing. That \$10 million commitment made by the Liberal Party has been passed on to the National Party to use royalties for regions money. That \$10 million should not be coming out of royalties for regions; it should be coming out of the general fund that the government has to deliver very important services such as health, education and policing.

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As I said, on the one hand, the National Party is saying money will come from royalties for regions while, on the other hand, we are seeing three per cent cuts right across the board. We have seen three per cent cuts in regional Western Australia to services that are already stretched, including policing, education, health, child protection and fisheries. The fisheries industry is a huge issue in my electorate as we have such a large coastline. Those services will all be cut by three per cent. On the one hand, the National Party is saying that it will deliver on royalties for regions. On the other hand, we are seeing a three per cent cut to services provided by departments in regional WA. What hypocrisy! The people in the north west will not be fooled. We will see what happens in four years.

More than \$180 million worth of projects listed for the electorate of North West in the last budget have already commenced. Some had some planning sites pegged out all ready to go. I will list some of those. One that is very dear to me is the justice complex in Carnarvon. The community of Carnarvon fought hard to ensure that the Labor government kept its promise to shift the police station to the site known as the Traders site. It is a \$38 million development. To date, the National-Liberal government, despite questions in Parliament and letters, has not indicated whether it will support the station being shifted to the Traders site. It is an issue that the majority of people in Carnarvon will stand up and fight for. Some of my colleagues know how the people of Carnarvon will take up this issue. I look forward to the government making another mistake and having to apologise to the people of Carnarvon when it fails to deliver a very important piece of infrastructure to Carnarvon. But there is more. As I said, expenditure for about \$180 million worth of projects has been cut from the north west. We all know that power prices are about to go up by about 35 per cent. In regional towns, power supply is often outdated and power station infrastructure is required to be upgraded. The Labor government had committed \$70 million to building a new power station in Carnarvon, which would have provided reliability of power to the township. More importantly, it would have assisted the growers. Crops are badly affected during heatwaves, especially if water cannot be pumped onto them when the heat is on. However, the amount of \$70 million has been taken out of the power budget.

I now move up north to Karratha in the Pilbara. The Labor government started a \$102 million education precinct, potentially one of the most expensive education precincts —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** In the world.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** In the world? It would have been one of the most expensive education precincts in Western Australia at the time. We committed \$102 million to develop this education precinct. The Shire of Roebourne and the people of Karratha have made it the jewel in the crown of the Karratha 20/20 Vision project. This is a vision that looks in detail at Karratha's future needs. The education precinct in Karratha is a priority because the vision is centred around it. Now, neither the education minister nor the Treasurer can tell me whether a Karratha primary school or a Karratha high school will be built. Stage 1 of Karratha high school has already commenced, but stage 2 has stalled. A total of \$52 million will be taken out of the education precinct expenditure for Karratha.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It's outrageous.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** It is. We all know that industry in the Pilbara holds up the Western Australian economy and the national economy, yet the government is saying that under royalties for regions it will allocate a dollar but behind the scenes it will take away \$20.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It makes it difficult for families there to plan to stay.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** It goes against efforts to make Karratha a family-friendly environment and to put a stop to fly in, fly out arrangements.

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

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Obviously, the member for Riverton has not been up there. He has not seen all the development there. The National Party now seems to be taking credit for releasing all the land at Bateman West that we released just before the election. It is land that will enable people there to purchase homes. I encourage the member to go there to see for himself the stage Karratha is at.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** I have.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** The member for Riverton obviously has not.

We completed stage 1 of Carnarvon Regional Hospital early last year. I believe that the second, and most important, stage—the \$6.7 million upgrade—of the hospital is now in jeopardy. I think it has been moved down the ladder of priorities. It is interesting that today the Minister for Health itemised how long it took the Labor government to make Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital a priority. The same is now happening with Carnarvon

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hospital because this government is moving its priority down the ladder. Will it ever be built? I cannot see it happening. As I said, it is another royalties for regions project: \$1 is being put in one hand and \$20 is being taken away in the other.

I refer now to one of the biggest and probably one of the most important projects for this state, which the government has put on the backburner. I cannot express how important this project is to this state, particularly the Pilbara region, and to the national economy. I am referring to the interconnected north west electricity system. We announced during the election campaign that it was our number one priority to seek funding support from the federal government. This power security for the Pilbara would mean cheaper and more reliable power. Reduced carbon emissions and increased business opportunities are also among the benefits of developing and integrating electricity supply for the Pilbara. In the face of increases in electricity costs in the next few months, people in the Pilbara are already paying exorbitant amounts for their power. The interconnected north west electricity system is one way that the government could reduce power costs in the north west by 10 to 30 per cent, albeit those savings would be swallowed up by the government's new charges. Nonetheless, it would provide a 10 to 30 per cent saving for those people. As I said, a submission to the Infrastructure Australia fund was a number one priority for the Labor government. However, it has not been included in the list forwarded to the federal government by this present National-Liberal government.

Bringing all major power generators onto a single grid would underpin the long-term future of the Pilbara by reducing power prices, as I said, by 10 to 30 per cent through improved technology and economies of scale. As I said also, the government will increase power costs by 35 per cent. This interconnected system would assist in reducing carbon emissions by up to half and improving reliability of power supply across the Pilbara. If each town is fed from two different directions, it will provide the reliability people need. Often, one town will suffer loss of supply due to a cyclone or the weather in general. That is why it is important to provide this two-way effect. It will allow the development of efficient solar-thermal power stations, and provide diversity in the grid and more protection from the effects of carbon emissions. The construction of a grid would also ensure continued job opportunities in the Pilbara during the economic downturn. This is a great opportunity to push through this project and get it built in these times when it is easier to get things built. This is a great opportunity for the Pilbara that this government is trying to avoid. The federal government will wake up to this situation and will, hopefully, announce that the interconnected north west electricity system will be its number one priority.

This government has instead put forward a project that both proponents said they would fund; namely, Oakajee port and rail, which is a vital project to the southern part of my electorate. Why would this government put public money into a project that the private sector has said it will fund? Why will it do that when it could make the interconnected north west system, which no-one wants to fund, the number one priority? The purpose of the Infrastructure Australia fund is to develop projects for which no funds are available and for which nothing has been set aside by government. Why ask the federal government for money to fund Oakajee when private investors say they will build it at no cost to the government? Why waste public moneys?

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** So the state can control the port.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** That is a good point. I thank the member for South Perth for raising that.

**Mr J.E. McGrath** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** The member has obviously not read the tender documents, which stipulate that the control of the port would remain with the Geraldton Port Authority. The member for South Perth should get his facts straight and pass them on to the Premier because I think he has got his facts a little askew.

Will royalties for regions money be used for the Oakajee project, which can be funded wholly by the private sector? I think the Premier needs to get his priorities right here. Why would the Premier throw away \$3 billion and thousands of jobs in the current economic climate to delay this project when the proponents already have the money to start it? It seems ludicrous. It reminds me of the Kingstream project which the Premier was responsible for when he was the Minister for Resources Development during the previous Liberal-National government. Perhaps this is Kingstream 2. Perhaps the Premier can tell members about that. In line with what is in the tender documents for the infrastructure fund, the Premier needs to leave the private sector investors to fund what they said they would. The private sector investors said that they would fund this project at no cost to the state and that they would allow the Geraldton Port Authority to control those areas that some people may be concerned about.

We have a minority government that, in opposition, made promises and said anything to get elected, and I will give members some examples. I wish National Party members were here to listen to me, but it is lucky that the Speaker is in the chamber; hopefully, he will take this back to his National Party colleagues.

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I will quote from some of the election material handed around in my seat of North West. The first commitment was: “If you vote for the National Party, we will deliver a policy to provide new houses and free rent to teachers and police and essential services staff.” That was a commitment made by the National Party—police, teachers and essential services staff would get a free house if they voted for the National Party. I cannot wait to see that happen. I know that all the teachers and police are hanging out for that. Another commitment was: “Save our shops. No to deregulation of trading hours.” It will be interesting to see what happens now.

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** That is right.

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Anyone can trade it. It is quite a strange policy. It will be interesting to see whether the Nationals support any move to deregulate trading hours in Perth. I cannot wait to see that happen. Another commitment was: “Reinstate the stock squad.” I am glad that the Minister for Police is in the chamber, as he has previously said that the Liberal Party would reinstate the stock squad in the government’s first 100 days. Do we have a stock squad? No. What happened? The Department of Agriculture and Food is now employing people to try to be police and to be the stock squad. I know that a lot of pastoralists in my area are very concerned because there is a lot of stock theft, especially when pastoralists go through periods when it is hard to earn a dollar. It is disappointing that the Minister for Police, who made a commitment in opposition to reinstate the stock squad, has suddenly gone quiet. I have another commitment. I am sorry to pick on the Minister for Police, but he promised to reopen police stations in regional Western Australia. I think a few police stations have been reopened, but the one in my electorate that is dear to my heart is the Gascoyne Junction Police Station. Is it going to be reopened? Unfortunately, I think it is an operational matter, is it not, Minister for Police?

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Are these the ones that you closed when you were in government?

**Mr V. CATANIA:** No. What did the minister say when he was in opposition? He said that it was a political decision and the government could change it. Now he is telling me that it is an operational issue and he cannot reopen the Gascoyne Junction Police Station. I am sure that we can work on it to fix the policing situation.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You know that I think the world of you. I love your father and I will do what I can for you; okay?

**Mr V. CATANIA:** I am pleased and I will report that back to my electorate.

Another announcement that seems to have fallen by the wayside is the \$40 million northern towns development fund that the Liberal Party promised for the Pilbara. That is right; there is silence. No-one knows much about it.

I will continue. The Liberal and National Parties promised the world in opposition, but now that they are in government, suddenly they have to change their tune. During the election campaign, the Liberal and National Parties brought their federal colleagues to Exmouth to campaign against World Heritage nomination for the area. Now they are in government. I know it is a huge surprise. It was a shock to us, but it was definitely a shock to them. When they were in opposition, they said that the government had not done any public consultation. What have they done now that they are in government? Suddenly, the Liberal-National government has put to the federal government a nomination for World Heritage listing for the area. It is unbelievable.

**Mr J.E. McGrath** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** It is a very important part of the world that needs to be protected. I cannot overstate how much it needs to be protected. The people of Exmouth are doing an excellent job of protecting a natural wonder.

Shall I go on? This is the one to note. The election material that was sent out to the people of Exmouth said that a Liberal government would ensure that the Straits Resources Ltd salt mine proposal would go ahead. I will explain this to those members who have not been to Exmouth. There is a proposal for a salt mine in the Exmouth gulf. There is concern about the location of the salt mine. At the time the proposal was going through a process—perhaps the former Minister for the Environment can interject and assist me —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The Appeals Convenor.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** It was with the Appeals Convenor. It was going through a process that had been set. Once that process is finished, which I hope will occur in the next week or two, a decision will be handed down and passed to the minister for approval. I cannot wait to see whether the Minister for Environment, Hon Donna Faragher, adheres to what the Liberal Party campaigned for during the election campaign—that is, to approve the Straits’ salt mine. At what cost?

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**Mr W.J. Johnston:** She will go on leave and the member for Kalamunda will approve it for her.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Or perhaps the Premier. It will be interesting to see what decision the minister makes. There is a unique environment in the area. If there is any question about the damage that a salt mine could cause to the backbone of Exmouth—that is, the fishing industry and Ningaloo Reef—why approve it, and at what cost? The member for Scarborough has an interest in the fishing industry and in tackle shops.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I like jobs, too.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Yes, and jobs.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** And regional jobs.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** That is why it is important to protect those jobs in tourism and in the local fishing industry. I am glad that the member has raised that point, because when we were in government, we formed a committee to —

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** It did not cost taxpayers anything. The committee was to investigate whether the community wanted to expand the harbour in Exmouth, a proposal that would have provided more jobs than any other proposal would have provided; that is, it would have provided a platform at which super-yachts and oil and gas ships could be serviced, rather than being serviced out in the gulf. Who knows what is happening in the gulf, because it is out of sight and out of mind. We had a plan for Exmouth. I hope this government fulfils that plan.

The other big-ticket item that we have been speaking about is the election commitment made by both the National and Liberal Parties that no local governments would be forced into amalgamating. I do not know what happens in cabinet; not many people do.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Most cabinet ministers don't either!

**Mr V. CATANIA:** Obviously, a lot of National Party cabinet ministers do not know what happens in cabinet. If they do not believe in forced amalgamations, why is the Liberal Party going down that path? It affects me, because there are eight towns in my electorate that fall under the threshold of 2 000 people. It is not about whether a town has 2 000 people; it is about whether people have to travel two million kilometres to get from one end of the local government area to the other. It is important for these towns, especially in these economic times, to ensure that jobs are not lost. It is a real fear in these communities that jobs will be lost and that towns will be forgotten because small local governments will be amalgamated with bigger ones and they will be swallowed up. People are already calling Shark Bay south Carnarvon, which does that town an injustice. I cannot believe that the government is heading down that path. Local governments are under a lot of pressure. The onus on local governments is growing. Recently, there have been floods in Carnarvon. Once again the onus was on the shire to assess the damage caused by the floods. I congratulate the Shire of Carnarvon for doing an exceptional job. I believe the state government should have done it.

Everyone talks about Carnarvon as the food bowl. Carnarvon is the food bowl. Food production is a \$94 million industry that is the backbone of Carnarvon. Everyone says that. The Nationals spout it, even though they want to double the size and put in another 800 hectares to allow the big boys to come in and totally rape and pillage the Carnarvon food bowl, which is a huge concern to the growers in Carnarvon. After the flood not one government minister visited Carnarvon to assess the damage. Not one state government assessor came to Carnarvon to assess the cost of the damage. The Carnarvon growers have a small window of opportunity. If they miss the Perth markets, it means that Perth people pay more for their produce because the produce they buy is not from Carnarvon. The Carnarvon growers are now experiencing the loss of topsoil caused by the floods and the state government has not acted to open up pits to allow them to replenish the topsoil. It is a great shame.

Members are aware of the banana price increase following the Queensland cyclone that wiped out the banana crops. Fortunately the flood in Carnarvon was not as bad as it was in Queensland, but if a big one occurs—it is only around the corner—people in Perth will pay higher prices for cucumbers, melons et cetera. It is a great shame that the National Party members, who spout royalties for regions, have been absent at a time of need for the Carnarvon growers.

The people in the north west are not fooled. The Pilbara is waiting for support through the Pilbara plan. The local people have done all the work and presented the documents to government and it is now up to the government to deliver proper royalties for regions; that is, to ensure that projects, such as Karratha 2020, are properly funded and that the high school and primary school are built. As soon as the Pilbara plan is given the government's backing, the resource sector will follow suit. It is important that it does that.

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Members should remember that Labor retained the seat of North West. Why? It was because Labor delivered many projects that the north west needed.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** They had an excellent candidate.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** A hardworking candidate.

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** I am glad that the Leader of the National Party is in the chamber. He has told me that regional Western Australia received a lot from a Labor government. That is the reason Labor retained that seat. However, there is always more money to be had. The member will recall the conversation we had.

I truly support royalties for regions and I think that everyone does, but at what cost? I said earlier in my speech that for each dollar that is handed to north west regions for major infrastructure projects, they are losing \$20. The area has lost a lot and that is a great shame. I believe that royalties for regions should be implemented. As the Pilbara holds up the state and national economy, 25 per cent should be quarantined for the Pilbara to ensure that it keeps growing to hold up the Western Australian economy.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** You should be getting back to your party room.

**Mr V. CATANIA:** I cannot wait until royalties for regions is passed through Parliament. I will make amendments to the legislation to ensure that 25 per cent of the royalties will be kept in the Pilbara. That is what it deserves.

**MR P. ABETZ (Southern River)** [8.04 pm]: I will address some issues I addressed in my inaugural speech to this house; that is, roads and infrastructure in the Southern River area. The roads in my area that are in desperate need of widening are Ranford Road, Nicholson Road and Garden Street, all of which are bottlenecks. I am pleased to advise that with the cooperation of local government and Main Roads Western Australia these bottlenecks are being addressed and should be alleviated within the next 18 months. Two of the projects are under construction and the Garden Street project should be completed within 18 months, to the great relief of the residents.

I have been told by the City of Gosnells that another 20 000 blocks of land will be developed in the Southern River area in the next 10 years. That means that even with these improvements to the roads, the area will continue to have a major traffic issue.

I am pleased to advise members that the mayor of Gosnells, together with council officials, and I recently met with Hon Simon O'Brien, the Minister for Transport, to discuss the possibility of improving the public transport system in my electorate by extending the Thornlie railway line to Canning Vale, via Nicholson Road and Ranford Road. It is interesting to note that step one of the recommendation by Professor Newman, the man who put forward the railway proposal to the Labor government, was to put the railway down the freeway. Step two was to have a deviation through Canning Vale at a later stage. I am pleased that Minister O'Brien is willing to continue to keep that as an option and that the land for the railway stations will be retained contrary to the efforts of the previous government, which wanted to sell off the land set aside for the two railway stations. The residents of my electorate are delighted that there is at least a possibility of retaining that option.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** The proposed Canning Vale station is in my electorate.

**Mr P. ABETZ:** It depends on which side of the road it is built. Is not the railway line the boundary?

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** The council wants the station at the corner of Nicholson and Ranford Roads, which is in my electorate.

**Mr P. ABETZ:** I thought the police station was in my electorate, but we will sort that out later. This government will build the railway station and my residents will get the benefit of it.

The other issue I will address is a major environmental issue that has gone under the radar for most people. With my background in agricultural science, I take a great interest in the use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides in agriculture. Members know that chemicals used in agriculture put an environmental loading onto the environment, creating issues of contamination and so on.

Carnarvon, the banana growing region of this state, is unique because the bananas are grown without the use of any insecticide or fungicide. This state's banana crops are totally disease free. Biosecurity Australia released a report that will allow the importation of Cavendish bananas from the Philippines, which has 15 insect pest and fungal diseases that we do not have in this state. In the event that diseases such as black sigatoka, a fungal disease, and moko were to enter Western Australia and become established, the growers would be required to

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spray fungicide every seven days and that would be at a huge environmental and economic cost. Moko is a bacterial disease. The way it is spread is not clearly understood. It is generally soil borne, but once it became established in WA plantations, it would be virtually impossible to eliminate. The difficulty is that if these diseases were to get into Western Australia's banana plantations, this state would be stuck with having to deal with them forever. Biosecurity Australia has a system of so-called acceptable risk levels. The detailed report refers to estimating the likelihood—it is always estimating. I would say, as an agricultural scientist, that the estimate is little more than an educated guess. The risk of importing bananas from the Philippines is simply too great. Even though the report says that it could be done only under certain conditions, they being met phytosanitary conditions, as they are called, for inspections of banana plantations, given the endemic corruption in the Philippines, any paperwork that is given with a consignment of fruit, quite frankly, is not worth the paper it is written on. The only way in which we could ensure the conditions were met would be if Australian Quarantine Inspection Service officers were stationed in the Philippines, physically did all that work, personally inspected the plantations and the consignments of fruit and dealt with all the documentation. The likelihood of that ever happening is very small indeed.

The fact is that if the state loses its disease-free status, it will never get it back—a great environmental cost. One of the aspects of this that amazes me is that on this issue I have seen no press releases from the Greens, the Conservation Council and others who claim to be concerned about the environment. I have heard nothing. It seems that climate change is the only environmental issue. The importation of bananas is probably not sexy enough. Carnarvon people may think that their bananas are sexy; I am not sure. I believe that this is an issue the Parliament should take a great interest in for the protection of the state's environment. I recently made a submission to the Senate inquiry into that decision by the Director General of Biosecurity Australia.

Another issue I draw to the attention of the house is road safety, which is of concern to people in my electorate. I have been inundated with messages from a number of driving school instructors who are deeply concerned at the problem that has been caused by people who are in the state on 457 work visas and the issue of their drivers' licences. In times past anybody who came to Western Australia needed to get a Western Australian driver's licence within three months. With the huge influx of 457 work visa holders, the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure issued an edict that people on 457 work visas would not need to obtain Western Australian drivers' licences. The problem arises because in so many Third World countries, such as the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka, people simply purchase a driver's licence. I have been given to understand that Western Power, for example, has experienced so many accidents with 457 work visa holders that it no longer allows anyone with a 457 work visa to drive its vehicles without undergoing a driving assessment by a qualified driving instructor. The failure rate is something like 75 per cent. The problem is that they fail the test and then drive home and keep driving until they get their next test. Some of them have failed the test 11 times and are still driving on the state's roads today. It is only a matter of time before a serious accident or fatality will be caused by the lack of the need for people from those countries to hold Western Australian drivers' licences. One very frightening episode that was conveyed to me was a person who came from India with a heavy rigid goods vehicle licence. When he went for a driving assessment he sat behind the steering wheel and because he could not move the vehicle and did not know what to do, he informed the instructor that he had never sat behind the steering wheel of even an ordinary car; yet he was here in Australia with an official Indian driver's licence that entitled him to drive a truck on the state's roads. That is a frightening prospect.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Do you think that 457 visa holders from the United Kingdom and South Africa should be treated in the same fashion?

**Mr P. ABETZ:** I believe that everybody who is in this state for longer than three months should go for a driver's licence assessment. South African drivers' licences are generally not purchasable to the degree that they are in the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka. However, there are still issues with local traffic rules, so it is good for those people to know what the rules are for their own safety and for the safety of other road users. I would certainly advocate that and I have taken that up with the Minister for Transport and it is currently receiving consideration.

Another issue I raise this evening is private property rights, which is taking up probably a third of my time when dealing with constituents' inquiries. The problems with the Bush Forever program are very significant in my area, as it is on the urban fringe where development is taking place. In principle, no-one objects to the concept of Bush Forever.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** No-one ever objects in principle.

**Mr P. ABETZ:** That is right. In fact, the landholders who are affected do not object to the policy at all. They agree that if there is remnant bush as suburbia spreads and the government believes it is worth retaining, it should be retained. However, they believe the cost of that should not be borne by the landholder but by the

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community. I have the most anomalous situation in my electorate at the moment. Three blocks of land of exactly the same size are next to one another. I think they were purchased in the 1960s. All three of the landholders came to visit me. Developers want to develop the area, which has been zoned for urban development. The person who purchased the middle block was a bit of a nature freak, one might say. He did not develop the land for a hobby farm. He kept it as bush and just built a house and garage on the block. The two people either side of him decided that they wanted to clear their land, which they did and ran sheep and goats. The people on the left and the right of him have been paid \$4.5 million by the developers for their blocks of land, but the government has offered the person with the bushland the princely sum of \$1.1 million. One might say that that does not seem quite just.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Is that someone from my electorate?

**Mr P. ABETZ:** It may well be for someone who lives outside my electorate as well. The issue is that not all the land is bush. Therefore, the government can compensate with \$1.1 million on the pretence that the land has never been zoned for urban development and been subject to the Bush Forever policy. The result is that it is deemed to have never been worth more than rural value; hence, it is valued on the basis of its rural value and that is how the government arrives at the figure of \$1.1 million. There are other situations in which blocks of land have been purchased under this arrangement. The part that has a house on it and the cleared land are carved off and sold to a developer for the price the government paid for the whole block of land. The government very conveniently gets a free block of bushland, which saves the government a lot of money, but I would say it is not at all just. I realise that we as a government have a very large legislative agenda but I believe we certainly need to be addressing this issue in this term of Parliament to remove this gross injustice in this state. It applies to not only Bush Forever but also even schools. I will give an example. The school at which my children attended is not in my electorate, but the block of land was bought with a view to developing the school. Because it was in a swampy area, sand was put over about half the land. The next bit was ready to be done, but somebody has now found an orchid or something in one corner, and it cannot be developed. However, there is no compensation for that. In this case, people are stuck with land that they cannot do anything with, and there is much injustice in that. That is one area that I am sure that we, as a government, will address in this term of government.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [8.20 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to address the Parliament this evening. I will run through a number of issues, and I will start with some issues directly related to the electorate of Cannington. We have excellent schools in our area, and they are all looking forward very much to benefiting from the federal government's economic stimulus package. Each of those schools will be able to utilise that money to upgrade its facilities and improve the circumstances of its physical infrastructure. The one thing those schools do not want to see is that money siphoned off to build new schools. Although building new schools is an essential activity of the state government, it is not really what the economic stimulus package is designed for. In fact, if the state government tries to siphon the money off to build new schools, that will actually defeat the purpose of the economic stimulus package, because those large projects, such as building a new high school or a new primary school, will take much longer to implement, whereas a few hundred thousand dollars for a primary school can be spent very quickly. That can make a big impact on the economy, and also benefit the students and the school community in Cannington and every other community in the state. That is why I believe that people would have been very surprised to see the Premier, Colin Barnett, talking about diverting the federal government's stimulus package away from its proper purpose and put into building schools, particularly when the new Liberal government has cut the number of schools to be built in this state. Whereas I believe 80 schools were built in the eight years of the Labor government, there is a proposal to build only 15 schools in the next four years. That is clearly a significant reduction in the activity to build schools in this state. Therefore, we would not want the economic stimulus package, which is designed to deal with the great effects of the global financial crisis, to be diverted to subsidise cutbacks by the state government, which is reducing expenditure on a proper school building program.

I have an established electorate. The people of Cannington do not need new schools—although we are all looking forward to the Bannister Creek Primary School being completed as a replacement school—but they need the existing schools to be upgraded. No school is more deserving than another, but I highlight the Wilson Primary School. I have written to the minister, urging her to put the Wilson Primary School at the top of her list. It is a school with excellent staff, with leadership from Ray Knight, the principal, and it is delivering above-average outcomes. However, the physical infrastructure of the school could be improved, and use of the federal government stimulus money would be an ideal way of improving that infrastructure. I have urged the minister—I am looking forward to receiving a reply—to improve that school so that the infrastructure meets the standards of the parents, the community and the staff. However, it is not the only school. There is also Queens Park Primary School, of which Paula Gray is the principal. There are many other good schools in the area. The member for Victoria Park, who formerly had Queens Park Primary School in his electorate, knows the quality of the school

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community there. All these schools—I will talk about some others later—deserve to see the money not diverted away from its intended purpose.

Another piece of important infrastructure for the community of Cannington, of course, is the rail line. I have spoken in this place previously about the rail line. It was a great plan by the previous government to upgrade the Queens Park train station. I have surveyed users at the train station about their needs. The station is serving their needs well, but it needs to be modernised. I am very pleased that the minister has agreed to spend \$1.5 million on the upgrade. There was a fear in the community that the new government would cut that project out of its forward estimates and spend the money elsewhere, so we are very glad that that money will still be spent during the calendar year. We therefore look forward to the Beckenham train station, which is just down the road, receiving an upgrade in the future. That is a much more complex one because it is split by William Street. Therefore, I urge the government, when it is considering that one, to go for the grade separation of William Street at the same time. I know that the member for Bassendean will know all about the grade separation of William Street, because when he was the member for Roleystone, William Street was in his electorate, and he knows how important that is.

Cannington is an electorate that has many older Australians living in it, and they were very welcoming of the federal government's stimulus package before Christmas, when they were provided with some extra money to help them with the cost of living. They often said to me in my electorate office that they could not understand how the federal government could so easily deliver several thousand dollars to them, but the state government made a complete mess of its cost-of-living rebate, which was worth only \$100 but which caused so much angst and confusion. I have never before heard of a government not being able to give away money, but that is what happened.

While talking about Cannington, I note that the government has cancelled the trial of income management in Cannington. It is very interesting that the Minister for Child Protection put out a press release—I do not have it in front of me, I am sorry—trumpeting the extension of income management in the Kimberley, but she rejected the trial in Cannington. I am not necessarily saying that the trial would work. The minister trumpeted the introduction and extension of income management to the whole of the Kimberley, but she did not proceed with the trial in Cannington. What is the answer? What is her solution? The minister is not trying this proposal from the federal government, which she agreed to do. She put out a media release stating that she agreed to it, and then she cancelled it. It will be interesting to see what she is going to do to try to deal with the problem of parents who do not spend their welfare money on the proper purpose. She cannot just say, "Oh well, I'll do nothing", which seems to be—I will talk about this in a minute—something that the new Liberal government likes to do. Therefore, I am looking forward to the minister explaining the alternative.

I will mention the guys at the Cannington Returned and Services League. I was very pleased to be hosted by them, along with part of the crew of HMAS *Collins*, in January. Terry Reynolds, the secretary, and Bob Hill, the president, are very good people. They are looking for a bit of money from the government too. They need a front fence to go around their war memorial. They also need a bit of an upgrade to the war memorial, so I am looking forward to the government helping them with funding for that.

I also make mention of the Cannington Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society, which is a very interesting body that serves the community of Cannington. It owns the Cannington Showground, which is a very important part of the infrastructure of the local area. The society has great plans for the future, and I hope that it will be able to proceed with them. At the same time, of course, I would not want that to be done at the expense of Greyhounds WA Cannington. The member for South Perth is not present in the chamber. I believe that there needs to be an accommodation between the two of them.

As I said, there are some great schools in the electorate, and one of those is Sevenoaks Senior College. I congratulate the college on getting \$4.5 million from the federal government for a vocational education and training centre. Sevenoaks Senior College is a very progressive school. It has a different style of management and is very well served by Kath Partridge, who is the principal, the school board and the school community. It draws students from right across the metropolitan area. It is across the road from the Cannington railway station and is a very important part of the state's education infrastructure, and not just for the people of Cannington. Much more broadly, because of the strong connections of Sevenoaks Senior College with the business community, the VET centre is going to be an important new piece of infrastructure. Unfortunately, the Leader of the House is not in the chamber, but I am very much looking forward to seeing flashing lights in the street in which Sevenoaks Senior College is located so that any problems with students crossing the road there can be avoided.

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There are some great environmental groups in our area. I am very pleased that four of them received funding recently from the Swan Alcoa Landcare program. SERCUL—the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare—received \$34 000 for the restoration of Edgeware Lake in Lynwood, which is also in the electorate of Cannington. SERCUL is very good. It provides support to other groups, such as the Wilson Wetlands Action Group, which received \$21 000 for its ongoing work in the Wilson wetlands and which is a fabulous community-based project that has been going for 10 years. Again, the member for Victoria Park, who previously represented the area, could tell the house of the good work that it does there. I was very pleased recently to be invited to the breakfast club at Brookman Primary School, another important piece of infrastructure that provides a service to the people of Langford. Brookman Primary School was fortunate to receive an upgrade during the term of the previous government. Having been upgraded, it would still welcome additional funds, so I again ask that the Premier not siphon the money off to long-term projects, but rather get on and spend the money at Brookman Primary School. Zora Ellis from the P&C invited me down to the breakfast club which is a very good organisation that supports the kids in the local area, and it is supported by local businesses. It is a great facility that the community operates there, and I am very pleased to continue to support the P&C at Brookman Primary School. I was pleased to help last year, and I look forward to continuing to support it this year.

I want to acknowledge a couple of other groups. The first of those is the White House Community Church in Langford on Nicholson Road. It has just had its tenth anniversary. It is very much involved in community work, and I was very pleased to be invited along to speak at its tenth anniversary dinner before Christmas. I look forward to continuing to work with the community from the White House Church, as I do with the Lynwood Christian Church. Mark Medhurst is the pastor there, and he needs a bit more land. The church is happy to purchase the land—a neighbouring former primary school site—but it just wants to ensure that the government looks after it. We will need to ensure that that can be accommodated, because it has plans to expand and continue to service the community. When I was talking to Mark Medhurst recently, we talked about not only the work he is doing the Cannington community, but also the work he is doing in supporting people in Zimbabwe, and there is no country in the world that requires support for individuals more than Zimbabwe.

I also want to talk about Wandarrah Seniors Club, which is providing a service for older Australians living in Lynwood, Parkwood and surrounding suburbs. The outgoing president is Louisa Smith and the new president is Fay Watson. Last year, the Warrandah senior citizens collected 95 signatures on a petition tabled by Hon Barbara Scott on behalf of Hon Simon O'Brien, calling for the reinstatement of bus number 155. I know the member for Riverton will probably be interested in this as well because it services his electorate, too. The Wandarrah senior citizens have given me a petition that I will be tabling on that same topic. I am looking forward to good news because Hon Simon O'Brien is now the Minister for Transport, so, having collected the signatures —

**Mr P. Papalia:** It's in the bag!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is in the bag! I have written to the minister to inform him that, given he was involved in collecting the signatures for that petition, I would be very disappointed if he was not able to assist us because it is very important to the community there. Given his obvious commitment to the issue, I am looking forward to good news.

In talking about the local community, I need to talk about the issue of trucks on Leach Highway. This is a real problem. I notice that people have an issue with truck noise on Roe Highway, and I can understand that, but truck noise on Leach Highway in the middle of Wilson—Wilson is split by the Leach Highway—is equally very important. The former government banned trucks over 19 metres in length travelling on Leach Highway between Albany Highway and the freeway. That was a very important decision; however, I have written to the new minister, and he has made no commitment to continue with the current ban, but I will be very disappointed if he does not. What is more, he has said that the government will not extend the ban to smaller trucks, which again is very disappointing.

The Liberal Party's solution is to do nothing. It has no plans to address truck noise on Leach Highway in the community of Wilson. It talks about Roe Highway, but Roe Highway is a five-year or six-year project that involves bulldozing through a wetland in the member for Jandakot's electorate. It will be interesting to see how welcoming the member for Jandakot is to Roe Highway stage eight. I am very much looking forward to his contribution to that debate.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** You are asking us ban them; where are the trucks going?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The trucks go exactly where the member wants them to go; they go onto Roe Highway. The distance around Roe Highway to the freeway and Leach Highway is exactly the same as Roe Highway to

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Stock Road. Nobody is proposing to build the Fremantle eastern bypass; nobody is talking about building any of the 1950s —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is always interesting when anybody in the Liberal Party raises anything about the Fremantle eastern bypass, because that was part of the 1950s plan for road infrastructure in the metropolitan area, which of course included a northern bypass to go from Fremantle, through Cottesloe and Karrinyup. I have never heard any Liberal come into this place and say, “Not only do we want to build through working-class Fremantle; we also want to build a freeway through Cottesloe and Karrinyup.” This just shows the dishonesty of the Liberal position on this matter. It is simply dishonest to say that it wants to build one part of a 1950s plan, but it will not build the other part of the 1950s plan. When a Liberal comes to this debate with clean hands, I will listen; for the rest of the time I will pay no attention. The time to act is now.

I will also mention a couple of issues that are happening at the moment in Wilson. The residents’ ratepayers association does a great job; it is very active. It has raised the issue of broadband connectivity in the area, and I will continue to work with it to ascertain what can be done. I also note that the federal government has a plan to solve that problem. I am glad to see the Minister for Police back—I hope he gives me my flashing lights on Sevenoaks Street!

**Mr R.F. Johnson** interjected

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Yes, I think so.

The federal government has a plan under the national broadband network, and I look forward to that being rolled out in the future.

The underground power project is going ahead in Wilson west at moment. Many ratepayers are concerned about the costs involved. I am very pleased that Mayor Joe Delle Donne is very interested in the views of the community and is very keen to work with the community in Wilson to ensure that those expenses can be dealt with.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I look forward to working with the mayor and council to resolve that issue, because I am sure we can come to a proper resolution that allows the project to go ahead but does not overly burden low income earners and pensioners. To them, \$4 250 is a lot of money and it is not right that the costs be put directly on to them.

Representing the Cannington community is a great job. It is a very satisfying role, and I am very pleased to continue to do it. One of the interesting things I was able to do during the past short while was attend the 100th birthday of Jeffrey Graham, a Wilson resident. I thank his son Darryl for the invitation to that family event. It was very pleasing to meet a man of that age. I am not quite sure I will reach his age, but Jeffrey is still very active and has all of his faculties, and it was very pleasing to be invited by the family. I am very pleased that so many people in the local community include me in events that are happening for them. I hope to provide them with proper representation in this place.

I will now mention a couple of other things that, although they impact on it, are not specifically about my electorate. In question time today there was a question about the Premier’s comments on Gorgon. The Premier demonstrates a weakness—he likes to say things without thinking through the consequences of what he is saying. Who could forget the Kimberley canal from the 2005 election campaign? In front of me I have an article from *The Sunday Times* dated 12 August 2001, with the headline “Barnett in push for one House”. I make it clear that I do not agree with the Premier on this issue. He stated —

“Government has got a lot more complicated today; a lot more demanding. We suffer because we have two small Houses,” he said.

“If we are to keep an effective State Government we will be better served by a parliament of one chamber.”

I do not agree with the Premier. I think the bicameral system serves the state very well and I do not believe his idea of abolishing the upper house is the right course. It is a demonstration of what happened the last time the Premier talked about his idea of abolishing the upper house. He woke up and thought about it on that day but he did not think through the consequences. Another example of this occurred on 23 January 2009. The headline on page 5 of *The Australian* was “Put people before ASX, says Barnett”. In the article he explains how he wants to relax the continuous disclosure rules in the Australian Stock Exchange so that companies can keep information

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secret from their shareholders. He blamed the ASX rules for BHP's ham-fisted attitude to the workers in Ravensthorpe. Continuous disclosure laws have nothing to do with the ham-fisted nature of BHP's termination of those workers. BHP could have given a month's notice and it could have treated people with respect and not simply called them in and told them they were gone that day.

I draw the house's attention to an article in *The Australian Financial Review* on Friday, 30 June 2009. I will quote from the article to point out how out of step with contemporary thinking is the Premier's 1960s attitude to secrecy by listed companies. The analysis piece by James Eyers states —

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission has made the enforcement of continuous disclosure laws a priority and, while market surprises remain common, the laws are widely recognised as providing a crucial means for shareholders and creditors alike to ascertain sufficient information from companies to assess the risk of buying shares or lending.

Let us get this straight. This is an important protection for people who invest in the stock exchange. If we want to have investment in the stock exchange, if we think that is a good thing—that is, capitalism—we have to ask companies to be honest with their shareholders. To argue that what BHP did at Ravensthorpe is justification for going back to the insider trading of the 1960s, the “only the mugs lose” game that used to be played in the Perth stock exchange when the Premier was learning about capitalism, is not a sensible suggestion. It is another example of the Premier simply saying anything without worrying about the consequences. The Premier's statement today is a further example of him saying anything if it seems a good idea. The Liberal lie of the 100-day plan is clearly another example of the Liberal Party saying anything because it was in a desperate situation and it thought it would win in an election. It had no intention of delivering on those promises.

In his speech today the Premier said —

We have asked government CEOs to save three cents in every dollar spent to improve the efficiencies and operations of their agencies.

With due respect, leaving aside the Minister for Police, that is the job of ministers. Ministers are elected to do a job. We expect ministers to get on top of their portfolios, find out where the money is being spent and make a decision instead of saying, “The CEO is the boss. I don't have to worry about it because I am only the minister. The CEO is going to make these decisions.”

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Is that what you would have done with your three per cent cuts?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Every time a decision is made that is unfavourable to ministers, they come out and reject it. With respect, the Minister for Police is very good to interject because he is the one who got most embarrassed of all. He backed his CEO on the boat up in Karratha and the Premier white-anted him; he pulled the rug out from under him. I am very pleased that the minister has interjected because it gave me an opportunity to ensure that the transcript shows that the minister was undermined.

In his speech today the Premier spoke about liquefied natural gas in the Kimberley. He said —

If that cannot be achieved, then we will use existing powers under the Native Title Act ...

On 10 February the Minister for Indigenous Affairs issued a media release headed “Indigenous Implementation Board sets action agenda for first 100 days”. What was one of those commitments? It states —

**The board has developed an action agenda for the first 100 days which includes:**

...

- ensuring the development and empowerment of indigenous leaders

On the one hand, the minister is saying, “I've set up this implementation board on behalf of Indigenous people.” One of those commitments is about respect for leaders of the Indigenous community. On the other hand, the shoot-from-the-mouth Premier is saying, “I don't care if the community doesn't want this, I'm going to do it anyway.”

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Is that what he actually said?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** That is what he meant. The minister was here at the time and heard it.

**Mr J.E. McGrath** interjected.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The member did not help the Liberal Party because he was in Melbourne. I am very pleased that the Treasurer is present. He is the luckiest person in the state.

On 16 May 2006 the present Treasurer said —

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This state is enjoying economic boom times the likes of which we have never seen before. Despite that, the Treasurer is sitting astride the \$2 billion stallion—the beast—that the surplus has become and he cannot contemplate meaningful, long-term, sustainable tax reform in Western Australia.

He is the luckiest Treasurer in the country. We will judge him by his own words. If it was not for the surplus left to him and the hard work done by the former Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition, he would have serious budgetary problems. He is able to get away with blowing the budget, as he is doing at the moment. I will quote again from the financial projections. It states —

The deterioration in the operating outlook since the PFPS totals \$5.2 billion over the forward estimates period, with \$1.5 billion of this due to weaker revenue ... and \$3.7 billion due to increased expenses ...

They are the words of this Treasurer, not the former Treasurer. This Treasurer thought that the budget of the former Treasurer was so good, he did not change one line. Where is his special budget? When is he coming before us to present the fix to all the problems left to him by the Labor Party? It is not happening because there were no problems. He is the luckiest person in the country. He inherited the budget from the former Treasurer, the present opposition leader. If it was not for the former Treasurer's budget controls, this Treasurer would have to do some work instead of going on holidays. The Minister for Energy put out all the Treasurer's press statements while he was in South Africa or Vietnam. He is away all the time. The best one of those is the media statement from Hon Peter Collier on Friday, 9 January 2009, while the Treasurer was again on holidays. It was headed "State in the red in October—firm action needed" and stated —

The Acting Treasurer said the report again showed that public sector expenditure under the Carpenter Government had been out of control ...

This statement was made with respect to October. I hate to mention this to the Treasurer but he was in charge in October. He cannot blame the former Carpenter government for his work. What does it say was the cause of the expenditure in the quarterly financial results for December 2008? It states —

— higher employee numbers and pay rates in the health sector ...

It was also about enterprise bargaining agreements. This is a Treasurer who is not doing his job. He comes in here and complains about public servants. He has a disregard and dislike for public servants, yet he does nothing. He goes away on holidays while the budget process is at its peak. He goes to South Africa on one of his other portfolio responsibilities and leaves, my God, Peter Collier in charge of the state's finances. The Treasurer cannot have it both ways. Either he will do the work and accept the blame for his behaviour in October or he will make excuses.

**MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield)** [8.50 pm]: That is quite an act to follow.

I have never been a thin man. I have weighed more and I have weighed less, and I have been told that the longer I am in this place, the more weight I will probably gain. But I have never really been a thin person. I do not claim any particular benefit from this. It is a great insight one gains from being overweight! I discuss it only to raise one particular issue within our society. It is one of the great lies of our society; it is the great lie that many people of my girth have discovered much to their chagrin. It is this: one size fits all. Trust me, it does not. If something looks good on me, it will not look good on the member for Nollamara. If it looks good on the member for Nollamara, it will not look pretty on me!

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** If some of the members opposite were interested, I would be quite frightened! However, the market continues with the myth that one size fits all. We, as diligent consumers, seem to suspend disbelief yet again and get taken for another ride. One size does not fit all. It is a simple, lazy way to have an average; something that will meet most needs; something that will look okay—a cheap way to stock the shelves with a disposable product when we do not really care to return to those customers.

Today there is a government in Western Australia that also believes one size should fit all. The government, in seeking to fund its outlandish promises and pay for its royalties for regions deal it made to get into government, is taking a razor to every single section of the public service, and seeking a three per cent cut in expenditure. In my family, we have a slightly different approach to budgeting. I expect it is probably true of most others within my electorate. We actually use a bit of strategy. Firstly, we cut back on the luxuries; we get rid of the Foxtel and the DVDs, and sacrifice going out to dinner on Saturdays or something like that. If things are still tight, we might buy cheap Home Brand products, the blue and white jobs that do not taste quite so good, but will probably meet the need. We might stop using the family car a bit. We might try taking public transport if we are lucky enough to have access to it near us, and I will come back to that in a minute. What we would not do is take three per cent

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from the kids' school fees; we would not take three per cent from the money we spend on our elderly parents' health; we would not take three per cent from the cost of the house insurance. It would be foolish to do those things. We would make cuts where we can afford to make them and leave the essentials alone. That is just commonsense.

However, this government has a one-size-fits-all approach; it is not strategic. It sees the health department, the education department and the police service in exactly the same way as it sees the Tourism Commission, the Department of Sport and Recreation or even the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor. It is nonsense. No rational person would apply the same strategy to his own finances. I and the people in my electorate find it astounding that a government is not sophisticated enough to understand that there are different needs; there are priorities. We need to make cuts in accordance with those priorities.

The police play a vital role within the Forrestfield community and it is essential that we maintain that role. We should not be cutting police numbers.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** We won't be cutting the police numbers in Forrestfield.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** Where will the cuts be made?

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You'll be all right; we won't be cutting police officer numbers anywhere.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I thank the minister for that.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** In fact, we are increasing the number of police officers.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I accept that promise. I am glad the Minister for Police interrupted then because last week when I was driving through Forrestfield I saw a police officer staffing a school crosswalk. That is not exactly what I call an important front-line service.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I agree with you. I tell you what, your government held two reviews into school crossing wardens. What did it do about it? Absolutely nothing.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** The clock is ticking. I look forward to seeing the problem resolved. It is not good enough to simply blame the last government for things. The minister is in government now; he should take responsibility.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I am and I will.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** The unprecedented step by the government to send Treasury officials to examine the police budget is a disgrace. It shows how single-minded the Treasurer is in seeking to slash funding from departments across the board regardless of the cost to the community. The police have gone out of their way to make savings for the government, yet it has rejected those savings. This government must face facts and make some hard choices. It can push blindly with these budget cuts but it cannot be all things to all people.

A member interjected.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** Absolutely. Only last night about four o'clock in the morning there was a high-speed chase through my electorate. It ended up in a fire at the side of the road and with the vehicle in question being destroyed. One person has been arrested, but the police believe three people are still at large. It is not an isolated incident. I have been contacted by constituents who have told me of many incidents like this. Children have been attacked at the local McDonald's restaurant. Our high school had a lockdown not so long ago because it was invaded by a gang of youths. An elderly constituent told me the other day that she was mugged while crossing the road on the way back from the seniors centre. The fact is, we need a greater presence of police on our streets, and not as school crossing guards. They need to be ready to take the call when a constituent is in distress.

During the last election campaign the people of Forrestfield were promised that under a Liberal government the Forrestfield Police Station would be open 24 hours a day. I would like to know how this can be achieved while we are cutting back budgets by three per cent—or will this be a broken promise? Is there, seriously, no less important areas in which we can make cuts, other than policing, health and education? The government today outlined plans for introducing tougher laws for hoons, including the confiscation and crushing of vehicles. This is about the government sending a strong message that it is tough on crime! The trouble is, as I walk through the streets of my electorate, I notice that there are already too many car wrecks on the verges. We do not need more; we need fewer.

The other day a woman was telling me about her autistic child and how certain therapies can help autistic children integrate better in society. They can learn skills that will allow them to adapt and lead a semi-normal life. The trick is, they must be exposed to the treatment at a young age. The problem is, many of those children

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are not getting the treatment because they come from families of a very low socioeconomic background who do not necessarily have public transport accessible to them. They do not have cars. Why in heaven's name would we crush perfectly good vehicles when there are citizens in need of transport? I beg the government to reconsider that plan. The vehicles should be taken from the hoons. I do not care what the government does to the hoons, but the vehicles should be given to somebody who needs them.

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** My friend, if the car is worth anything, it will be sold and the money will be used for good purposes. Only the old heaps will be crushed. Do you want your constituents driving around in old heaps?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** No. Unfortunately, that is all many of them can afford.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Have a bit of faith, my friend. If you are opposed to the hoons who cause so many problems and who are a danger to innocent victims and other road users, you will support the government's legislation.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** If the legislation is fair, I will support it. The reality is that the problem is more than just getting tough on crime; there is a range of things.

The one thing about Forrestfield that I feel very passionate about is that we get ignored. In fact, the member for Nollamara pointed out that her electorate is about to become part of the eastern region, and to that I say that I am sorry. Frankly, we are the forgotten child in this state. We are not as sexy as the regions, we do not get royalties for regions, and we do not get any of the great infrastructure programs that are occurring in the north and south of the city. I do not have as many things in my electorate to talk about as do other members in the chamber simply because there are no government programs, there are no organisations in operation, there are no sporting grounds and there are no hospitals. There are a few schools that are largely under-resourced and there are a lot of people who live in desolate suburbia.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** Earlier, I indicated that one of the key services that Forrestfield requires is public transport. The previous government talked about moving the train line out to the airport and extending it to what would be the Maida Vale terminal. This is a vital project that we should be considering. Now is the time to be thinking about big-ticket infrastructure projects. I often hear people talk about these difficult economic times. They are difficult economic times, but this is the time when the government needs to step up to the plate. This is the time when we need to boost the economy. Now is the time to invest, and we should be investing in the infrastructure that we need. My electorate is desperately crying out for public transport.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I think you will find that we are doing that.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** The government is certainly not building a train line to my electorate. It is not building one to the airport.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Nor were you going to.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** We had a proposal to investigate that.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** A proposal to investigate! That was the con job during the election campaign. You were going to do nothing; you know that.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** If people in, say, High Wycombe want to go to a medical facility or a hospital, they need to catch a bus to Perth to go to Royal Perth Hospital, or they can catch a bus to Forrestfield so that they can catch another bus to go to Midland, or they can catch a bus to Guildford and then walk a bit to the train line and then take the train to Midland. The reality is that it is a long journey for a person to travel a relatively short distance. Forrestfield is poorly serviced and it has very poor public transport infrastructure. This is a longstanding problem; it goes back decades. It was like this when I was a kid. I remember sitting on the side of the road for two hours waiting for a bus. This means that a lot of people do not necessarily expect there to be public transport. Every time we do a study to find out whether it would be feasible to provide additional public transport, lo and behold, it turns out not to be feasible simply because people have made alternative arrangements because if they do not make alternative arrangements, they will get nowhere. We have to show leadership. We have to accept that if we build it, they will come. We have to ask ourselves to invest, take a loss and jump that paradigm so that we encourage people to make greater use of public transport.

I have made many references to the fact that Forrestfield is the forgotten child, that it is lost and ignored and that the government does not like it, but that is not entirely true.

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**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You had eight years of a Labor government; we've been in government for only six months. They completely ignored you for eight years. Have you taken it up with them?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** Absolutely, I have.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** What did they tell you?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** They said to me, "Why don't you run for Parliament?" which I did.

Forrestfield has not been totally forgotten. This government has given us a gift. It is a gift that we did not ask for. It is a gift that we did not know was coming. In fact, as I recall, the government told us that nobody would get this particular gift. However, the gift that we are getting will be wrapped in double plastic. Yes, the government will allow Magellan Metals Pty Ltd to transport lead carbonate through my electorate—past schools and retirement villages and through some of the fastest growing residential areas in the state.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** What about sodium cyanide?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I do not want that either. Should my constituents be worried about a company with a track record like that of Magellan Metals transporting a dangerous substance in a way in which it is not transported anywhere else in the world? I would like to say that, no, I do not think they should be worried.

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

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** The member for Riverton should listen to what I am saying. I said that I would like to say that, no, they should not be worried.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson):** If the member wants to interject, he can stand and speak later. He probably would not like people interjecting on him. The member on his feet is replying to the Premier's Statement. It would be good if we could listen to what he has to say.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I would like to be able to stand with my hand on my heart and say that there is nothing to be worried about, but I cannot do that in good conscience because the fact is that there will be nothing to worry about until there is something to worry about—that is, until there is an unplanned, unexpected event; that one in a million shot that we thought was never going to happen. While we all hope against hope that that event never happens, we cannot say that it will never happen. Before I came to this place, I was an information technology worker. IT is a peculiar profession. Those members who use computers, as we all do these days, will know that they never work, they fail at the most extreme times and an incredible amount can be lost if the computer is lost. As an IT worker, it was my job to plan for those occasions; in fact, IT workers were always planning for the pessimistic outcome. We planned for things that we hoped would never happen. We put in place plans that we hoped we would never use. We made contingency and redundancy plans. People will recall the Y2K bug. Everyone said, "What a shemozzle that was. We spent billions of dollars preparing for this thing that didn't happen." The reason it did not happen is that we planned for it and fixed the problem before it occurred. Those are the types of shemozzles we want.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I didn't do anything to my computer and it worked fine.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I believe that Microsoft probably took care of it for the minister.

What are the government's contingency plans? It is cutting back on government services, so how can I say to my electorate that in the event that something goes wrong, it will be taken care of and that the necessary policing and emergency services will be in place? I do not think I can honestly say that they will be in place. People in IT ask themselves what is the upside and what is the downside and is the risk of the downside acceptable and worth it. I feel that a time will come when we look back and ask ourselves: what were we thinking; why did we choose a route that was so close to major population centres; why did we not plan for the worst; and, why did we not take the time to ensure that there was a little downstream processing and that this stuff was converted into ingots? I have heard protests from members on the other side about the previous government's record in response to the disaster in Esperance. However, the government is relying on the same environmental oversight of the same company moving the same substance. All I can say is that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. I do not want that to be repeated with my constituents.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** During my inaugural speech, I talked about the isolation of Western Australia and how that has been diminished by the access to global markets and information via the internet. I thought about this quite a bit. It is a problem for me because it is often considered a federal issue, and I wonder what the state's role

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is in that. I took the time to do a little research—I must admit that I did it online—into how we are progressing with a plan for a high-speed broadband network throughout Western Australia.

The previous state government announced plans for a large broadband rollout. I went searching for it on the internet because I wondered what happened to the project. I did not know whether the current government intended to go forward with the project or whether it would be subsumed by a federal government project. I searched and searched and eventually found a document on it. I was surprised where I found this document. It was hosted on the Department of Mines and Petroleum site. Apparently this is from where the state government intends to run its broadband strategy. It is endemic of a particular problem. It is endemic of the fact that information and communications technology is considered to be of secondary importance in Western Australia. We heard the Premier say earlier that Western Australia's economy is different. As primary producers we basically grow the product, dig it up and ship it out. It should not always be that way. We should be pursuing other industries and investigating other avenues. However, we need to ensure that we invest in those industries. ICT is obviously of great interest to me and we should be putting some resources towards it.

On 25 August last year the Australian Information Industry Association hosted the now Treasurer, Mr Buswell, and Tony Simpson —

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** The member must refer to members by their electorate.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** — the member for Darling Range, to present the WA Liberal Party's view on the ICT industry and what it would do if it was elected to government in September. It goes to show how forward thinking the ICT industry is; it considered that to be a real possibility, much to our chagrin. It reported a summary of that meeting on its website. It stated —

Simpson views ICT as a potential shining light in the WA economy — worthy of a **Minister for ICT**, which the Liberal Party would appoint to give true focus to the ICT for government, industry, education and community in Western Australia (applause from audience). Currently there are numerous departments and Ministers with authority over aspects of ICT in Western Australia.

Buswell presented on the state of the economy in Western Australia — a boom unlike anything since the gold rush in the 1890's. Although there is a boom/bust cycle — he considers this to a shift in activity which will not “bust”, but needs to be managed to spread the wealth and broaden our economy.

Key factors in managing the economy were listed: Resources, population growth, globalisation, food and energy.

A series of questions followed. That was terrific, although the focus was on WA being a primary producer. Members opposite should run with the idea of an ICT minister, because, honestly, we need one.

What has happened? Where is the minister for ICT? Where is the ICT strategy? These are tough economic times, but it is the rainy day we needed to plan for; it is a time when the government needs to strike out and invest in strategic industries. WA needs to change that grow it, dig it and ship it mentality. This state needs to view ICT as a strategic industry that it can excel in.

The US President, Barack Obama, recently appointed a chief technology officer. It is not acceptable for us not to do the same; it is not acceptable for WA to sit back and wait for the federal government to take the initiative. WA has to lead the way to try to become the Australian Silicon Valley, probably more than that; and we need to think about what opportunities lie before this state.

The Square Kilometre Array is, for members who are not aware, the radio telescope program that essentially will result in a square kilometre of radio telescopes that will search the sky for all sorts of things.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** Your colleague just criticised the Treasurer for going to South Africa.

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** I would prefer the Treasurer to be in South Africa all the time.

We will need to move data in and out, mostly out, of Western Australia if this state is to be successful in that program. By building the infrastructure to do that we will attract industry and science to Western Australia. In turn that will attract people with brains to, and investment in, WA. That is what will turn this state around from being a grow it and dig it up economy. That is something that WA promises to be. I urge the government to seriously reconsider and go forward with its plans to create the position of a minister for ICT.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah)** [9.15 pm]: I think I am the last speaker this evening, which I appreciate because it allows me to close the innings today on what has been a momentous and important day. We had important condolence motions earlier this afternoon for two very important people, one of whom's death is a particular tragedy to the nation.

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It is great to be back in this place. I am always enthusiastic about Parliament reconvening and members joining together to represent their communities and ensuring that the issues of the day that concern their constituencies are articulated and passionately delivered in this place. When I came here today I wanted to see some vision because I knew that we would hear the Premier's Statement, which should clearly articulate a vision for the state and talk about important issues—a legislative program; the road map forward for the state. One hopes that it will be an inspirational speech, a speech of hope and vision and a speech that clearly articulates what will happen in the future. Now I wish I had not come today. I came here in anticipation, but now I am disappointed. I will make that lonely trip back to the beautiful city of Mandurah, which will take me one hour and 15 minutes. I should have come by train, but I might have missed the last train home. I will make that lonely trip back home wondering whether I should have got up this morning and come to this place. I was hoping to be inspired—that is what leadership and vision is about.

The Premier's Statement said little, plans little and gives Western Australians very little to look forward to. I am disappointed because on my trip back to Mandurah I would like to spend an hour and 15 minutes mulling over the good things we could hope to see for the state. However, I will leave this place tonight disappointed. I will wake in the morning and I will make that lonely trip back—I will probably get stuck in the traffic; therefore, I might come by train because I can return to Mandurah at a reasonable hour. It is really important, particularly when the whole world is currently encased in a black cloud of doom and gloom, that the vision for the way forward is clearly articulated.

Soon after the surprising result of the September election when the National and Liberal Parties cobbled together an unlikely and, some would say, unseemly government, most of them went on holidays. Most of them said, "We've got where we wanted to get, but now we don't know what to do. We'll go on holiday." Some of them packed their bags, leaving the decisions that needed to be made, and should have been made, in the best interests of Western Australians and went on holiday. Not only did some of them go on holiday once; some of them went on holiday twice. Some government members enjoyed their holidays so much they thought they would pack their bags again and go off on another holiday because they thought they did not have to do anything here. They are six months into a no-do government. Of course, they are going to do things. They are going to crush a few vehicles and castrate a few people. I can remember when the now Minister for Police was talking about all the things he would do to the terrible people in this community. He was going to hang them, castrate them, crush them, mince them into small pieces and put them on people's front lawns. That was in only the first week of coming into power! However, what have we seen? We have seen nothing. We have simply witnessed a range of gonna policies; they are gonna do this and they are gonna do that. They are gonna send the budget into deficit of course, which is something on which they have a proven track record. Those of us who were elected from 2000 onwards remember very well the five deficits in eight years under the Court government. What happened? The state was going downhill. I remember a stark vision from 1996. I was a City of Mandurah councillor at the time. I clearly remember a fellow standing on the Pinjarra Road at the Mandurah bypass traffic lights. I have never forgotten it. He had a sign that read "I need a job. I'll do anything."

**Mr C.C. Porter:** Did he join the Labor Party?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This is real, member for Bateman. This is the challenge that faces all of us in our communities. It ain't no laughing matter, mate! More and more people out there are afraid about job security and whether or not they will be able to provide a source of income for their family. It is nothing to laugh about. The member for Bateman might laugh about it but it is no laughing matter. I remember that fellow vividly. He was pleading for a job. Those sorts of people and the many other people throughout Australia who fear for their job security require and need leadership and vision. They do not need a lack of leadership and vision. We have seen leadership and vision delivered by the Prime Minister. The federal Liberal opposition has criticised him for the stimulus package, but he has been demonstrating and articulating a clear vision.

**Mr C.C. Porter:** He is good!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The member for Bateman laughed about a man who was unemployed.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson):** Member for Bateman, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is exactly right. It is very sad. What we must do is deliver to the people of Western Australia in all constituencies in this state, whichever part of Western Australia we might represent and/or live. We must make sure that we articulate hope to those people and indeed a clear vision for this state. This state can and should be able to ride out whatever global economic peril we may face, because in the past eight years the state has been placed in a position by the previous Labor government where it is able to ride out a range of concerns and issues.

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When I came to this place today I was hoping to gather from the Premier the vision and the sort of stuff that talks about building the state, developing the state, protecting assets and protecting those things that make Western Australia a wonderful place in which to live and visit. Where are those sorts of things in the Premier's Statement? The Premier's Statement was absolutely sadly lacking. That is the disappointment that I will take home with me tonight. I may have a restless night tonight. I may toss and turn tonight with a great deal of disappointment.

Mr Acting Speaker, you may find this a little surprising, but I am going to say some positive things, which I will be very pleased to say. I am pleased with the seniors travel announcement that was made on the weekend. A very significant percentage of the population in my constituency is over the age of 65 years and, therefore, eligible for the Seniors Card. I am very pleased they are eligible. However, the government made a bit of a blue with the details it was sending out earlier about the \$100 subsidy. It was a very poor and very lax communications strategy. When I was Minister for Seniors, I always said that whatever people do they should never get between a senior and a concession because it causes all sorts of angst. Members would not believe the number of calls that my office received from people who did not know whether they were eligible and did not know what they had to do to find out. Of course, when they attempted to contact the Office for Seniors Interests and Carers to make sure that they were registered, they could not get through because the telephone system suffered a logjam. Many of them could not log on to the Internet because they either did not have it available at home or were not au fait with the technology. It is an important rebate, but the communication and delivery of it was very lax and poor. That is one thing I say positively.

In the next few months a very important project will be delivered to the Peel region. It was an initiative of the state Labor government when it was in power. It is the Perth-Bunbury highway, which is on track to be completed later this year. It is a particularly important project for the region. It will deliver a number of important benefits, including helping to address some of the major traffic problems in the City of Mandurah. It will also open up the Peel region even more to day visitation and enable people to explore and understand the wonderful attributes and assets that the Peel region offers to day visitors and to tourists who wish to stay in the region. That project and the extension of the southern suburbs railway to Mandurah represented \$2 billion of investment by the Gallop and Carpenter state Labor governments that is now being delivered to the Peel region. Those are two examples of investment in the region by Labor. There are many other examples of tremendous investment by Labor, recognising the growth of the region and its demographically varied population with its various needs—the core needs being health, education and policing—and also recognising that the Peel region continues to have an emerging economy.

It is important that the government understand that whether it be through royalties for regions or other government investment, we need to see an appropriate number of dollars delivered to projects in the Peel region to continue to support that growing population and the diverse needs of the population and to stimulate the diversity and the growing economy. At the moment the Peel region relies on some key areas as economic drivers. It has huge mining interests. When people think of mining, they seem to look only to the north of the state, but they need to understand that in the Peel region Alcoa, Iluka, Boddington Gold and other mining operations are significant contributors to the state's economy. My good friend the member for North West talked about royalties for regions money going to the Pilbara. I have to say that when my region, which includes my constituency, is delivering substantial royalties through the mining activities in the region, the argument about ensuring that we get an equal share of funding arises, given that our population continues to increase and that people continue to move there because land is being opened up and is particularly attractive to first home buyers. We need to have recognition of that by this place and by this government.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The fragility of the economy in the Peel is probably exemplified by a recent announcement by the Minister for Fisheries about changes to the regulations impacting on the rock lobster industry. Many people may not be aware that a number of families in the Peel have for generations been involved in the fishing industry, and in the crayfishing industry in particular. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago the Watkins family and I had a meeting in my office. It is a third generation crayfishing family in Mandurah and the Peel, but it is one of a number of families that have fished the waters off Mandurah, in the Indian Ocean, and in the Peel-Harvey estuary over many years. This family's fear is that these decisions that were made, without any compensatory measures for them, place their third generation business in real jeopardy. It impacts on them as a family and it impacts on their business investment. It also impacts on them in wanting, as they do, to continue crayfishing and to have a fourth and a fifth generation line in that business in the future. That is one example of a decision that can have a direct impact on a particular part of the economy, but there are many others.

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I remain very concerned that the proposed three per cent cuts to government services will have a real impact on very important projects in my electorate. I was hoping that the Minister for Education would still be in the chamber. I have a great deal of respect for her. She is not here, but if she were, I would be pleading with her that the school proposed for the Meadow Springs-Lakelands locality in the north of Mandurah remain in the plans for schools to be built. It was said in the election campaign—I understand it was in the forward planning of the department—that that school would be built in 2010. I remain concerned and uncertain about this. When I drive around that area, I worry about these things. I am concerned that that school may fall off the list, because it would service a very large and growing part of that northern section of Mandurah, servicing the Meadow Springs, Lakelands and Madora Bay areas. I hope that the Minister for Education can assure me that that school will be built within the time that we, when in government, announced.

The other thing that we are still waiting for—I hope that the Minister for Mental Health will look at this closely—is our supported accommodation facility for mental health patients. This is very important. I know that there have been a range of contractual and lease issues regarding the site on the Peel Health Campus, but I am hopeful that they can be resolved so that that facility can finally be built. Alternatively, as I have said, if that site is not appropriate, I ask the government to please find another area of land. Whether it is in the City of Mandurah or even in the Shire of Murray, can the government please find an area of land so that that very important supported accommodation facility for mental health patients can be built and become operational? It is very important to us.

I was really concerned, very concerned and absolutely concerned when I found out through a freedom of information process that the completion of the Marine Operations Centre in Mandurah is apparently \$1 million over budget. This is a very important operations centre. It was an initiative of the state Labor government. The construction is almost finished, but apparently \$1 million is still needed to complete it. The FOI material that I have regarding that matter is from the Minister for Fisheries to the Treasurer. The Marine Operations Centre is in the Mandurah Ocean Marina. It is a co-location of the government departments that have an interest in marine matters, including the Department of Fisheries and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. I am very pleased that the Minister for Police is in the chamber. I know he wants to go home.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** No. I am absolutely enthralled with your speech —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** He is all ears.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** — because I thought you were going to have a short innings, but it is going to be a long innings.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is. I have been known to have a long innings; that is true. I hope that the Minister for Police is aware of this, and hopefully he will make sure that the water police are not lost from that facility. When I became the member for Mandurah in 2001, the then superintendent, Ross Napier, came to me and said, “What we really need is a water police presence in Mandurah.” That was based upon a range of issues, but in particular —

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You’ve got one.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is right, but I hope the minister does not take it away from us. The government tried to take it away from Dampier, and I hope it does not take it away from Mandurah.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** The water police actually stopped some people on a boat outside a place where I was staying over the weekend. They had their lights on and their siren going. They are doing a great job down there.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Indeed. However, I want to make sure that when that Marine Operations Centre is opened, it will house a permanent water police unit. It is there, but it has not been opened yet. The former government promised it and delivered it, but it has not been finished. However, I am worried that with these three per cent cuts, the government will cut off that bit and say that it is going to take the water police away. Please do not do that.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Is that a front-line service?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Absolutely.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Then you have nothing to worry about. Have faith in me. I am from the government.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Is the minister confirming that it will stay?

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I can tell you that I will certainly look into that on your behalf.

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I appreciate that, and I know that the minister will.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** There is no way that I want to see any reduction in front-line services. We are committed to that.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the minister. I need to tell the minister why that is so important. Users of the Peel waterway and the artificial parts of the waterway, which include the canal areas and the marina et cetera, have one of the highest rates of registered boat ownership. There is also, of course, a very wide expanse of water to be policed and in which compliance is very important. Before a decision was made to put a permanent water police unit there, every busy weekend there would be a water police presence—I will not say it was ad hoc because that would reflect badly on the police service and I have a great deal of respect for the police service. However, on normal weekends that were not busy or at other times, the water police would not be there, which meant that there was not a consistent policing of the waterways or support of the other organisations that do great work there, such as the marine rescue service. With an increased population, including an increased boating population, and with more and more people using and recreating on the waterway, issues regarding policing have become critical. That is why the water police unit there is absolutely critical to the ongoing overall front-line policing within the region.

I think I have written to the Minister for Police about police numbers. I have a great deal of respect for the police in the Peel district. I have absolute faith in the men and women in the police service who resource the Peel district.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** They do a good job!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** They do a tremendous job. They have been very well led by some excellent superintendents over a number of years. It is so important that we maintain the Peel police district as a distinct, clear district. Over a long period of time rumours have circulated, and I remember former Superintendent Parkinson ringing me on a couple of occasions, saying, “I’ve heard they want to amalgamate us into the South Metropolitan region”, et cetera. Can I again plead with the Minister for Police that because of the growing population and because the Perth-Bunbury highway will now become an important traffic artery, that it is now even more imperative that the Peel police district remains in its current form, as defined by the Peel region boundaries. These issues are really important.

In my letter to the Minister for Police I also articulated that after the government’s promise of more officers in the coming four years, when he is discussing—and I know it is not his job to say where they all go —

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Exactly!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** — the delivery of these new resources to the police over the next four years that Peel is recognised, not only for its current situation with the growth in population, but also the nature of the region changing, particularly with that Perth-Bunbury highway. A former superintendent said to me, “That’s going to be a great road, but it’s also going to be a great road for possible hoons.” It is a highway that needs to be policed —

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** We will catch them.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** — and policed effectively. Those are important issues.

With four minutes to go—and I know that members are growing weary of me, but I have so much more to offer.

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Talk in the past tense; have grown weary of you!

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am so disappointed that I will go home without that uplifting feeling of being inspired by the Premier’s Statement! I want to mention a couple of other things.

The City of Mandurah has some very clear priorities that are actually important infrastructure projects for the future. The royalties for regions policy may be one source of funding, and of course the federal government’s infrastructure package is another source. The old traffic bridge in Mandurah is now reaching the end of its life safety-wise. There are estimations that the old Mandurah traffic bridge—that is the one right in town—will really, within five years, need replacement. It is an ageing bridge, it carries a huge amount of traffic, and because of the nature of Mandurah’s design, because of Mandurah’s geographic nature and the limitations to what can be done, that bridge will need to be replaced and expanded. That will be a sizable project, probably a \$30 million to \$40 million project, and certainly well beyond any capacity of the local government there to deliver.

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The other important road project is the proposed Pinjarra bypass in the Shire of Murray. I am sure the member for Murray-Wellington would support that, too. It is in his electorate but it is something that I support. As Minister for Peel it was one that was particularly of interest to me because I know, being a regular visitor to the Shire of Murray and now having part of the Shire of Murray in my electorate, that it is an important infrastructure project for the Shire of Murray, and particularly for the town of Pinjarra, which is a growing town. Every time I see Noel Nancarrow, the Shire of Murray president, I say, “Noel, you will be the next inland city in Western Australia.” That is how fast the Shire of Murray is growing. The Shire of Murray’s population growth is expected to be over 20 000 within about the next five to six years. There is huge development happening, and I say, “Noel, you are going to be mayor of the first inland city in Western Australia for many, many years”, in fact in the world, perhaps—I do not know! Well, I might be a bit flippant there!

I will finish by saying that I love this place and I do love my job. I enjoy listening to all members. One of the great things about being the Whip is that you have to sit in this place all the time. There is a benefit to that! That is that you get to hear people’s views and you always hear different points of view about a range of different things. I appreciate the passion that all members bring to this place, because I know they came to Parliament for the right reason—we all did, I think—which was that we wanted to try to make a difference to the place that we live in, that we represent, and for the people that we represent. We want to make this place a better place for all Western Australians, for our kids and for our grandchildren. That is why, please, this government must show vision, particularly at a time when there are so many doom and gloomers out there. We need that vision to be shown by this government, we need that inspiration to be delivered, and we need hardworking ministers who do not go on holiday three months after they have been elected to Parliament.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 9.45 pm*

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