

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2010–11 TO 2015–16) SUPPLEMENTARY BILL 2017
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2010–11 TO 2015–16) SUPPLEMENTARY BILL 2017

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.40 pm]: I continue my remarks on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017 and the Appropriation (Capital 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017. Before I was interrupted by other business of the house, I was informing the house about some of the important youth services in my electorate of Morley, what I consider to be a significant gap in services in Morley and the need for many non-government organisations to have more secure funding. I am very pleased that the Labor Party went to the election with a commitment to provide longer-term funding contracts for non-government organisations that provide services, because having a contract rolled over every 12 months makes it impossible to plan adequately for the future, take into account the future changing needs of an area and retain good staff—and staff are the lifeblood of these services. The relationships that they form with the kids in the area are critically important. The provision of long-term funding for non-government organisations will enable them to retain good staff.

I touched on the previous government's decision to cut \$52 million, I believe it was, out of the budget for financial counselling. At the time, I campaigned very heavily locally against that decision. It was an appalling and short-sighted decision and it seemed to be the decision of bean counters who wanted to run a red line through the budget and were just looking for money where they could find it without looking at the consequences of cutting that kind of funding. The consequences of cutting financial counselling in an environment of an economic downturn and record unemployment means that many of the people who would normally seek financial counselling end up in primary services, such as emergency hospitals and family and domestic violence refuges, or they end up on the street or in crisis shelters and crisis accommodation, and all those services are incredibly expensive at that end. The government needs to be sensible and provide funding for individuals and families early in a crisis situation to keep them in their homes, jobs and school and to keep them paying the mortgage, rent and bills so that they do not have to access other government services to survive. It was an incredibly short-sighted decision, and I am very pleased that the budget just handed down by this government has returned funding to the sector. Sadly, due to the significant restructure of financial counselling, the Salvos in Morley no longer provide financial counselling. It cannot provide that service because of the restructure that occurred under the previous government. The nearest centre that the people in my electorate can access that I am aware of is in Balga and for those who live in Morley, Balga is not that close and public transport is not great going east to west. It is really inadequate for that community.

The other important aspect of people's concern about jobs locally was our Metronet plan and our Western Australian Jobs Bill. I am very pleased that the bill has passed in this house. It will work hand-in-hand with the government's Metronet plan. Our aim is to provide 50 per cent local content in the manufacturing of rail cars and support for local contractors and local tenderers to tender for work. Rather than having the very slick operations and tender departments of the large multinationals, we want local contractors who employ local people to support that infrastructure plan and build the rail.

Another issue that is significantly important—I am pleased that we have delivered some funding for this in my local area—is road safety. This year there have been three tragic deaths on local roads in my electorate, which is exceptionally high. In the five years that I have been representing the area, if you like, from the upper house and now the lower house, there have been three, two of which involved elderly pedestrians and the other a motor vehicle and a motorcycle. It really highlights the issues on our local roads and, frankly, how pedestrian-hostile the area is. When I say the area, I mean Dianella, Noranda, Nollamara and Morley, which are the four suburbs that I represent. I am hosting a road safety forum at the end of next week with the Road Safety Commissioner, Iain Cameron, and representatives of local government. I want to see a better approach from state and local government representatives to work together to resolve these issues. Local members receive requests from people for pedestrian crossings, better lighting or better road markings and often when members approach local government, their response is inadequate and it is similarly often inadequate from Main Roads. There is an awful lot of buck passing and claims about what Main Roads will and will not do, claims about what local government will and will not do and what it is responsible for and what it is not responsible for. I would like to see a more collaborative approach. I have set up the forum to enable the two levels of government to work together with the Road Safety Commissioner to put in place best practice for road safety. There are a lot of major junctions and significant arterial roads in my electorate and in neighbouring electorates. A lot of people want a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is an area of significant concern and certainly the death on our roads this year—indeed, all road deaths—were entirely preventable. We need to work better together on an approach that prioritises pedestrians in many ways. I take my life into my hands when I cross the road from my office to get to Morley Galleria Shopping Centre. I have done it once with my son in his pram and I will never do it again. Apart from the fact that it is almost virtually impossible to cross the road in the time the green man is flashing—I am pretty able and can move quite quickly—the pavement around the area just stops and people can choose whether to scramble through the bushes with their pram, wheelchair or walking stick or go on the road. The entire area needs a rethink. We have provided \$1 million worth of funding to look at that intersection, and I will be working with local government to help do that. I urge the government to consider, particularly with the mooted significant development around Morley, a better pedestrian environment. People are starting to demand that a little more now. Councils are becoming more aware of that. The latest buzz word at local government is “activation”. Everyone has an activation hub or they want activation in a certain area. I hope that that involves “pedestrianisation” for my electorate and that we can move on from the car dominated and car-priority culture in Western Australia.

I want to mention the NorthLink project, which we love and hate. It will be incredible for congestion when it is finished and will provide enormous benefits to businesses, particularly in my electorate and neighbouring electorates such as Maylands, Bayswater and Bassendean, which are significant areas of industry. I absolutely recognise the time that will be saved for the logistics of their goods and services. It has been and continues to be a point of enormous stress and anxiety for the local community that live next to the intersections; it is the intersections that are creating the biggest problem for people. Most people have gone from living in a very, very peaceful and quiet neighbourhood to now living with an overpass over their house. It is very, very busy with an overpass and a walkway and people can see into what was once a lovely, quiet street. Residents’ home lives have been entirely changed by this project. It was a federal Labor project. We inherited it as a state government and I am really pleased that we have done everything we can to ameliorate as many of those issues as possible. In many instances, we have gone above and beyond the minimum requirement of Main Roads WA and contractors to provide privacy and noise protection.

The underpass for the Hampton Park Primary School, which was agreed to by the previous government, albeit kicking and screaming, will be a huge improvement for that school. The fact that there will be continued access under what is now quite a magnificent underpass is a huge win for that school and the parents and citizens association that campaigned heavily on that. Also, the Lightning Park–Lightning Swamp area will maintain its own slip-road out, and it was a commitment made before the election of over \$3 million. There will be a slip-road out of Lightning Park that will not impinge in any way on Lightning Swamp. It is a very important environmental asset, a hidden gem in the area for those who enjoy an urban bushwalk in the Noranda area. It will not impinge at all. That has meant that a very busy and popular recreational facility can continue to function without local residents around it being aggravated by huge amounts of traffic going in and out. Similarly, there is the Benara Road overpass, which will have some additional screening, privacy and noise amelioration installed to protect some of those residents. All in all, just in my electorate there are millions of dollars’ worth of commitments over and above what was required. I thank the Minister of Transport for her support and for always being willing to listen to residents and understand the issues. It is not always easy to deal with contractors—they have to work within certain parameters—but I have been really pleased to work with the minister in getting outcomes for those residents. That has been good for everyone.

I have to mention that jobs are the government’s priority, as is diversification of the economy. The digital economy is the future, without a doubt. I think it is clear that the federal Liberals do not understand the value of the digital economy, not only the value in dollar terms, but also the potential impact of the digital divide. There is a new gap between the rich and poor and it is not just monetary; it is also digital. It limits access to education and the broadening of any other opportunities. To give an example, I will talk about a fantastic woman in my electorate. She is the president of Hampton Park Primary School P&C. She has multiple sclerosis. She is quite open about that and is always happy to campaign on raising awareness of MS, so she is perfectly comfortable with me talking about her in this place. She is really quite an outstanding woman who gives a lot back to our community. Her partner is unemployed and she is unable to work. They live on a very, very low income, and they have no internet—they cannot afford to pay for it. An average internet plan for most people is \$40 to \$100 a month, which is an awful lot of money. It would cost \$40 at the very minimum—I made that up; I am sure it is more! She does not have the internet to do even the most basic things for Centrelink, apply for jobs for her partner or do all the things kids need to do at school—she now has high school kids. I have said to her that she can come to my office when she needs to and use the internet or wi-fi to access Centrelink. I said my office was always available and open to her. It is incredibly important. We have seen an absolutely stubborn refusal from the federal government to shift on the mode of the national broadband network rollout. Fibre to the node is absolutely failing to deliver. In Morley, the pits are 30 years old and the copper is so degraded that when it rains, the internet cuts out, so people do not really want the NBN—they are not interested.

Mr J.N. Carey: It is terrible.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes.

Several members interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, exactly.

Mr B. Urban: What is fibre to the node?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Member for Darling Range, that is another conversation. I will take the member through it outside of the chamber.

People are not excited about the NBN at all.

Ms J.M. Freeman: They have stuck really ugly boxes on our corners.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes. People end up fighting them on their front lawn or their verges, but frankly, if people have a box in front of the house, they are probably going to get good internet connection, so there is some benefit!

Several members interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, the internet connection.

Fibre to the kerb is the answer and the state government is advocating heavily for this, because in an innovation economy, in a digital economy, we absolutely need the internet. We lose businesses out of the Morley area because of the internet. They move to Malaga or other areas because they simply cannot function as a business. There is a significant drain on the local economy. We are very far behind, and it is frustrating. There has been a parliamentary inquiry and a recommendation that the remaining rollout be fibre to the kerb, and my understanding from the inquiry is that the cost differential is minimal but the impact on delivery is exponentially better—so much better. I urge the state government to continue to advocate heavily for a better rollout in WA and that we keep a very close watch on it in Morley and Noranda in particular.

I will finish up with just a few words. This bill is really about the supplementary spending of previous governments. I think the former Premier, the member for Cottesloe, asked in a heated debate: What would you not have? What spending did you not like?

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Good question.

Ms A. SANDERSON: It was a good question. Notwithstanding the incredibly poor management of the opening, building and management of that contract, the Perth Children's Hospital will be absolutely incredible. As a parent who has spent many a night in one of those awful chairs at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children—or made my partner—we are all looking forward to having a great hospital there. Elizabeth Quay is fantastic and the Perth Stadium will also be incredible. Were they the things we would have built in a time of downturn? Members of the public I speak to generally say not necessarily. Putting aside the children's hospital, they would not necessarily have prioritised the stadium or Elizabeth Quay. There was also a lot of waste and debt. Some of that waste was because of Muja AB, which cost between \$300 million and \$400 million. Serco's contract with Fiona Stanley Hospital provided Serco with \$118 million to run an empty hospital. There were also information and communications technology blowouts in the health department around Perth Children's Hospital. There was an awful lot of waste and debt. The kind of debt that we have been left with as a community is not good debt—no debt is good—but debt simply for providing infrastructure, jobs and future jobs can be considered good debt. Debt to pay the bills is bad debt, and that is what we are borrowing for now. We are borrowing to pay the bills. If someone went to a financial counsellor and said that they were paying for their shopping, their phone bill and their kids' school fees on the credit card, the counsellor would say to stop doing that because it is a very bad way to manage finances. The state government got itself into that position and we are now running bad debt. We are simply borrowing to keep the lights on. That is not a situation that can continue. I hope that other parties will support future measures to bring the budget back under control and improve the revenue stream. I hope that as a community we can move on from this episode of bad debt as quickly as possible so that our children and our children's children are not saddled with this ball and chain for their futures as well.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [4.00 pm]: I also join with the opposition today to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017 and the Appropriation (Capital 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017. I did not have the opportunity to congratulate the government for the announcement made by the Premier last week about the Historical Homosexual Convictions Expungement Bill 2017. Although he is not here, I congratulate the state's thirtieth Premier and the Attorney General for their work on what I think is righting a substantial wrong. It is a wrong, which I raised in my maiden speech, with respect to the rights of Aboriginal Western Australians, which was committed within this very chamber. Previous members were complicit in allowing what I think were heinous and egregious acts committed against homosexual Western Australians, who were considered criminals. It will give me great pride to talk about and vote in support

of the expungement bill and acknowledge those historical wrongs. It is not my place to apologise on behalf of the government to the people of Western Australia. I think the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party did a sterling job in that regard and I support them for that.

I contrast my pride for the introduction of the expungement bill with my disappointment that we are here today speaking on these appropriation bills. When I look back on the legislation that this house has had to deal with, unfortunately I see very few bills of substance. I expect that freshman members would share these sentiments; in their first year, they would not have thought that they would be voting largely on legacy bills of the former government. There are a number of state agreements and bills, including the Constitution Amendment (Demise of the Crown) Bill 2017, that were legacy bills of the former government. Unfortunately, only in recent weeks have we seen the government start to install a proper legislative agenda. Spending the entire day on these legacy appropriation bills is pretty lazy legislating.

The leaders of my party and the National Party have already spoken about having so many ministers absent from Parliament today. It is evident, I suspect, when we are dealing with appropriation bills, that this government is already not prioritising the Parliament and giving it the due courtesy that I think it deserves.

I rarely do this but I recognise the willingness of the Minister for Tourism to stay here and commit his time to Parliament versus other ministers who decided to travel.

Mr P. Papalia: They're focusing on education for the first few days.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate that, though I suspect that the minister could still have enjoyed his time over there.

Given that these bills are legacy bills and they deal with investments made by the previous government, I thought I might very quickly place on the record some of the achievements that the previous Liberal–National government has made in my district. During the election campaign we put together a fantastic document outlining local Liberal achievements. I will quickly go through some of the investments of the former government that those opposite continue to criticise for leaving the state in a situation of what they say is bad debt.

Mr J.N. Carey: It is. That's a fact.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, member for Perth, but I suspect that residents in my district do not quite feel the same way when they see that Mandurah has been so fundamentally transformed by the previous Liberal–National government. I will very quickly go through some of those achievements of the previous Liberal–National government in my district, given these are legacy bills. The Liberal-led state government invested \$42 million into the Mandurah Aquatic and Recreation Centre, which is a great facility that I enjoy membership of to this day. Those funds fundamentally improved sporting and recreational abilities for people in my community.

Mr B. Urban: It was federal money.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There was some federal money for that as well —

Mr B. Urban: Secured by the late Don Randall.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, it was secured by the late Don Randall, a good man. A total of \$42 million was spent by the Liberal-led state government, I think through royalties for regions. A total of \$48.8 million was allocated to the Mandurah traffic bridge; \$121 000 to upgrades at Dudley Park Bowling and Recreation Club; \$4 million for tech upgrades at Halls Head Primary School; \$1.7 million for improvements at Glencoe Primary School; \$49 million into transforming the Growing Our South initiative, which will see 23 000 jobs by 2050, an initiative taken up by the current government; \$300 000 for floodlights at Peelwood Reserve; \$220 000 for South Mandurah Tennis Club improvements; \$31 844 spent at Dudley Park for upgrades; \$36 million for rebuilding Halls Head College; \$20 000 for the South Mandurah Tennis Club improvements; and Waratah youth community centre saw improvements to the value of \$739 000. The Novara boat ramp was expanded, with \$55 000 spent for a new jetty and ramp; \$15 000 for the Goodstart Early Learning Child Care Centre; \$100 000 for improvements at the Halls Head Primary School; \$250 000 for the Midway Community Care centre, something that the Leader of the House touched on today, which delivers great services for disabled members in my community; \$500 000 for the Port Bouvard Surf Life Saving Club upgrades; \$100 000 for new floodlights at Falcon Reserve; \$39 981 at Parkridge jetty; \$70 000 for an expansion of boat ramps in Dawesville; and \$2.1 million for wastewater reuse projects. Sailability, a disabled sailing program that operates out of the Port Bouvard Recreation and Sporting Club in Dawesville, gives disabled members of the community the opportunity to sail. It received \$50 000 to enable that program to occur. At the Mandurah workforce development centre, \$1.07 million was spent over four years to help Mandurah deal with historically high unemployment levels; \$9 million for redevelopment of Rushton Park; \$89 000 for the Mandurah Wildlife Rescue hospital; infill of deep sewerage right across Falcon and Wannanup in my district; \$155 million spent on building Mandjoogoordap Drive, the main road that goes into the city as we come off the freeway; \$1 million spent over four years to assist in mosquito control management; Yalgorup National Park saw \$13.3 million spent as part of the parks for people

program, a program that I was very pleased to help author as a policy adviser for the former Premier and see that rolled out in my district, which was fantastic; \$50 000 for Florida Parade access, which improved access to a very constrained part of my district; \$80 000 for the Eyes Wide Open leadership program for young teenage youth at risk in Mandurah; \$34 250 for the principal shared path program and bike lanes; and another \$6 million spent to improve the overall health of the estuary.

That is a significant contribution by the previous Liberal–National government. If there was ever an excuse to recognise the fantastic investment by the former government, I guess it would be these bills that we are debating now when we look at the legacy of the former government.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Members, it might be a bit late in the day but I will call people if I have to. I do not want to. Sit back and enjoy listening to our representative from Dawesville.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As can be seen from the previous Liberal–National government —

Ms S. Winton interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Member for Wanneroo, I have so much to go through that I just want to make sure we get there first. I will get back to you.

Mr J.N. Carey: Will you take one interjection?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No. As we can see, the previous Liberal–National government invested in Mandurah and the Peel region. That stands in stark contrast to this government, which has largely forgotten our community. Unfortunately, I have to wake up every day thanking God that the member for Mandurah has been made a cabinet minister because I suspect without him, the Premier of this state would not realise that there is a city of some 85 000 people at the end of our freeway. If the member for Mandurah was not in cabinet, I fear for where our city might be. The investments that I outlined here today by the former Liberal–National government, which have been enabled by this legislation, far surpass Labor’s most recent budget efforts with respect to Mandurah, which saw no new money for our hospital, no new money for our police station, no new money for roads and no new money to help with the growing population of our schools in Mandurah.

Mr B. Urban: It was eight years before that. Mandurah Police Station needed to be done about six years ago.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Sure. I take the point. But it burdens me, and I suspect also the member for Darling Range, that that station might service part of the district, but we know that the expansion of Mandurah Police Station is to allow for another 100 new police officers, yet this government denies it.

I find it unfortunate that the member for Swan Hills has suggested that the people in her electorate are second-class citizens as they do not have access to the MRI facilities at St John of God Midland Public Hospital. That hospital was enabled with \$36 million of state government money to build another 300-odd beds. We can contrast that with the facilities at Peel Health Campus, which are decrepit and falling apart. I raised that today with the Deputy Premier. If the member for Swan Hills is taken at her word and the people of her district are considered second-class citizens because they cannot access an MRI, I would hate to think what that would make the residents of Mandurah, who, if they have a tier 1 emergency incident, cannot be seen within the time frames that have been put by the Department of Health, and only 65 per cent of the time can be seen within the four-hour rule.

I note with interest that as part of the most recent budget, which ignored Mandurah, the Premier decided that he would travel across Western Australia to sell the budget to the people of this state. The name that was given to that on social media is #seatblitz. That shows the true nature of this media-centric Premier. He is full of spin, and very little substance. Rather than delivering on his promises to the people of Western Australia, and investing in Mandurah, the Premier is trying to get his hashtag to trend on Twitter as part of the budget process.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for Perth!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Rather than investing in my city of Mandurah, the Premier is resorting to a hashtag.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I will have to start calling you. I remind you that you have already been called once today.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As members can imagine, I was very keen to see where the Premier’s roadshow would lead and whether we will see the Premier in Mandurah. There is a faint glimmer of hope within me that the Premier will travel to the end of the freeway and come to Mandurah. Sadly, when I looked at Twitter and went through the list on #seatblitz, it was clear that the Premier’s contempt for the City of Mandurah is alive and well. As part of

the ambitious target set by the Premier's office, in which he would travel the length and breadth of this state to sell his first budget, it seems that, once again, the Premier has decided to forget not only Mandurah but also the entire Peel region. The Premier did not as part of #seatblitz visit his most marginal seat—the seat of Murray–Wellington. I was curious—if the Premier is not going to Mandurah or Murray–Wellington, where is he going? I have said a number of times that I suspect members on the back bench have already been thrown under a bus by this government. They have already been ignored by this Premier. A number of members on the back bench will be turfed out at the next state election in 1 220 days. That is not only because of the inevitable swing against them, but also because this government has decided not to invest in their seats and harden them against a swing.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The member for Wanneroo may balk at the prospect of a swing against the Labor government. I would like to reference some polling that has been released and that none of us in this place have yet made mention of. On 12 October, Essential released polling that showed that the first-preference vote of the Labor Party in Western Australia has dropped some 3.2 per cent. That 3.2 per cent reduction may not be very much. However, I suspect that the Premier and his team know that if a 3.2 per cent primary vote were to follow through to the two-party preferred vote in 1 220 days, the government would lose eight seats. I will go through the seats of the eight people who will be turfed out of Parliament based on polling that has been released publicly. First and foremost, the Labor Party would lose the seat of Joondalup, at 0.6 per cent; that would be gone. The seat of Kingsley, at 0.7 per cent, would be gone. The seat of Jandakot—I apologise to my good friend the member for Jandakot—may also be gone and he would be out of a job. The member for Murray–Wellington, who has been ignored by this Premier in his #seatblitz, will be gone at 1.4 per cent. The member for Pilbara, whose seat is being greatly hardened by this government to stop an inevitable swing, may be at risk at 2.3 per cent. The retiring member for Kalamunda, at 2.5 per cent, will be gone. The member for Burns Beach, at 2.5 per cent, will also be gone. Maybe the mate whom he helped become Commissioner of Police will help him with a new job. The member for Bicton, at 2.0 per cent, may also be gone.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am glad the member for Perth finds this so hilarious. He sits there on his safe margin. I suspect only the member for Perth would have the arrogance to assume that it is fine to lose so many of his colleagues. How dare he betray his own members!

Mr J.N. Carey: Watch out, members! They're casting Zak for *The Bold and the Beautiful*!

The ACTING SPEAKER: It is all very interesting, but I would rather hear the member for Dawesville than all the interjections, if that is okay. Member for Perth and member for Wanneroo, I have warned you a number of times. I will have to start calling you. It is probably a bit late in the day to get you out of the place early, but I would like you to make it possible for other members to hear, thanks.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would not mind addressing the interjection from the member for Perth. He continues to raise *The Bold and the Beautiful*, I think it is. He needs to reference what that is, because I am not certain that I know what that show is. Let us get up to date and find something more relevant.

Mr J.N. Carey: The Premier was watching it at 4.30 pm yesterday, with a glass of chardonnay!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, he was, and we are from very different generations, member for Perth.

This reduction in the Labor Party's primary vote has already happened in what would absolutely be considered this government's honeymoon period. What will happen when members opposite have to start making decisions, start bringing legislation to this Parliament that might be contentious, and start governing? I suspect that once the government stops with its incessant media indulgences and things like #seatblitz and starts to govern, it will upset more people in the state of Western Australia and more than eight seats will be up for a prospective loss.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I hope so, member for Wanneroo.

I will say it again. This state's thirtieth Premier is not a popular man. We know that, because the last election was not so much a "Kevin 07" style rush to power but more of a denial of the former government. The Premier has never had much popularity. I suspect the peak of his popularity was when the member for Cannington orchestrated a failed coup and somehow could not make the very popular former federal Minister for Defence the next state leader of the state Labor Party.

Mr F.M. Logan: You really are Rick Forrester!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I do not know what that means, minister.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 9 November 2017]

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Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr Zak Kirkup; Hon Fran Logan; Mr Shane Love; Mr David Templeman

We need to add to the mix the fact that we have a very ambitious and capable Treasurer, whose legislation we are dealing with today, who I suspect is paying very close attention to those polls. I would encourage those eight vulnerable members who are slated in public polling to lose their seat to do as much as they possibly can to take a stand against the Premier and his team and ask that more be done to harden their seats. I acknowledge that in the Premier's team, quite apart from the member for Murray–Wellington, who did not get a visit as part of #seatblitz, a number of seats have already been written off. We know that from what the Premier said in selling his budget. As I look at those eight vulnerable members, I know that as part of the Premier's #seatblitz, he went everywhere. He visited all seats.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As I look at those eight vulnerable members —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am giving you your first warning, member for Perth, and I call you for the second time, member for Wanneroo.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I went through the list of where the Premier went and what he got up to as part of #seatblitz. As I looked through those vulnerable eight seats, I noted that although he visited every seat that was marginal or at risk, there was a slight difference in the visitation time. I credit the Premier's team for managing to roll him out to every single seat. Good on them; they ticked that box. But curiously, as part of #seatblitz and that opportunity to have a visit from the Premier, some districts got money and some did not.

Let us first look at the seats that the Premier's office decided were worth hardening. The district of Baldivis got more money as part of #seatblitz for electronic signage at the community college. The district of Forrestfield got \$50 000 for upgrades at Edney Primary School—a great primary school. It is not as good as Woodlupine Primary School where I went but it comes a very close second! The district of Jandakot got \$224 000 as part of #seatblitz for upgrades to the playground. The district of Bicton got \$1.8 million for upgrades to the netball courts. The district of Belmont, even with the very solid margin that the member now enjoys, still got \$20 000 for the men's shed—well done, member for Belmont. The member for Wanneroo's electorate got \$400 000 for Tapping senior high school as part of #seatblitz.

Ms S.E. Winton: It is Tapping Primary School.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Sorry, I will correct the record—Tapping Primary School. The member is quite right. The district of Wanneroo got \$400 000. The district of Joondalup benefited from \$746 000 for HBF Arena. Unsurprisingly, the district of Pilbara got a splash of cash right through it once again as part of the \$1 billion committed by the state Labor Party to do its best to hold that seat. The district of Mount Lawley received \$120 000 towards RTRFM, which I suspect was strongly advocated by not only the local member, but also the by the part-time disc jockey and very good media adviser in the Premier's office. Finally, as part of #seatblitz we could never forget the district of Perth that got \$250 000 for the north west common. In all of that it was very clear to all of us that the Premier had decided, as part of his budget, what seats he wanted to save, which was also very evident as part of his media photo opportunities, because when he went to the districts of Kalamunda, Burns Beach and Kingsley, not a single dollar was spent as part of #seatblitz.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is it! I am going to start seriously calling people now because I cannot hear, and Hansard probably has not got a hope. Member, that is the final warning, and I will just remind the member for Wanneroo that she is on two calls.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It would bother me if I were in the districts of Kalamunda, Burns Beach or Kingsley because it would seem to me that not only have they not been prioritised by this government, but also when the Premier comes to my district, he does not come with cash in hand. Instead, after his photos have been taken, he wants to get out of the place and dodge around everyone as quickly as he can. All that the Premier has done is satisfied the inevitable requirement to ensure he went to every metropolitan seat, but he did not follow through with any substance to see any funding diverted to those seats. I strongly recommend that the members for Kalamunda, Burns Beach and Kingsley start polishing up their curriculum vitae. I suspect that when the member for Kalamunda, who was here a moment ago, realised that he got no money, he decided to get out the door before we gave him that advice! I can promise him that in 1 220 days he will need to get out that CV because he will be out of a job. To be quite frank, I welcome the opportunity for a new member for Kalamunda, someone with a bit more energy I hope.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Perth, I am calling you for the first time.

Point of Order

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I ask the Acting Speaker to advise the member for Dawesville to refrain from using the sort of language that he used about the energy and capacity of the member for Kalamunda. He knows, I know and every other member in this chamber knows that he was referring to the member's age, which I think is just wrong.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I ask the member to withdraw any aspersions that he may have implied by making that comment.

Debate Resumed

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I withdraw unreservedly. I will inform the minister that members opposite have made various references to my age on a number of occasions. At any point of time, I am called a range of things that seek to exploit my young age and vitality. I apologise, minister, for any contrast.

I will get to the end of my contribution here this afternoon. The former government of Western Australia and the state's twenty-ninth Premier governed for all Western Australians regardless of their electorate's margin. The same cannot be said for the unpopular Premier in the member for Rockingham who not only continues to ignore communities like Mandurah, but also, it seems, members of his own party.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have seven minutes. I will get back to the member if I have time—we will see, member for Wanneroo. If the polls keep slipping away, as they are now, and keep on trend, I suspect it will not just happen to those vulnerable eight members; three of whom have already been cut. Far more government members will see the tide go out and far less money spent on them and their districts in the budgets to come. As long as the member for Rockingham is their leader, as long as he ensures that he governs only for the indulgences of the positive media coverage, and as long as he continues to ensure that he does his very best to try to reverse the trend of his lack of popularity, then his condescendence and arrogance will start to become a burden on all government members. I suspect that in time, as long as we keep dealing with this non-legislative agenda and the government continues to indulge in its unusual media cycle that it gets up to now, many government members will lose their seats, and I, for one, welcome that prospect. I commend the bills to the house.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [4.26 pm]: It is nice to be heard in the house. I am quite pleased to be speaking because it is one of the rare occasions on which the Minister for Tourism is in the house while I am speaking. He is able to witness me talk. He did make some rather unkind comments earlier on in the day and now I am here to refute the idea that somehow I am silent in the house.

Mr P. Papalia: You are here so infrequently that it is not surprising that I don't listen!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am here usually. It is just the occasional division I miss.

I would like to speak very briefly on the Appropriation (Capital 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017 and the Appropriation (Recurrent 2010–11 to 2015–16) Supplementary Bill 2017, which appear to be so important that it has taken the whole day in the house and some other time to get through just the second reading debate. It is quite disgraceful that at this point in time, with only three weeks and a few hours left in our parliamentary year, that this is the best the government can do in its first year.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is six sitting days, and half an hour. What are we doing? We are talking about bills that are dealing with matters going back to 2010–11 and just tidying up a bit of an administrative function. The money is long spent and the bills do not really achieve anything. If that is the best that this government can do, I am glad that it is sending all these people off to China! They clearly would be wasting their time being in Parliament because this government is not bringing anything to the house to discuss, and it is very poor in my view.

As we are talking about historic matters, it would be nice to recap some of the achievements over that period from 2010–11 until now. Being a country member, one of the major things I see as I drive around my electorate and those of other members is the great change that has occurred because of royalties for regions. The former member for Pilbara, once the member for Central Wheatbelt, was maligned in this house again today, even though he is not here, for taking a holiday seven or eight years ago, I think it was. Somehow he got himself mentioned in this house again, but the scheme that he and the rest of the National Party helped to bring about has made a huge difference to regional Western Australia. Royalties for regions money has not just been spent in country seats held by National Party members, but also in places like—not in the seat of Murray–Wellington so much, but in other areas of the state.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Do you know that the former member for Murray–Wellington was very, very angry with you lot. He was an angry man.

Mr R.S. LOVE: A member has to go through processes to get royalties for regions spent in their electorate. Foremost, a member has to put forward worthwhile projects and work with the development commission and other bodies in that area to get the project up. I have heard other members admit that they did not really know how to get things going. It is because the members were not driving it; it was driven from the grassroots, by the local governments, by the regional development commissions and by the local champions, not by a bunch of worn-out political hacks running around the countryside.

Mr P. Papalia: Are you saying the development commission members are worn-out political hacks?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No; I am calling some of the local members that, some of whom are present in the house.

Mr P. Papalia: That's all the National Party appointed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: No; that is not actually true. Very few appointments to many of the boards had any association with the National Party before they were appointed. I think I can comfortably say that that was very far off the mark. If we look now at the people appointed at the moment to front up the development commissions, it is probably a different story—not that they will be doing anything. As we know, royalties for regions money has been absolutely stripped. The money is no longer being spent on local priorities; it will be spent on state matters such as the operations of the Water Corporation, which will lead to a profit that the government will reap. The government is now using a strange accounting method.

Before this government took over, we were looking forward to seeing some projects being delivered in my area. Despite its mantra that it would spend royalties for regions wisely, it decided it would not spend it in the way it was intended at all—not on fixing the legacy of problems brought about by 20 or 30 years of neglect by people like members of the Labor Party. One of the most disappointing aspects I have spoken about in this house before is the cessation of funding to the redevelopment of the Moora Residential College, a vital appendage, if you like, to the Central Midlands Senior High School to enable country students to have access to a reasonable standard of education. Within my electorate, many small communities do not have access to a senior high school within driving distance. Those students need access to low-cost, residential accommodation so they can get an education. Many of them are probably people who might even vote for the party of members over that side. They are people who do not necessarily have the resources to make use of Perth College, Scotch College or some other institution in a faraway place. It is still an issue for them to find that \$2 000 or \$ 3 000, which is the difference between subsidies provided by groups such as the federal assistance for isolated children and the state boarding away from home allowance, and the modest cost of a government hostel. They certainly cannot find the tens of thousands of dollars annually to educate their kids elsewhere. There is a real problem of access to education for these children. I am very much of the mindset that one of the biggest problems facing my electorate now is those children not having an opportunity for a decent education. They cannot get a year 11 or 12 standard education where they live. Their parents cannot afford to send them away, and the government is refusing to invest in the only facility between Perth and Geraldton that could accommodate them. At the same time it is dragging back the royalties for regions component of the boarding away from home allowance that helps to cover some of the gap between the amount of federal assistance and the basic cost of boarding at a residential college. It is a very real issue. When compulsory education for years 11 and 12 first came in, a small amount of money was given to each of the district high schools to provide some sort of program for those students. At some time, it was cut to some of those schools and that meant that, in some areas, the local district high schools stopped offering any sort of course for years 11 and 12. In one case we know of, those students had access to the school to do a School of Isolated and Distance Education program. But because of some behavioural issues, they closed down that room, so at one stage in the town of Dalwallinu, probably a dozen or so kids in the years 11 and 12 cohort were getting no education whatsoever. That is not acceptable and it is not something that should be allowed to continue.

The other issue of deep concern to me is the cessation of \$22.4 million announced under the previous government for the Turquoise Coast Health Initiative to pick up some of the areas outside the traditional wheatbelt zone where the Western Australian Country Health Service is the primary health provider. Historically, development of the wheatbelt took place about 100 years ago when the railways were developed and a good suite of hospital facilities were built in the inland areas. Much of my electorate was relatively undeveloped in that period, so it is only in the last 50 years or so that much of the areas I represent started to develop economically and develop a larger population. They therefore missed out on the legacy of early investment. When royalties for regions funded the Southern Inland Health Initiative, much of the investment went towards rebuilding infrastructure and providing services where they already existed. That is something I recognised when I was first elected and I worked pretty hard to put in place a program that would address the disadvantage that had developed in areas such as Gingin, Jurien Bay, Chittering and the like where there is not the level of health infrastructure that people would expect in places like Moora, Dalwallinu et cetera. Having achieved that, I was very disappointed to see the government whittle that down to only \$1 million, the component that will go to Dongara to help put in a few more aged-care beds. Dongara has a very large cohort of aged people. It is a very welcome investment but it is not the whole story

and it certainly does not address a lot of the disadvantage that occurs for people in my electorate due to the lack of health care.

Since the pending announcement of the budget and the final understanding that that money would not be available, the Shire of Chittering has been drawing together a working group to see what can be done to provide the types of services that will now not be available. I am talking about a population that has grown pretty rapidly. It has a fair number of people who access a lot of their services from the metropolitan area, so they do not appear in any statistical analysis as an area of need. When they are discharged from Midland Public Hospital, there is nobody to provide after-hospital care, or the type of wound dressings and other sorts of things people would get who are discharged into the metropolitan area. It is an area that, at most, is an hour from Perth, where there is a real pocket of disadvantage for people with the inability for them to be looked after. Similarly, there is very little in the way of palliative care or any sort of assistance, if you like, for people who are at a very vulnerable time of their life. I have dealt with health professionals who have worked for a very long time in the health field. When they have a relative who is in trouble and in need, even they cannot navigate their way around trying to source some sort of help for their loved ones. I am talking about people who are actively involved, such as a nurse employed in the health service, a physiotherapist or whatever. They are people whom we expect to have good knowledge about where to get help, but they cannot get it. I am interested to know just what the government might have in store for those areas but given what we have heard about the WA Country Health Service shifting positions to Perth and to Bunbury, I suspect that not very much will go to the electorate to combat these types of issues.

One of the things we heard during the election campaign was that the Labor government would spend royalties for regions money where it was needed—on things such as roads. That is interesting. An amount of \$15 million has been allocated to the Shire of Gingin and other coastal shires as part of the first tranche—expected to be around \$60 million—to provide a decent transport system for the millions of tonnes of lime sand heading west–east every year from the coast and into the wheatbelt and grain growing areas. Those local governments and local communities are paying a very heavy price trying to provide the road system for very heavy vehicles, which do not contribute to their local community at all. The product goes out and there is very little return to the shire for the lime sand when it is sold. Up to one million tonnes of lime sand comes out of Lancelin alone and goes down shire roads. That can be compared with some of the areas in the eastern wheatbelt where I know they are upset about the tier 3 system. The entire tier 3 rail network carried about 600 000 tonnes of grain in an average year. The Shire of Gingin is facilitating the movement of a million tonnes of lime sand across its roads and it gets virtually no return from that whatsoever. That is a real issue for those local governments. Rather than addressing it in a positive way, the government has reduced its program to the bare bones of a \$10 million program and I do not think the rest of the \$60 million will be coming any time soon.

Similarly, a program was announced for \$48 million to be spent on roads of agricultural significance right across the state, but mainly to address some urgent needs that had been identified through the work done by some of the wheatbelt shires, and led by the Shire of Koorda president. A lot of work was done to identify the priority roads throughout the area. A \$48 million fund was announced to go towards that. It is down to a contestable round of, I think, \$10 million, which will not do a hell of a lot across the entire wheatbelt.

There is a bit of discrepancy in some of the language about the importance of roads and what we are seeing on the ground; I am talking specifically about royalties for regions–funded projects. The projects I mentioned were all funded entirely by royalties for regions and now, of course, royalties for regions is not there, but we can see money set aside in the budget. I think \$250 million of funds is still sitting there, unallocated, in royalties for regions. I know there is some talk about some of that money helping with the redevelopment of Geraldton Hospital. I hope that does happen at some point. Although the member for Geraldton is in the chair and cannot contribute to the debate, he and I would share the same concern about the need for that hospital’s redevelopment. Geraldton Hospital is the centre point for the midwest’s health services and it is the starting point to ensure that there is a robust medical and health system in the midwest, as distinct from the lower end of my electorate, which is down near Perth in the wheatbelt. Ensuring that Geraldton Hospital is well supported with plenty of services in the area will ensure that the midwest has a good health system. We can combine the need for those services to be provided in the area with some very good training facilities that now exist in Geraldton at the former Durack campus—it is now Central Regional TAFE. There are some very good facilities and some specialist rural health training facilities.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Could I ask you a serious question? What is the season looking like in your electorate regarding farming?

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is a bit of a mixed bag and recent rains have turned around some of the areas. Further east and further north, the damage has already been done. I was talking to the Shire of Morawa president. I do not know what it has in the bin now, but the shire’s expectation was for about 400 tonnes of grain off 19 000 acres of wheat that have been planted. That is not a very good return and would not even cover the return of the seed. If the minister goes out to that sort of area, he will see it is pretty dire. Some areas are looking much better now, but, overall, the Geraldton port zone will be well down, but because of some late rain, it is probably not as bad as we

may have thought a couple of months ago. Sometimes, too, crops look okay but when we get in there, it is a little bit disappointing.

I would like to very quickly touch on another issue. There is a need in the midwest for economic growth, and having a poor agricultural season does not help. The recent decision by the Environmental Protection Authority on a mine site in the eastern part of my electorate at Blue Hills mine was very disappointing. Locally, it would have meant hundreds of jobs in the area at a time when we need them; we need some work for people in the midwest. The proposal to mine in what is known as banded iron formations was knocked backed by the EPA. I think it was a little caught up in all the furore about the Mineral Resources situation further south and probably, quite unfairly, it was lumped in with that. The area that the company proposes to mine has been impacted over the years by many, many local mines—probably a dozen or so—so it is not as though we are going somewhere man has never been. This area has already been impacted by mining. The company had a very good program of rehabilitation. It worked closely with Kings Park to develop the ability to restore the area very quickly and to propagate some of the threatened species so that they could be returned in greater numbers. I hope that the appeal processes are underway—the minister is aware of my concerns in this matter—and that the Minister for Environment will act to ensure that the mine can go ahead because we need some work and development in the local area.

I am conscious of the time. I have pretty well said most of what I wanted to say, but I will ask for a very brief extension.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: The last issue I want to touch on has been an ongoing problem. I came to this place in 2014 and grieved to the then Minister for Transport, Troy Buswell, about the condition of Jurien Bay Marina. For the last 15 to 20 years, it has been subject to repeated fish kill incidents and environmental degradation caused by the infiltration of sand and weed in large quantities. We were able to establish a working group that advised on what studies should be done and worked closely to get some work done to ameliorate the problem. As I recall, the design for the marina had the depth of the channel into the marina set at about four metres. By the time the working group got underway, the channel was down to only about one metre in depth. What happens at Jurien Bay Marina is that the lack of oxygen and the development of hydrogen sulphide in the water caused by the decomposition of large quantities of weed hits first at the entrance. A kill zone starts right at the entrance, so nothing can leave the marina and survive, and then it spreads right throughout the marina and kills everything. The task of that group was to try to make sure that the marina had a healthy environment. Unfortunately, since the election, the Minister for Transport has seen fit to disband the group and has also cut back on \$8.7 million of funding for the marina. I think that is very problematic. If the government tried to rebuild that asset, it would cost probably at least \$200 million to \$300 million. It is quite a major asset for the state and I think it needs to be taken very seriously. Very disappointingly, since the election and since the cessation of the working group and anyone doing any monitoring of the water, the fish kill has recurred. I am not saying that that is anyone's fault directly, but without someone locally raising those issues and interacting with the experts who were charged with understanding how to combat the problem and had the wherewithal to do it, these fish kills will keep happening. It is not a very pleasant situation for the animals or the local community, and it is not good for the industry. At times when the hydrogen sulphide levels rise, the water becomes extremely acidic and if people do not pull their cray boats out of the water, they will dissolve because the water becomes so toxic and acidic that it begins to attack the plate aluminium and other bits of metal that might be floating around in the marina. This is a real issue that needs addressing. It does not help very much when money is pulled out of it and when the government disbands the only group that is able to provide a local voice and coordinate with the state agencies et cetera. I was in that group; fair enough—get rid of me and put one of the Labor Agricultural Region members in there or some other nominee, but I think the idea of just getting rid of the group and cutting back on the whole program was a big mistake.

I thank members very much and I will wind up there.

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