

**McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — DECISION-MAKING**

*Motion*

**MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central)** [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the ministers of the McGowan government whose inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and politically fuelled decision-making has undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians.

Members, this is a motion about your government because the fish stinks first at the head and the Premier has really led —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I think you've got that wrong. It rots from the head down!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** No, I googled it and that is what it said! I was trying to find out how the ministers of this state are behaving and how they are not providing confidence to the people of Western Australia and it starts with the leadership. It stinks from the head. It starts rotting from the head, member for Mandurah and the rot is there. I want to give a bit of a history lesson when it comes to the Premier of this state. He has many names but he has carried one through his political career. I was looking and doing a bit of research and found, "New face of Labor Mark McGowan carries old baggage". I thought: That is interesting. I should have a read of that. I forgot, because it has not been used for a while —

**Ms S.E. Winton:** What date is that?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I am happy to give the member the date. It is from 18 January 2012. The now Premier, then Leader of the Opposition's nickname was "Sneakers". Why? The article states —

... he was dubbed this way because his party colleagues joked that his shoes were the only part of him that remained visible when he was sucking up to whoever was leading state Labor.

Shall I repeat that? Did members hear it? I reckon I know the member who tagged him with that nickname. He has been around for a while. I think he was elected in 2001. He sits over yonder, over there. He probably gave that reasoning. When it comes to his nickname, "Sneakers", having been in the Labor Party one of the reasons the Premier got this nickname from his own colleagues was that, being unaligned to a faction, he would constantly go into little faction meetings. What he would do is go and get the intelligence then go back to the Premier of the day, whether it was Geoff Gallop or Alan Carpenter, and tell them what everyone was saying around the Labor Party. That is how he got his nickname and I wonder who has taken that mantel now? Perhaps it is the member for Perth, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier. Perhaps he is the person who goes around now to all the little faction groups, gets the information, and passes it on to the Premier. What I suppose I am wanting to get at is that the Premier has a history of character assassination. He is always playing the man, never going for the ball. It started publicly back on Thursday, 10 April 2008. I have here the front page of the paper at the time. He criticised one of his own colleagues and the front page reads, "The Ethnic Branch Stacker v The Premier's Poodle." I think that pretty much sums up, at the time, the now Premier and how he was considered by the people in the media and the people in the party. The comment was —

'John D'Orazio —

The late John D'Orazio —

is well known as ... the worst ethnic —

Not a branch stacker, but had to label him as an "ethnic"—

branch stacker in the history of the Labor Party in WA.

'The lap-dog of the Premier has spoken... what an attack on all members of the Labor Party who are ethnic.

That is what John D'Orazio said and I was a member at the time. I am an ethnic. My parents were born in Italy and I consider myself as ethnic but an Australian. For the member for Rockingham to say that about one of his own was the start of the character that I think he has really grown into today. This Premier leads our state. There are many instances of these comments he has made. He very much personalises every attack when he is under stress. One issue we have had was the community resource centres. They were under attack by this mean-spirited Labor government, cutting the funding and not understanding the importance of community resource centres. They said that everyone could just grab a mobile phone and look it up, not understanding the importance that community resource centres have in regional Western Australia. After continuous attack from this side of the house, from the Leader of the Nationals and from community members against the mean-spirited government's decision to reduce funding in community resource centres, the Premier then had to personally attack those who work there. I quote —

We want to move away from the model the National Party had in which it put National Party hacks and friends into CRCs. National Party members would give a mate a job, give some friend a job and give the branch president's husband or wife a job in the CRC. That was the National Party model.

The Premier personally attacked community members who provide a resource for the community. But the Premier had to personally attack those community resource centre workers. He has since had to apologise because of the onslaught by people in the community saying, "Hang on a sec; we're actually not National Party members. We're not National Party hacks. We're people who want to see our community resource centres flourish and we're concerned about the funds that you've cut." Then, when we come into this place, on occasion—we experienced it today in question time about pieces of paper. In one incident last year, I think it was, or the start of this year, the Premier denied he had two pieces of paper and would not give it up to the Speaker to see whether it was an official document that he was quoting from. But if members look at the footage, it clearly shows two pieces of paper. The fact is that he was there to mislead the Parliament yet again, and deny there were two pieces of paper. We have seen it again and again, and we saw it with the incident involving the member for Bassendean. I stand by what I saw, when the member for Bassendean walked over here and moved his head towards the Leader of the National Party. Whether or not the other side believes that, and whether or not this side believes it, I saw what I saw. The Leader of the National Party saw what she saw. The Premier's response was that he did not see it, so it did not happen. Can members start to see the character of the person who is leading our state—the mean-spirited personal attacks on individuals when things are not going his way? He might not like a person, and I know he does not like me. It is quite obvious, and do you know what? I actually do not like him, but to say that he did not see it, so it did not happen goes —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do you like me?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I like you, member for Mandurah. You are a great laugh in this house.

Members can see the character of the Premier, and how he portrays people in this house, and also people outside this place who do not have a right to defend themselves, like the community resource centre workers.

I was not here one day, because, having a large electorate, I have to leave here to drive to my electorate, unlike the member for Bunbury, who can drive home every night. Members on this side need to plan, because sometimes it takes a day to get where we need to get to. On that day, when the member for Moore asked a question of the Premier, I was in Shark Bay, at Denham, handing over a flag to some students at the local Shark Bay Primary School; a fantastic school. It happened to coincide with a meeting there that I had to attend. I was there and was busy, but I looked at my phone later that evening at the questions because I had been alerted to a question asked by the member for Moore of the Premier.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I asked why National Party members of Parliament were being denied access to schools.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The member for Moore asked the question of the Premier because, the week before, National Party members were travelling to Moora to visit Moora Residential College and stage a community event to show our support for the community, and to show community members that the National Party was fighting for the funds needed for Moora college. We all got approval, but suddenly the member for Warren–Blackwood and I were rejected. Rightfully, the member for Moore, who has been waging the campaign to save Moora college, asked the Premier why the member for Warren–Blackwood and I were rejected. I was absolutely flabbergasted by the Premier's response to that. He said —

... it certainly does not sound like a wise idea to me to have the member for North West Central visiting primary schools.

In response to the member for Moore's supplementary question, the Premier said —

I cannot be clearer: I would not allow the member for North West Central to visit primary schools.

That is the response to the question. The Premier of this state said that about a member of Parliament in this house. I was absolutely shocked. I did not know how to take it. It could be taken several ways, but obviously my mind boggles and I go to the extreme, which is not nice, especially when the people at Moora college, who read it in *Hansard*, were coming up to me that night, when we had a couple of hundred people there, saying, "I can't believe the Premier said that about you. I cannot believe the Premier's comments." I can take being called lots of things, and the other side has said it all, but when the leader of the state—the Premier—says something like that about someone who is at a primary school handing out a flag, who is a father, a husband and a son, and we read that, it hurts. I am saddened and disappointed that someone would make those comments.

I consulted with my colleagues. What do we do? What do we say? We just could not believe that a leader of the state would say something like that and imply—who knows what he wanted to imply? The Leader of the National Party wrote to the Speaker to talk about the imputations made by the Premier during question time. I will read the letter that she then wrote to the Premier. We asked the Speaker to refer the matter to the Procedure and Privileges

Committee. The Speaker responded that it would have to be referred by a vote of the house, and I know that the issue of the member for Bassendean was voted down. The house voted not to send it to the privileges committee to find out whether an altercation occurred on the floor. The government used its numbers to say no. I thought I would not get a fair hearing if we had to deal with the matter on the floor of the house, so I thought I would ask the Leader of the National Party to write to the Premier to ask him to clarify his remarks. I will read out the letter, because I think it is important that everyone knows the character of the Premier and the disappointment and sadness I have in the leader of this state.

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I think the member needs to sit and listen to this, because it will open her eyes. The letter from the Leader of the National Party states —

Dear Premier

**IMPUTATIONS MADE DURING QUESTION TIME**

I write with regard to statements made by you during Question Time on 23 August 2018 referring to the Member for North West Central Vince Catania MLA.

Your remarks targeted Mr Catania's character in a derogatory and offensive manner that insinuated he is not fit to visit primary schools or be in proximity of children. It is neither Parliamentary nor befitting of the Premier of this State to denigrate another Member of Parliament in this manner.

Mr Catania a father of five children—is right to feel aggrieved by the statements. You were not reflecting on a matter of policy or making a political statement. It was clearly aimed at disparaging Mr Catania in a most vicious and insidious manner.

I write to ask that you reflect on the comments and the effect that they have had on Mr Catania, and consider offering an apology for the distress this has caused him and his family.

I look forward this matter being resolved respectfully and expediently by you placing an apology on the record in the Parliament of Western Australia.

Yours sincerely

Hon Mia Davies MLA

LEADER

The Premier's comments in reply to that letter absolutely astounded me. I will read out the response by the Premier of Western Australia —

Dear Ms Davies

I refer to your letter of 18 September 2018 regarding Mr Vince Catania and comments I made in Parliament.

In my view, Mr Catania sets a very poor example to children due to his extreme disloyalty to the Party that put him into Parliament. His actions in betraying all of the voters, supporters and Labor branch members are one of the grossest breaches of trust I have ever seen. Furthermore, his recent untruthfulness in the Parliament in relation to allegations he made against the Member for Bassendean, was a further gross example of dishonesty.

I would hate to think school children could ever see Mr Catania as a role model or community leader.

It should be Mr Catania who apologises to the Labor party and to the Member for Bassendean for his dishonest and disloyal behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Mark McGowan MLA

PREMIER

God help us! If a member responds to what the Premier said in Parliament and then they get that response, God help us!

**Mr D.T. Redman:** From the Premier of Western Australia.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Yes, from the Premier of Western Australia.

It is disappointing more than anything. It is upsetting. I know what the Premier was trying to imply at the start and what he would not say outside this house. But that letter refers to a person who left the Labor Party in 2009, who was re-elected as a National Party member in 2013 nearly on primary votes alone, and who was re-elected again in 2017, and I look forward to being elected again in 2021. If that does not show the Premier of Western Australia that I have the full support of my electorate and the people whom I represent, I do not know what does. The

Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Shane Love

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disloyalty and dishonour lies with the Premier because what he has done as a leader of the state is disloyal and dishonest. We can start to see how he likes to character assassinate and personally attack everyone, not only his colleagues and those on this side of the house, but also people outside Parliament who cannot defend themselves. But enough of that.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Churchlands! Excuse me, members, I am on my feet. The member for North West Central is in the middle of giving his speech. It is not appropriate to have uncalled for assistance. Member for Churchlands, that is enough.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Sorry, who are you the member for?

**Ms S.E. Winton:** I am the member for Wanneroo.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Member for Wanneroo, this motion captures how the rot begins at the head of the fish. The head is the Premier and this is about his character and how he is leading his ministry down the same path. I reckon that the member is aspiring to be like the Premier and I say, “God help you.”

**Ms S.E. Winton** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** No, this is about the character of the Premier, the person who is leading this state, and his ability to character assassinate not only members on the government’s side, but also members on the opposition side and members of the public. We will look at some examples of when the Premier has said one thing in opposition and done another thing in government. The TAB is a classic example. I have an article titled “Premier Mark McGowan says TAB sale ‘in State’s best interests’, which states —

In 2016, the Labor leader argued that selling the TAB to the highest bidder would be the death of the industry in WA and cause job losses.

Now we see that he has changed his mind.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** He listened to the industry.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** He listened to the industry! I have some more quotes from *Hansard*. It states —

... as we know from meeting and talking with industry representatives in other states, they regret it, virtually to a person. They regret the change from the former model to a new one. Some people would say that Western Australia is out of touch. The Premier would probably say that we are out of touch with the modern direction of the other states and the like. The member for South Perth would probably say that as well. However, in Western Australia sometimes we do things differently, and, I would argue, sometimes we do things better.

...

shareholders will come first and the racing industry will come second.

...

Jobs could very well be lost. Actually, let us be frank: they will be lost if the TAB is sold.

That is the Premier of Western Australia talking. When in opposition, he was critical of even the thought of the sale of the TAB, but he has changed his mind. This is the same when it comes to TAB Trackside—virtual horse racing—that under a Labor government will be put into TAB outlets. The Leader of the Opposition said at the time —

“WA Labor will always oppose further introduction of pokies and similar gaming machines in Western Australia because of the financial misery they cause.”

Yet, the Premier and the Minister for Racing and Gaming have happily introduced virtual racing—Trackside—into TABs and provided another way for people to place bets, which will cause more problems. Western Australians have always prided themselves on not having gambling machines in this state, but this is another step closer to that and something that the Premier, when he was the Leader of the Opposition before the election, said he would not do. We have seen many broken promises since Labor formed government. For example, it promised that there would be no new taxes or an increase in taxes. What have we seen? The Premier has talked today about how wonderful the state’s finances are. If a government does not spend and it taxes Western Australians, of course the bank balance is going to improve! Anyone can do that, but this government has done it at a cost.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** What is the cost?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Minister for Health, it has come at the cost of Carnarvon aged care, Tom Price Hospital, Meekatharra Hospital and Laverton Hospital and it is the fact that this government has not opened up a ward in the Karratha Health Campus. The list goes on. Roads funding has been cut left, right and centre. The trading halt that has occurred in regional Western Australia is a classic example of what happens when spending in regional

Western Australia stops. We have seen an increase in taxes, an increase in the price of water and power, and an increase in boating fees—the list goes on, one after the other. This is something that the Premier as the Leader of the Opposition prior to the election said that Labor would not do in government—no privatisation! We have seen privatisation occur all over the shop. They will not go back to Western Power but they will privatise everything else. The Premier has said one thing in opposition, and another when in government. The list of examples goes on. What happened to the wage increase of 1.5 per cent for police? What happened to paying down debt like a mortgage? Has Labor paid down any debt since coming into government? It has been two years since it said it would pay down debt. Have we seen any debt being paid down? I think it has gone the other way. We are seeing that Labor candidates will say and do anything to get elected. Now that they have been in government for two years, the only thing that they have been consistent with is blaming the former government for everything that has gone wrong. Although things have gone wrong during their time in government, it is still the previous government's fault. We have seen one thing after the other go wrong. When it comes to issues such as the gold royalty, the Premier was opposed to it when he was in opposition. I remember standing on the steps of Parliament House next to the Leader of the Opposition. Although I really did not want to do that, I stood next to him because it was for the right cause and to prevent any increase in the gold royalty.

I stood there with a bunch of other members of Parliament, including Labor members of Parliament, to fight against any increase in the gold royalty. Yet in government, the Premier has twice tried to introduce a gold royalty.

The character of the Premier is shining through; he says one thing in opposition and does another in government. He said Labor would keep royalties for regions. There is nothing to see here. The Premier said, "Don't worry; we'll continue to build the Tom Price Hospital, the Meekatharra Hospital and aged-care facilities in Carnarvon." The list goes on. We were told, "Don't worry; royalties for regions will pay for that." I cannot see it. The Premier said he would keep royalties for regions. We probably did not ask the right question. He said he would keep royalties for regions, but perhaps only in name. Maybe he forgot to put any money behind it. It was a huge hoodwink of the people of the Pilbara and of all regional people. I remember that the member for Pilbara got up and said, "We'll keep royalties for regions." I cannot see it. Where is it? I have to read this quote, because I think it is a great quote. This was the Premier when talking about the gold royalty. He said —

"Gold, by its nature, can often be very marginal. A lot of work, a lot of processing, a lot of employment— but at the end of the day, costs are high and if this royalty comes in, mines will close and jobs will be lost."

That was the Premier of Western Australia!

**Mr D.T. Redman:** It sounds like a backflip.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Backflip after backflip—apparently he is very flexible. How can the Premier be trusted? We can talk about some of the things the Premier has done with camps in Karratha. I am glad to see the member for Pilbara in the chamber. Perhaps he can get up and say why he supports a camp in Karratha when the community and the shire are absolutely opposed to it. The Premier said it would be for Woodside only. Suddenly, it is not just for Woodside—it is going to be for everyone. The continual misleading statements that the Premier makes are becoming part of his character. He cannot be trusted. He is mean. I know that members opposite know what he is like. The people of Western Australia are starting to see through him. That started at the Darling Range by-election. The government lost that seat partly because of the community's mistrust of the Premier and the mean-spirited way in which the Premier has gone on.

We are here to talk about other ministers, who have also started to learn how the Premier operates. The Minister for Education and Training is probably one. She has lost the trust of people in regional Western Australia, of kids attending schools and of teachers because of an ill-thought-out, ill-conceived idea to close Schools of the Air.

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

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I do not have all day. I have only 29 minutes left. The Minister for Education and Training has lost the trust of people in regional Western Australia when it comes to regional education. That minister should be sacked. To try to regain the confidence of the community, there should be a reshuffle and someone else should be put in there. Perhaps it should be the member for Armadale, who would restore the confidence of people in regional Western Australia—the kids who came to the rallies in Karratha.

**Mr K.J.J. Michel** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The member for Pilbara was there. He got up after the announcement of these cuts to regional education and said, "There will be more cuts and more cuts and more cuts!" Does the member remember that?

**Mr K.J.J. Michel:** Yes. That is because of the \$40 billion debt.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** More cuts!

**Mr K.J.J. Michel:** There was \$90 million spent on underground power.

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**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I remember that, and so do the people of Karratha. People in Karratha are still paying for it. **Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** They remember; do not worry.

**Mr K.J.J. Michel:** They remember you!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I like the member for Pilbara, but his ability in politics and looking after his community is questionable. The people of Karratha are now starting to see what the member for Pilbara is like, because he said there would be more and more cuts. He was right. There were cuts to Moora Residential College, farm schools and camp schools.

**Mr K.J.J. Michel:** What did you do?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** We did not close them!

**Mr K.J.J. Michel:** What did you do about the camps in Karratha? Nothing! Nine private camps—what did you do? Nothing!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The government is closing them down; that is what the government is doing.

Here we go. The government was happy to close down camp schools and Schools of the Air, but it was also happy to open a mining camp in the heart of Karratha. I think maybe the member has the camp wrong! Certainly the City of Karratha and the people of Karratha do not want another mine camp in the centre of town. They want the Dampier camp school to be opened. They want regional education to be fulfilled, and for good education outcomes to be delivered in places like the Pilbara. That confidence is not there with the Minister for Education and Training. I put to the Premier, knowing he has a lot of flaws in his character, that he can surely see the flaw he has in the ministry of education—that is, the Minister for Education and Training. Hopefully there is a reshuffle at the end of this year and he can put someone else there, whether it is the member for Armadale or the member for Girrawheen—two people who I think would fit the role quite nicely and who would restore people’s confidence in regional education. The minister must go.

Another commitment the then opposition made was to look at regional airfares. The government launched a tourism promotion called “Western Australia the Road Trip State”. It is not bad. I drive around. I like driving around. I drive around most of these places.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Better than flying.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** It is better than flying, and we simply do not have the ability to fly around. I do not particularly like flying in little planes, so I drive a lot. I thought this promotion was quite good. I had a look at the map. I do not know if members have seen it. Members on the other side probably have not, because they probably do not know where regional WA is! If one uses the map to drive up the coast, there is no Carnarvon and no Karratha! Member for Pilbara, there is no Karratha on the road map! It has suddenly gone. It has Exmouth and Port Hedland, but no Karratha. There is a little pineapple tree there, but I do not know if pineapples grow there. I think it is coming out of the member for Pilbara’s office! The point is that the government is missing towns on this road trip. It is missing the point here. It has missed out a town like Carnarvon, which just won a tourism award for best town with a population under 5 000. It is not on this map. There is no Karratha. The road map refers to Karijini National Park. The Karratha–Tom Price road starts at Karratha, which is not on the map, and goes to Tom Price, which is on the map. This is a road that the Shire of Ashburton has said that people should not use, because there is asbestos on the road. It is putting warnings out. What is the government doing about that? What is the government doing to clean up the asbestos from the royalties that were made by the state at that time from Wittenoom? Should the state not clean up the entire road to ensure that it is safe? The Shire of Ashburton just issued a warning to people to not travel along the Karratha–Tom Price road, which is known as the Roebourne–Wittenoom Road. The map shows a road trip to Karijini, but people are being advised to not drive out there because of the concerns the Shire of Ashburton has about asbestos.

How does that work? Under this government’s watch, we have some of the highest petrol prices we have seen in the last decade. It cannot blame the previous government for fuel prices. It is asking two people to get in a car, spend a fortune —

Several members interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** We have a campaign for a car trip, but we have high fuel prices, the longest distances possible and roads that people cannot drive on. I like the idea. I think the concept is sound, but we have high fuel prices. This campaign does not welcome people to travel north of Geraldton. They need the right equipment and the right vehicle.

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

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** North of Kalbarri, there is livestock on the road and there are dirt roads. People cannot take hire cars on dirt roads. For people to go to some of these places that are on the map, they need to have it set up nicely. What investment is the government making in hire car companies to ensure that people have the right safety

equipment so that lives are not jeopardised and volunteers are not put risk when they have to go out to these highways to pick up people? This could be avoided if the government acted on making airfares cheaper—fair fares for regional Western Australia. The government said that it would do an inquiry and look at how to reduce airfares. I hear the government has made some changes for Broome, Carnarvon and Monkey Mia, yet I still have not seen it act on the recommendations from the committee report. I think it is a very good report and I have said that in this place. It has recommendations that could have been a bit stronger, but there are recommendations. Where are they at? Has the government acted on them? If I wanted to fly to Karratha on Monday, 12 November, on a 7.20 am flight arriving at 9.25 am, how much do members think I would pay for a one-way fare? I would pay \$1 223 one way.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** That's to England, isn't it?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Yes, that is right! I thought I would check out other flights. These are the earliest flights on Monday, 12 November. The 6.20 am flight from Perth to Kalgoorlie costs \$467 one way. What does everyone think the cost is to Port Hedland? It is \$1 062 one way. To Paraburdoo, it is \$855 one way. Remember, this is for Monday, 12 November. To Exmouth, it is \$436 one way. To Carnarvon, it is \$413 one way. To Geraldton, it is \$202 one way. To Meekatharra, it is \$414 one way. To Esperance—the minister said the other day that the fares had gone down—it is \$560 one way.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** That's return to Sydney.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** That is one way, member for Cottesloe. To Albany, it is \$432 one way. To Shark Bay, it is \$563 one way. To Kununurra in the Kimberley, it is \$1 234 one way. I have heard a lot about Broome, so I thought I might fly there on Monday. Given how much the government has spruiked these airfares, I checked out how much that flight will cost. When I looked at the price of the flight to Broome leaving at 10.30 am and arriving at 1.05 pm—I could probably have my first beer at 1.05 pm because it would be nice there—I thought, “I can't afford to have a beer when I arrive because it's \$1 719 one way.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** You could have a glass of water.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I hope we get water on the plane, because we will not be able to afford a bottle of water when we arrive! A one-way flight to Broome costs \$1 719, yet the government has spruiked its reduced airfares to Broome and it now has an extra 10 000 tourists going there. That might be at certain times when they can book.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** The driving holiday works when you are going to the Swan Valley.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The driving holiday works when it is compared with these prices. These fares are for only one person. I hope people are single. I hope they are not married or have a girlfriend or a boyfriend, and I certainly hope they do not have kids. They better not have kids, because they certainly will not be able to afford to spend \$10 000—that is in my case—just to fly to Broome.

The report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee says that regional travel is an essential service. I think that is one of the biggest points: regional aviation is an essential service. But the prices that people have to pay are exorbitant. They are out of reach for many people; they cannot afford to do that. We know why tourist numbers are down in regional Western Australia. It is because they cannot afford to get there. What can be done? There are only two options in this case: either the government can regulate air flights, and it has regulated some routes but it does not impose any price conditions on those regulated routes, or it can go down the route that it has gone down for a very long time for people in the metropolitan route, and that is that it subsidises bus, train and ferry travel. That is what has occurred in the metropolitan area for a very long time. Nearly \$1 billion a year goes towards subsidising bus fares. If people want to get on a bus in Perth and go to Scarborough, it would normally cost \$20, but the subsidisation has reduced that cost because having a bus or train route in the city is an essential service. I agree with that. I fully support that. But our essential service is a plane. In that way, tourists could come to regional areas, and family and friends could come and visit or they could visit their family or friends in Perth or somewhere else. People should be able to afford to get on a plane and travel to see a medical specialist or whatever the case may be, but they cannot afford to do it.

There needs to be some action plan by this minister, who spruiked prior to the 2017 election that the Labor Party would reduce regional airfares. Some people in regional Western Australia believed that. Clearly, people in places like the Pilbara believed that, because we now have the Labor member for Pilbara. People are rightly upset that, under this government's watch, it costs \$1 223 to fly to Karratha and \$1 062 to fly to Port Hedland. The government cannot blame this on the previous government. These are the highest prices for flights I have seen in regional Western Australia, and that is only now. I would like to compare the prices that I read out today in Parliament with the prices in December, because the costs will be even higher. Under this government's watch, the cost of flights in regional Western Australia have gone up. It is smoke and mirrors. The government likes to portray that it is doing something about regional aviation and regional tourism, but it is going the other way. It is smoke and mirrors. Companies are doing deals with the government for \$200 fares. People may get a \$200 fare now and again, but these are the costs for a flight on Monday. It is absolutely ridiculous. Everyone in the south, no matter their political persuasion, should think that is ridiculous.

When it comes to the road trip state, people cannot afford to fly, so let us go to cars. There can be more than a 20c difference in the price of petrol from Monday to Tuesday. We are the only state where the price is hiked from Monday to Tuesday. I know that the price of petrol is out of the control of members opposite, but I think the cost of flights is within their control. Perhaps there needs to be an inquiry into why there is a variation in the price of petrol from Monday to Tuesday week after week. Why is it happening?

**Mr D.T. Punch** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Can the member for Bunbury just listen for once? There have been some Australian Competition and Consumer Commission investigations into fuel prices and there have been federal investigations and we have got nowhere. Perhaps the state government needs to hold a proper inquiry or a royal commission into fuel prices to look at why Western Australian prices vary so much and are some of the highest in the country. This affects the government's road trip and campaign of \$2.2 million. People cannot afford to fly anywhere in regional Western Australia, so tourism goes down. The government is asking people to drive to the north of the state, missing out on Karratha and Carnarvon because they are not on the map, and to try to travel down roads that the local shires advise people not to because they contain asbestos. What is the government doing about that? Nothing. We have the highest petrol costs, and over long distances safety is a real issue for tourists who do not know how to drive long distances with the livestock we have on our roads, to visit towns that are not on the map.

There needs to be an inquiry; we need to look at why fuel prices are so high. That is probably the only answer for travelling around regional Western Australia, because fuel prices are much cheaper than flying, but the driving prices are way too high compared with those in other states. What are we doing about it? I urge the state government to initiate a royal commission into fuel prices in this state. Federal governments of both political persuasions have failed to look at reducing fuel costs or to ask why we have the fluctuations that occur on Mondays and Tuesdays, when there is the same fuel in the tank. I do not understand. Perhaps the government can be proactive in looking at fuel prices. It is something that is not within its control, but let us work out ways in which we can control it. Under this government's watch, we are seeing the cost of transport grow in this state to the point at which it is affecting tourism and affecting people's ability to live and work in regional Western Australia.

That is probably why the member for Pilbara likes to see more mine camps. He does not want people living in the regions because that would mean that people would come and go, up and down, families would want to come and people would want to come and visit, and he knows that they would complain because of the cost of flights.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I think there is a bit of buyer's remorse when it comes to the member for Pilbara!

What is the Minister for Tourism doing? Is he speaking to the Minister for Transport and asking, "How can we look at subsidising, regulating or reducing airfares to make them fair, like we subsidise metropolitan transport in Perth?" We have to look at the cost discrepancies between Western Australia and the east coast. We have to look at the reasons why there is a difference in price between the metropolitan area and regional Western Australia. That is what the government should be inquiring into in respect of fuel prices. It is needed.

Perhaps all the funds are going into the government's signature policy of Metronet, so there is no money to subsidise regional airfares. Once Metronet is completed, I think it will double the amount of metropolitan subsidy that is needed from \$1 billion to \$2 billion. It just rolls off the tongue, those billions of dollars.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** Do you support Metronet?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I totally support it, absolutely, but the government needs to come up with how much it is actually going to cost taxpayers. That is where this policy falls down. Rolled-gold transparency was another of the government's election commitments, but when it comes to Metronet, it still cannot tell us how much it is going to cost. I cannot believe that the people of Western Australia are not jumping up and down about that. Perhaps that is where the new GST money is going to go. I think \$4.7 billion will come from the federal Liberal-National government, which has delivered a GST windfall for this state. Is that where the \$4.7 billion is going? Is it going into Metronet? Will it go towards paying off debt, or is it going into Metronet? Is the state government relying on the federal government to fund Metronet? If we look at the books, one book says it is going to be \$2.9 billion for the first two stages, so the government claims the stages. Is it the Forrestfield-Airport Link? I have a joint media statement released by the Premier and the Minister for Transport, which is headed —

METRONET team to design Belmont Station precinct

It states, further down —

- Forrestfield-Airport Link project jointly funded by the State (\$1.37 billion) and Federal (\$490 million) governments.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 7 November 2018]

p7964b-7990a

Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Shane Love

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This is the start of Metronet. We see this, the start of Metronet, the Forrestfield–Airport Link, but the other day when there were problems with the tunnelling and it stopped, it was the previous government’s fault. It was the previous government’s fault that the Forrestfield–Airport Link works came to a halt, but in this press release the government is taking credit for it, saying that it is the start of Metronet: “How good are we? We’ve already started.” When there is a problem, this minister blames someone else. I often tell my kids, “You can’t blame someone else. You always blame someone else for your problems or what you’ve done wrong; it’s always his fault or her fault.”

**Dr D.J. Honey:** The dog ate my homework.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** It is dog-ate-the-homework stuff. The government needs to take responsibility. When we come back to Parliament next year, the government will have been in office for two years. Will it still be saying that the previous Liberal–National government damaged the tunnel and ate the blueprints? That is what it is saying, and the people of Western Australia are getting sick of it; and if the Darling Range by-election is anything to go on, they were sick of it then. I have stood in this place before and said that three per cent will see eight seats go; four per cent will see, I think, 10. Four and a half per cent will see the government go. I think it was the Minister for Transport who talked about weak oppositions not keeping the government to account and that that leads to bad government. That may be true at the moment, but we will find our feet next year. We have a bad government at the moment because it is always everyone else’s fault when something goes wrong. When it comes to Metronet, the government cannot take credit for something and then, when something goes wrong, claim that it is not its fault. The Labor opposition hated the stadium; day after day the now Minister for Transport and then shadow minister for accountability, the member for West Swan, spoke out against the stadium, but when it was opened we saw smiles. The then opposition was also against Perth Children’s Hospital and the Ningaloo Centre on my patch, yet in government it could not wait to get a plaque on it and open it. The government is happy to take credit for Karratha Health Campus, which it actually had nothing to do with; it was done under the previous government. If anything goes wrong, it is the previous government’s fault; but if something goes right, “How wonderful are we? We’re opening the stadium.” We can see how the government blames everyone else, but it has been in office now for nearly two years, and that has worn thin, as we saw with the Darling Range by-election. People have had enough of the Labor government’s hypocrisy and mistruths, led by the Premier, who started the rot in the ministry.

I do not have time to get on to other ministers, like the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Corrective Services, the Minister for Water or the Minister for Police; I will let my other colleagues go through that. The list goes on. The Labor Party said one thing in opposition and has done another thing in government. It said it would keep royalties for regions; no, gone. It said it would not sell the TAB; gone. It said it would not privatise, but we have seen privatisation occur. It said it would not increase fees, charges and taxes, but we have seen the highs hike up. This is all from a Premier whose only form of attack is personal, and not only in this place. He calls people names and insinuates dreadful things that we do not want our kids, mums or dads or brothers and sisters to read. Constituents brush it off and say, “That’s politics. You are all mean and hate each other”, but it hurts when our families read some of the stuff said by the Premier of this state. It goes to the core of his character. I hope someone reads the speech and starts to realise that this person is not fit to lead the state, and that personal attacks are not good enough. If someone has gone to assault someone or intimate that they were going to move towards someone to hit them or whatever, if the Premier did not see it, it did not happen. It is disappointing that the Minister for Women’s Interests has not taken that up with the Premier; it is actually even more disappointing that a minister has backed the comments of the Premier, that, “I didn’t see it; it didn’t happen.”

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** That’s not what he said.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** He said it. Do you want to look at *Hansard*? I have it right here.

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** I am very happy to.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** “I didn’t see it; it didn’t happen.”

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** That is not what he said.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** He has verballed and attacked members of the public, like the community resource centre people, outside this place. They do not have the ability to defend themselves, apart from using us. I think that just shows how the rot on the mean-spirited Labor government side started with the Premier, and the ministers are following that rot because he is not a fit and proper person to lead that party or be around other people because of the mistruths and the way he attacks people’s character with no basis whatsoever. It is a great shame that we have to have this conversation in this Parliament about someone who should be standing above politics a lot of the time because he should act in a statesmanlike way. The Premier has not acted in any way like a statesman.

**MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services)** [5.01 pm]: I am very pleased to make a contribution to this debate. Nothing riles people on our side more than listening to the member for North West Central. As rambling as he can be about a number of issues, I was surprised at how much time he took

on this motion to talk about himself. I understand he makes crying crocodile tears an art form, but for him to talk about himself so much in this place while there are so many issues confronting our state says, I think, quite a bit about him as a person and the representative of his electorate.

It is incredible to have a motion today that claims that the McGowan Labor government is inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and guilty of politically fuelled decision-making, and that we have undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians. They are pretty extraordinary claims, so I am very keen to outline a couple of the achievements I have been responsible for and am in the process of implementing in my portfolio. The debates that have governed many of the areas I am responsible for can often be quite polarising and damaging to the people who are the subject of those debates and discussions. But importantly the people who come before me in my portfolio responsibilities of child protection and particularly the prevention of family and domestic violence are some of the more vulnerable in our state. I have been incredibly heartened by the support and effort on the part of the community sector and the hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers who operate throughout the sector, including the countless foster carers who step up to do work year after year. Even if they are feeling exhausted and are asked to step up again, they do. It has been incredibly heartening. I am keen to acknowledge those contributions to our community, but to also honour those contributions by redoubling our effort to achieve a sophisticated, evidence-based, long-term approach to dealing with some very challenging social problems that are very evident in our state. So I thought I would, in stark contrast to the rather pithy claims made in this motion about the McGowan government, outline some of the projects we are working on.

I will start by talking about our election commitments. In my portfolio areas of responsibility we took three specific commitments to the election. There was the supporting communities policy, Target 120, and a comprehensive policy titled “Stopping Family and Domestic Violence”. We consulted quite extensively with the community sector in the development of those commitments, and asked their peak bodies, as well as individual service providers, about their experience of working with government and their priorities for us as a party in contesting the election. The outcome of those consultations formed a large part of our election commitments. The supporting communities policy is a commitment to work in partnership with community services organisations to maximise the opportunities in the often-challenging work being done. If we are to tackle really challenging ongoing persistent problems like homelessness, domestic violence, working with vulnerable families and working with Indigenous disadvantage, by a long shot it will not be government that solves them or has all the answers. We have to work in partnership with community organisations that are working on those issues, and the community itself. I earlier mentioned volunteering, but there are people who formally or informally volunteer in many forms, and I am very keen to make sure that they are firmly at the table in dealing with the issues. That is what the supporting communities policy is about.

We have set up the supporting communities forum, which is a peak body with a number of directors general sitting alongside 14 community leaders. The community sector had a part in choosing those community leaders, and they will meet four times a year. It is coming up to 12 months since that body first met, just before Christmas last year, and it has been working on projects like procurement processes in government, data sharing linkages and what is needed in the sector, and how we can ensure that there are proper privacy considerations and propriety around that and that the benefits are realised. There is also an outcomes framework, so that our contracts are delivered not in outputs but are a clear articulation of the changes and what we expect to change as a result of those contracts.

I was very pleased to stand alongside the Treasurer; Minister for Finance when he launched the delivering community services in partnership policy. I always get a bit stuck on the name—it is so catchy. That policy goes to, for instance, five-year contracts as the default to make sure that there is co-design in tender criteria and outcomes and the like so that we are able to deliver on one of those election commitments. I urge the opposition to look at the supporting communities policy and then hold us to account, because we are absolutely getting on and delivering the components of that policy and working in partnership with peak bodies like the Western Australian Council of Social Service and the Women’s Council for Family and Domestic Violence Services, as well as individual services.

Target 120 is an innovative, challenging and ambitious early intervention juvenile justice project. The name arose because police had told us a number of times that if they could work with 120 of the most challenging families in our state in a proactive rather than reactive way they thought they could help turn around the possible life course for some young people in those families. I acknowledge people in this chamber, such as the member for Armadale, who helped work on that policy. That is where the name comes from. That project will target individuals usually between the ages of 10 and 14 who may have some foray into the juvenile justice system but have not been detained. Those young people and their families will be asked whether they would like to get involved on a voluntary basis with a community service provider to help work on some of the issues going on in their family—and regarding young people: Are they going to school, if not, what are the barriers? Are there housing difficulties? Would financial counselling help stabilise the situation at home? Does drug and alcohol work need to be done or are mental health interventions needed? It is important that Treasury will be working with us on that project to make sure we use a sophisticated tool across government rather than just community data, but working with police,

justice, health and education to target young people we approach for this program and that we use the same tools to assess the effectiveness of the intervention.

It is estimated that support provided to a young person and their family who have had multiple contacts with justice and other departments costs more than \$2 million over a young person's life. That is not only incredibly expensive but, sadly, we know that under the current system, it is probably quite ineffective. Target 120, a \$20.5 million commitment of new money in the budget announced in 2018, is the beginning of this project and we have announced the initial sites of Armadale and Bunbury. As I said, it is an ambitious project but I am determined to do what I can to work with a range of providers and across a range of agencies in government to get better outcomes for young people.

Members in this house will have heard me talk many times about family and domestic violence and a range of work needed in this area. We clearly made about 21 commitments at the election on our stopping family and domestic violence policy and we are getting on and implementing those policies. We have announced 10 days' leave for family and domestic violence victims who work in the public service and it has been great to see some private sector organisations in Western Australia follow that lead. For instance, Rio Tinto has since gone on to become White Ribbon accredited, which involves quite a rigorous process, particularly for an organisation that size. BHP and a number of banks have that policy in place after seeing the public sector, the state's biggest employer, put in place paid leave for family and domestic violence victims.

We are funding two additional women's refuges with work to commence shortly on those refuges. We have reinstated and expanded financial counselling with an extra \$7.4 million of funding. We provided funding for the RSPCA to support a pets-in-crisis program. We have joined the national Our Watch so we can leverage support through partnerships and access research and do the important preventive work that is relevant to all our communities. We are investing just under \$1.7 million to expand culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal services for victims of family and domestic violence. I should say that they are not services in themselves, but opportunities for us to better understand what are the services, the entry points and the ways we can better respond to Aboriginal as well as CALD victims of family and domestic violence. We are, of course, funding an additional breathing space and a behavioural change service for male perpetrators—a raft of issues. In fact, on 25 November we will commence the second 16 Days in WA, an opportunity for all of us to get involved, wear orange and hold some local meetings. I am sending information out to all members of this place and we have engaged with a number of agencies in the public and some in the private sector to make sure we all use the opportunity of 16 Days in WA to talk about the need for us to call out domestic violence and do what we can to stop it.

They are some of the commitments we took to the election. They hardly meet the criteria of inconsistent, mean spirited, reactionary or politically fuelled. I think members will agree that many of the benefits of the policies I have just read out will be either directly the beneficiary of or impacted throughout the whole state by these policies. Only a few weeks ago I was in Fitzroy Crossing talking to Emily Carter and her team, who work in the child and parent centre in the early childhood education centre up there. They are doing fantastic work and really understanding the importance of investing in the early years in that community. I am also going to visit the women's refuge to talk to them about those issues. These issues are felt in different ways, but felt very keenly across the state and I am determined that we have a good lens over the breadth of this issue across the whole state in dealing with them.

Some other issues are about a collaborative approach by our government and the principles unpinning our approach in government to the issues in my portfolio. Those principles are that we face complex issues in my portfolio such as domestic violence, child protection and homelessness, as I mentioned before. Our approach to these issues needs to be strategic and collaborative, as I have mentioned, and it needs to be focused on the vulnerable individuals, their families and their communities. I think most of us acknowledge now that it is just not good enough to expect that some of those vulnerable people and vulnerable families should traverse their way across myriad service providers or sectors and make their way through the system to get the support they need. Sadly, they do not work their way through the system; they fall through the cracks. If given in the right way and for long enough, services or assistance could be effective but are just not meeting the target. We need to make sure the vulnerable individuals and their families, and at times their whole communities, are the centre of our approach and we work around them and not expect them to work their way around government systems and the community sector. I think our changes manifested in the machinery of government reforms reflect that. The coming together of the previous Housing Authority, Disability Services Commission, child protection, family support and community services in one department gives us the capacity to work with some vulnerable families and communities. I see the member for Warren–Blackwood across the chamber. He knows from his regional reform work that this is absolutely what is needed. To give credit where it is due, the previous Liberal–National government, I think, did an appalling disservice to Aboriginal people in a range of initiatives but when it finally found its feet with the regional reform project, I think it was very sound. We have not thrown away old projects if we think they are good. I have not thrown away projects in my portfolio if I thought they were good approaches. By and large, that approach has

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demonstrated the machinery-of-government changes in our department, whereby we think coming together and making sure we have an ability for benefits of scale as well as a joined-up approach are very important.

Another example of collaboration is the announcement we made in March this year that the state government, the Minderoo Foundation and the Telethon Kids Institute would work together on a \$49.3 million investment into a long-term early childhood initiative—the early years initiative. Many members in this place will be aware that there has been a lot of talk for a much more strategic approach to the early years, and we do that in part. We have some particularly good universal services but we absolutely need to be a lot more ambitious in our work in the early years. This is an opportunity for us to do that. It is a 10-year project. It is not something that many governments sign on to do. We will report on that every three years so there will be some public accountability and an opportunity, if things are working, to perhaps scale them up. That has the elements of philanthropic contributions, which I think we would all agree is always very welcome. The Telethon Kids Institute will bring proposals for best practice around the world and also an ability to track the changes in approach, but significantly a commitment by government to do things differently in those four communities—the Minister for Health is nodding his head—and education will be there. We need to work with zero—conception—to four-year-old children. That is pre-birth to four years of age. We need to do things differently and then see how we go. If what we are doing now is not working, we have to step back and be agile, and be prepared to do things differently. That is the early years initiative.

I will mention a couple of other initiatives. The sum of \$20 million in new money will go to the consortium of Aboriginal-controlled organisations led by Wungening Aboriginal Corporation to provide Aboriginal in-home support in the metropolitan area. Those services will include guiding and mentoring parents on managing the day-to-day tasks in the home; meeting children’s needs and keeping families safe and together; developing routines so parents regularly get their children to school; and, if needed, getting assistance for alcohol and drug issues, the impacts of significant intergenerational displacement and trauma, homelessness and the like. We are excited about that project but we need to work alongside Wungening and that consortium. It is not a case in which communities will hand over those families and say, “They are up to you now.” We will continue to work with district officers in child protection work and make sure that there is a sharing of knowledge and experience.

We have also spoken many times about our commitment to financial counselling. If there has ever been a great example of early intervention and its benefits, it is financial counselling. I see that time and again. I went to the Financial Counsellors Association of Western Australia awards just the other night. It was a great event.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood)** [5.22 pm]: I rise to support the motion that has been read into the house this afternoon by the member for North West Central, which states —

That this house condemns the ministers of the McGowan government whose inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and politically fuelled decision-making has undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians.

That is absolutely appropriate. We are at the halfway point now. We have another two weeks of —

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

**Mr D.T. REDMAN**: It is probably a good thing I did not hear the member for Armadale.

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

**Mr D.T. REDMAN**: We have two more weeks of Parliament after this week. That is probably the halfway mark of this government’s term. It is a good time to take stock of where things are at. Every government gets a little goodwill from the community—it gets a honeymoon period. As the member for North West Central maintained, things are starting to move. We want to highlight at this time a number of issues we have been through that we think merit some public attention, and give some pretty solid reflection on the performance of some of these government ministers who, in our view, are showing signs that the wheels are starting to fall off.

The house will recall my commentary over a number of weeks about the wave energy project in Albany. Yes, it was an election commitment. I would almost call it election commitment fraud with what has happened because it is a total change from what the good people of Albany thought was going to happen in their community. They thought they were going to have a wave farm off the coast but now they have a nice little research and development project not doing much at all. We also saw how the government, through that project, managed a process that landed Carnegie Clean Energy with the outcome. In reality, it was the only company that could have won the project, given the procurement process, because it had sole rights to waters off the coast of Albany, which is where the government defined it wanted to have the wave farm project.

A whole range of significant issues emerged including a budget of nearly \$16 million towards the project that was going to leave a legacy of what I described as an extension cord going out into the ocean. That, in my view, will be a stranded asset. It will produce only one megawatt of energy for one year for nearly \$16 million. It will be an

absolute disaster. There are a lot of other priorities, including one that I will talk about in a minute, that could well do with those sorts of resources and will make a difference to the people of regional Western Australia. The company that the Minister for Regional Development was dealing with missed its first milestone, which is the first measure of whether a company is going to perform, if one is going to engage with it and give it some money. The first milestone it missed was at the end of June this year. The government went into negotiations very quickly with that company to manage what was starting to fall apart. In fact, it came to an agreement for half the milestone payment. The milestone payment was just over \$5 million. A negotiated outcome of \$2.5 million was reached at a point in time. What was really interesting about that is at the same time we saw through the media a whole range of issues in and around the company concerned; issues that I know should have triggered a minister's concern for the capability of the company to deliver the project. We saw writedowns in the financials, we saw the CEO resigning and we saw two other senior members of the company resigning. There were a whole range of very clear signals. We know the minister met with the company because I have a freedom of information request to say that there was a meeting. It did not have an agenda attached to it, but there was certainly a meeting. I can guess what the discussion may well have been.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Roe, you need to seek permission to walk in front of the speaker.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Attached to the \$2.5 million payment that the minister signed off on, which was half the first milestone payment, the minister also said, "You've got nine weeks to prove your capacity to deliver the project." When she signed off on \$2.5 million to Carnegie Clean Energy the minister did not know, and is still seeking confirmation, whether the company has the financial capacity to deliver the outcome. Just bank that position. Carnegie has already banked \$2.5 million of taxpayer funds. It has still not convinced the minister that it has the financial capacity to deliver that project. Bank that and let us compare and contrast that with this other project—the Busselton airport project. The member for Vasse was in the chamber. She has also done a bit of FOI work on this and raised a range of issues about the concerns the state government has about promoting tourism in the state and it clearly having a negative view in and around the Busselton airport delivering an outcome. I also received information after an FOI request that highlights the government effectively mobilising the South West Development Commission to play a role in watching and managing the project and, to use a word that was written by the CEO of the development commission, to "interrogate" the project. I recognise also, through the review that occurred on the project, that in fact the City of Busselton has a range of rights because it signed a financial assistance agreement to pursue that project. Of course, the FOI request delivered a pretty comprehensive sort of document. There is a lot to it. Part of that process was the South West Development Commission, which is the arm of the minister, setting up two groups—a governance committee and a project control group—ensuring that the city meets its particular targets in the commitments it has and the financial agreements it has in the financial assistance agreement. That is there and it is progressing that.

When I read through this, there are a couple of key issues. Despite the government trying to pull money back from the project, it effectively delivered on the air side of the project. That means the airstrip has been upgraded to take the big planes from the east coast and will potentially be an alternative landing point for planes that might come into Perth, if they have landing problems. That has been upgraded. A whole range of civil works have been done, but the one component that the minister will not allow the city to progress is the terminal building on the land side—a \$10 million project funded out of the regional airports development scheme, which is under the Minister for Transport. I understand that it is under a different agreement, but it is an agreement that should be delivering funds to the City of Busselton to build that project. That is the bit the minister does not particularly like. The argument the Premier put today was the same as the minister. He said, "Why would we support building this terminal when we have not got commitments for an airline to deliver services from the east coast into Busselton?" But I highlight that this is a chicken-and-egg-type scenario. It needs to be demonstrated that there is the capability to manage that and it needs to be shown that there is the investment and a terminal capable of taking those people. We know that the South West Development Commission did the work to get themselves ready for this. This is the little piece that is missing. We should compare and contrast that with what we are seeing with the Carnegie Wave Energy project in Albany where \$16.5 million is being burnt—that is what is happening—to deliver next to nothing. At best it will deliver a megawatt of energy for one year—that is it! We should compare and contrast that with what is happening in Busselton. I was concerned. The minister has tasked the commission with watching the project closely, and to engage and to look at the governance and feedback information as necessary. In the information that I got through freedom of information, a couple of things were interesting. I know that back at the end of January and the start of February this year, when the City of Busselton was progressing with the tendering of the terminal building, which is a part of its contract and its absolute right to progress, that the contract had been let and signed and was then shut down by the minister. I was interested to know how that played out and how it had actually happened. A project governance committee was set up in order to progress the contract and I have the minutes of one of its meetings held on 22 January 2018. In fact, it was chaired by the development commission, and those minutes go into detail about the process. It was chaired by the acting chair of the South West

Development Commission, Rebecca Ball. It talks about a few signals in and around the terminal building. It states on page 5 of the minutes —

Assessment of tenders underway with award expected in early February.

Nick asked if it would be better to move forward with award of the Terminal tender hand in hand with an airline commitment.

That is Nick Belyea who is the chair of the South West Development Commission. It continues —

Naomi —

She is one of the City of Busselton staff members—Naomi Searle if I remember correctly. It goes on —

advised that this had been considered previously as part of the VOR and cited some of the reasons this path wouldn't be viable, including:

- Waiting would likely lose competitiveness and increase costs
- Tender validity timeframe would lapse
- Construction would end up commencing in winter – more time lost
- Existing terminal is only a very temporary solution

They are very good reasons. That was the extent of the discussion at that particular meeting. There was an attachment to those minutes, which highlighted the time line the city was going to work through. It talks about the tender award and contractor engagement starting on Wednesday, 31 January. We know that the tender and contract were approved by council on 31 January and signed the next day on 1 February. We know that the minister had a meeting with the City of Busselton on 3 February and told the City of Busselton to pull the tender—to pull the contract or pull the project. I then wondered where the advice was to the minister from the commission, which was engaged at a pretty heavy level. When I read through the notes that I received under freedom of information, I found an email dated 5 February from Rebecca Ball of the South West Development Commission to Cole Thurley, who is the chief of staff for the Minister for Regional Development. It highlights that the chief executive officer of the City of Busselton advised the South West Development Commission that the tenders had already been awarded to Pindan and a contract had been signed on 1 February. The City of Busselton then made an announcement in the public domain. This was the first time that the South West Development Commission had been advised that the tender assessment process had concluded and that the successful applicant had been determined, advised and contacted. I have confirmed that with a question on notice in the upper house—that happened around 5 February. The scuttlebutt on the ground was that the chief executive officer of the development commission attended on 2 February a forum in Bunker Bay run by Australia's South West, our tourism operators. A number of people were there from the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, obviously the City of Busselton, all the chambers of commerce in the region, the south west wine industry and the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association. It was quite a substantial forum. One announcement on that day was that the tender for the terminal was signed and contracted. It was not mentioned who won the contract, which was to be announced at a later date, but that the contract had been signed off. Of course, in attendance was the CEO of the South West Development Commission. I put the following question to the Premier: why did the minister tell us that she did not know about this until 5 February when in fact the CEO was apparently in attendance at a function on 1 February and the Premier said they were not aware of that announcement being made? The minister flew down south very quickly on Saturday, 3 February. She had a meeting with the City of Busselton and presumably was not aware of the tender being signed, because that can be found in a note she made on the bottom of a briefing note I have here. She basically told the city that it had to pull the project. The cost of pulling a contract that had been signed two days prior would be one per cent of the project's cost.

The motion that the member for North West Central has brought into Parliament condemns a minister of the McGowan government whose inconsistencies and mean-spirited, reactionary and politically fuelled decisions leave a lot to be desired. This is a good example of that. A minister, and by extension her agency, because she has to take responsibility for her agency, should have been or may have been aware of the tender process and the tender being signed. She raced down and told the city to pull the contract two days after it was signed at a cost of one per cent of the project cost, which was about \$12.5 million. I find that process deplorable. How can we possibly have confidence in the Minister for Regional Development managing any project around the state when she has messed up a project like this? Members should compare and contrast that with the wave energy project in Albany. She has given that project \$2.5 million even though she does not know whether the company is financially capable of managing it. In this case, she has gone out of her way to get the project pulled or stopped two days after it was signed because her government is not in a position to get the right information to make a good decision.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Isn't the chairman a former staffer? Is Nick Belyea a former staffer?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** He is the chairman. I am not sure of the chairman's position, but I know that he was certainly cited as someone who had experience in the airline sector. There are three reasons for me struggling to accept that the minister could not have been informed about the project being signed. One is the minutes of the meeting that show the time frame of what was going to happen, the second is that she attended Australia's South West forum and the third is that it was also in the minutes for the City of Busselton's council meeting. They are three good reasons that she, and by extension her agency, should have been aware of that. She has flown down and made a kneejerk response and it is absolutely not acceptable. Do members know what else? There was someone else at that Australia's South West forum who would have known or had some understanding of what happened: the member for Bunbury. I heard that the member for Bunbury was at Bunker Bay. Was the member for Bunbury there? It was held on 2 February and it was the Australia's South West forum at Bunker Bay.

**Mr D.T. Punch:** I was committed to my electorate, member for Warren–Blackwood.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The member was not there. I thought he was there. I heard a whisper. The member is in *Hansard* now. For *Hansard*'s sake, the member has said that he was not there.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** Member for Warren–Blackwood! You are inciting disorderly conduct.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Those two projects alone are giving us a pretty clear picture of a minister who has taken a very reactionary approach that is, I would argue, politically fuelled. Certainly the Busselton airport project was a project that the Liberal–National government put in place and the Albany project was Labor's project. One is a dud and one is not. The minister is backing the dud, not the one that in our view should get the support of government to be transformational for the south west.

I will move on. The Minister for Corrective Services has had more headlines than the Hindenburg. We have walked through a range of issues that they talked about when in opposition about overcrowding, budget restrictions, rundown prisons and the challenge of meeting demand funding and program funding within prisons. We even talked about a couple of challenges under Murray Cowper when he was minister in terms of the Banksia Hill Detention Centre issues. Then we heard a quote from *Hansard* of the Premier saying when he was in opposition that we should be responsible.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The then shadow minister, the member for Cockburn, and the then shadow Minister for Tourism said that it was the then government's fault and that it should take responsibility. But of course they go over to the other side and what do they do? They do not say that the government should take responsibility; they put it back on us and say it was our problem. They are not taking any responsibility whatsoever. That was a big point the member for North West Central made in his contribution to the debate. It is an absolutely sound point, because at some point the public sentiment around that will shift. That is coming.

I will make an interesting point about the member for Cockburn, the Minister for Corrective Services, which I did not quite have time to do the other day. I remember talking about his response to two issues. There were issues in Acacia Prison. I will quote an article from page 16 of *The Sunday Times* of 16 September 2018. It says here —

Corrective Service Minister Fran Logan warned Serco —

So there were obviously issues with what Serco was doing —

that he expected “any private operator of a taxpayer-funded facility to adhere to their contract, which includes the proper management of staff”.

“I will be meeting with Serco soon to discuss a number of concerns with its operation of Acacia prison,” he said.

The minister said he would meet with Serco soon to talk about its management of Acacia Prison. We know his position on Serco, the private operator, albeit that it is one of the most efficient deliverers of corrective services into prisons in Western Australia. Of course, we can compare and contrast that with a Corruption and Crime Commission investigation, which the member for Dawesville raised in this house recently. The minister's public response to that was cited in the paper of 27 October 2018 —

Mr Logan said he shared the concerns of the CCC and expected his department to work “expeditiously” to address the matters raised.

He did not talk about racing down there and giving them what for about what went wrong—a CCC report—but of course Serco does a couple of things wrong and he is going to race down and give it what for. How can we possibly have confidence in this minister to manage the prisons when he presided over what I understand was the biggest escape in Western Australia's prison history? He needs to be held to account for that. We know the temperature is going up in prisons. The heat is certainly going up on this minister.

Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Shane Love

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I also pulled out the Labor policy platform on corrective services. There were a couple of interesting points. Point 93, in a fairly extensive Labor Party platform on corrective services, says —

WA Labor believes that prisons, juvenile detention centres and prisoner transportation and other corrective services should:

- a) operate under established international best practice;
- b) be sufficiently resourced and staffed to ensure the safety of staff, prisoners and the wider community; and
- c) be operated at the same standard and with the provision of required services, regardless of location ...

I go on. Point 96 states —

The capacity of the prison system should be expanded to: meet demand; prevent overcrowding; ...

Failure! We know that the Treasurer has identified corrective services as one of his significant risks. We have a minister supporting a Labor Party platform that says a lot of stuff that the government is actually not delivering. Under the heading “Rehabilitation”, point 102 states —

WA Labor will ensure that prisoners are provided with appropriate programs in a timely manner in accessible locations to maximise rehabilitation outcomes, reduce recidivism and ensure that prisoners re-join society in a productive way upon release.

Failure! This minister has failed the test of his commitments and the Labor Party’s commitments going into the election. He has more headlines than the Hindenburg. He has presided over the most significant prison breakout in recent history. Now the Premier is backing him to be able to work through the CCC recommendations, which quite rightly we have a substantial struggle in accepting.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Can I ask a question?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I do not have much time.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Are you going to have a go at me? Because if not, I will leave.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I do not have the Leader of the House on my list, because the drivers like him.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The drivers like me! On that note, I will leave!

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I do not have the Leader of the House on my list.

The Minister for Housing is someone who comes into this place and likes to make big statements. He likes to make statements that make it look like he is in charge. Being in charge is as much about perception as it is about reality. He likes to make those big statements about being in charge. I remember him coming in here and having a go at the lack of federal funds for housing in remote Aboriginal communities. What did he say? He said, “We might have to think about closing some of these down.” That is what he said in public. Members know what happened when Colin Barnett said that—they had marches in the streets of Melbourne. There are a couple of reasons why he says it and nothing happens. One is that probably no-one believes him. He is incapable of managing the portfolio. But what a statement to make. I am pretty certain that it is not one that would be reflected on the backbench of the Labor Party, but that was the statement he made. What is more, he has been presiding over a very targeted campaign towards the federal government to shame it into delivering funds into Western Australia for remote housing.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have supported it. I have said that publicly. I said that up at the Yule River meeting. I have said that to the Treasurer on a number of occasions. I have actually made representations to Nigel Scullion.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Why are you complaining?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Government members do not need to question my commitment. I do not have much time, Deputy Premier.

There is another interesting point in and around this issue of federal funding. I have a letter to the minister, Nigel Scullion, from Hon Peter Tinley. It was dated 11 June this year. I quote from the paragraph at the bottom of the first page, where it says —

I have also recently received your letter dated 24 May 2018 setting out a formal offer from the Commonwealth for additional funding of \$60.9 million, which reflects our discussions when we met in Canberra in March. I will table this offer with my Cabinet colleagues and will respond formally as soon as possible.

He went over there and negotiated the outcome, again, I am sure, with strong leadership and big statements across the other side of the table. He came back and wrote the letter, which he signed on 11 June. He said, “Yep. Bewdy! That reflects our chat. I’m going to take that to cabinet.” We know what happened then. We know that he went into cabinet and the Treasurer said, “Get nicked; go away! We don’t buy this. We want more.” The Treasurer did not accept it.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Let’s play politics!

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** He said, “Let’s play politics.” The minister signed that letter to Nigel Scullion—take note, it was dated 11 June—in which he accepted a funding arrangement that he had negotiated. Six days before that, on 5 June, an email was sent by Darren Foster, the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, to a bunch of people, including being cc’d to the minister. It went to Simon Ward and Howard Pedersen—I do not particularly know those people. It was about the Don’t Walk Away campaign and says —

Kick off for the above campaign is now likely to be the weekend of 24 June.

The next bit was blotted out—I do not know whose names are there. Such and such had —

... agreed to be in the ads, and we’ll try to enlist four others.

Six days prior to the minister signing off a letter, he was cc’d into an email from the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet which, in my view, amazingly gave remarkably detailed attention and effort to a campaign against the federal government to shame it into putting money into remote housing for Aboriginal people. What do we think is going to happen to the relationship? They were going to do it anyway. The minister got the good letter. He failed to deliver that through cabinet and failed to get the support of the Treasurer. It was a position that he negotiated. At the same time, a politically motivated campaign was being run to have a crack at the federal government. That absolutely stinks. How can the government possibly think that it is going to win people over? This letter says all the right things; this email does not. This campaign was funded out of taxpayer funds, including single ads to the tune of \$40 000 to \$50 000 in an eastern states paper, to shame the federal government into doing it. I tell members what: if I was a minister on the receiving end of that, I would almost say, “Get stuffed!” Everyone here would do that, too. It is not what one buys into to build relationships. The Premier has been crowing about how he builds relationships. This is what has happened with this minister. I think that is absolutely wrong. The Premier deserves to be condemned for it.

The Minister for Housing has made a couple of other faux pas. They include a great little meeting he had with the Urban Development Institute of Australia. He went out there again, I am sure with this bravado, “I’m going to take the issue of the foreign buyers’ tax, which you have raised with me, to the Treasurer, and I think it should be deferred.” That is because he would have been hearing from them what we are now reading about in the paper, namely that there are some challenges with the cuts that have been made by the current government to the first home buyer scheme and what that is doing to the demand for housing in this state. We know how that is now playing out in reality. The minister came in here and I asked him the question, and he fumbled around the answer. The minister makes big statements to small groups in private, but he cannot stand up to be counted when it comes to making statements that make a difference and are meaningful to his portfolio area. He is another minister who does not have a good track record. The big statements do not count. What counts is what they achieve. That is sadly lacking from this minister.

In my last couple of minutes, purely because other colleagues want to talk about some of these issues, I will talk about the camp schools in my electorate. That is a significant issue. Two of the six camp schools that will be closed are in my electorate, at Bridgetown and at Pemberton. The feedback that I am getting about the maturity of the transition from these facilities being government run to being run by Fairbridge is appalling. We are hearing that the bookings that should be in place have not been put in place, purely because people have not been able to secure confidence about the pricing arrangements. We are hearing that there will be staffing issues in managing the camps. I even heard from one person that if the camp schools are not staffed, they will run a busload of people up from Pinjarra to run the camp schools. I am sure the communities in which those camp schools operate would be rapt about that. A lot needs to happen with these camp schools. This government has effectively said it will take—was the number \$3.5 million? Was that the cost of the camp schools?

**Mr R.S. Love:** Yes, as a subsidy.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The government is effectively taking that away and giving those camp schools to Fairbridge for nothing, and asking it to run them and deliver the same services. That is what the commitment was. Something has to give. It will either be the service, or it will be the cost to students, many of whom live in disadvantaged areas, to access what is a fundamental enrichment to their educational opportunities. That is very sad. We will certainly be watching this closely. I predict that it will fall over at some time. If that happens, we will go straight to the government and ask it to reinstate what it had before, because that is the commitment that it made.

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands — Deputy Speaker)** [5.52 pm]: This is a good opportunity to make a few comments on this motion. When I read the motion moved by the member for North West Central, I thought if I just changed a couple of words, I could speak very easily about what happened in this house over the last eight years before we came to power. When I read “That this house condemns the ministers”, I could easily insert after those words, “of the former Liberal and National government”, because their inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and politically-fuelled decision-making has undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians. Indeed, I think that is why 40 of us are now sitting in the lower house. That is exactly what the former government did over a very long time.

I remember that for my first six months in this place, the member for North West Central was in fact a Labor Party member. When I first came into this place, Hon Eric Ripper had been the Treasurer of this state for some time, and for about nine of those years he had delivered a number of budget surpluses. I remember what he did with electricity prices. I am extremely clear about this, because I quizzed him about this a lot. I had come straight out of the community sector. We had run a major consumer utilities project and were very cognisant of the impact of rising electricity prices on vulnerable Western Australians. So I was very keen to find out what Eric Ripper had put aside to smooth out or provide a glide path for electricity price increases, because he knew they were coming. He had put aside about \$200 million specifically to provide a glide path as electricity prices increased over those seven years. However, what did former Premier Colin Barnett do in one of his early decisions? I remember it well. He started to fight for the James Price Point project. All the money that had been put aside by Eric Ripper to help Western Australians manage the increases in electricity prices was suddenly deflected towards fighting for James Price Point. Time has passed. We know what the outcome of that was. However, really, when we talk about mean-spirited decisions, that money could and should have been spent, in my view anyway, on cushioning the impact of power increases over that seven-year period, not thrown willy-nilly into a project that was doomed to fail because it was causing so much community angst and had so many economic outcomes attached to it. When that project eventually collapsed, the state was a couple of hundred million dollars worse off. That was just the start of some of the mean-spirited decisions perpetrated by the Liberal and National Parties, because the Nationals were in government with the Liberal Party at the time.

I will not spend the whole of my 30 minutes talking about the past. I will also talk about the things that are happening now. However, I could not help but remember during the eight years of the former government the money that was wasted on the local government amalgamation process. That is my personal favourite. I saw the City of Bayswater waste \$1 million of ratepayers’ money on that process. I have no idea of the total dollar cost of the former government’s decision to force local governments to amalgamate. A bunch of local governments wanted to do that and were ready to do it, but, by crikey, at the end of that government’s appalling process they were all so shell-shocked that they will probably never think about it again. A huge amount of resources were used in that local government amalgamation process. Poor old Hon Tony Simpson! Talk about getting the bad side of that deal. He had to try to sell that. Quite rightly, it all fell over. I felt sorry for Tony.

I also remember some of the former government’s mean-spirited decisions that impacted directly on my constituency and in particular on my community base and contacts within the community sector. The former government took a huge amount of funding from financial counselling services. If that was not enough, the then Treasurer, Christian Porter, also decided to cut the hardship utility grant program. Really! There were no longer any places to which vulnerable people in this state could go for help. They had to cop it every which way because of those kinds of decisions. I do not think there is any justification for not considering these decisions as mean spirited. I remember that the former government cut the funding for paupers’ funerals. That is another of my personal favourites. Do members remember that?

Several members interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I was struggling to listen to members on that side of the house accuse us of being mean spirited! He reinstated that and put the money back in, because there was such a huge hue and cry. But what was he thinking?

I remember some of the other decisions made under the former government’s watch. When the former Liberal Premier put up power prices, he said to people that they should turn off their air conditioner. That was not mean spirited, was it? I hope he had misspoken. I hope he had just put his foot in his mouth. He could not have really believed that was an alternative for the vulnerable in our community. That was an outrageous statement at the time. He then did some things that are indefensible, such as the expenditure on the Roe 8 program. We discussed that in this house today. That is a bit of a dead issue for us. We won government and we are going ahead with the changes that we announced. When I think of MAX, I think that that was a bit of a politically driven decision. I always want to make the sheep noise to go with MAX. That is the list that I had a chance to put together off the top of my head when I was thinking about mean-spirited decisions. Then I started to think about the kinds of things that we have been doing.

Members opposite have described in great depth specific actions that they allege have been taken by the Premier. That is fine. But I will talk about some positive things that I know my government has been involved in delivering.

I will go through them chronologically. In the time that I have left, I want to talk about the funding that was reinstated for community financial counselling services for people who most need support. In the corner of my electorate is Morley. The money that has been put back into this service thanks to a Labor government is not mean spirited. That is what should have happened. I remember comments from the minister at the time that financial counselling services in the Perth metropolitan region had been forced to turn away more than 3 000 requests for assistance in the second half of 2016. By anyone's count, that is an unacceptable outcome. The previous government took \$1.5 million out of that program. I am very pleased to say that we put it back and we now have a service that vulnerable people can access to make sure that they do not go to the wall during times of stress.

There is a program that I am proud to be part of and proud to have seen rolled out. I say this because I sit next to the member for Armadale, who has decided to leave the chamber just as I am about to put this forward, so I hope he is listening somewhere. When we were in opposition, we spent a great deal of time working on family and domestic violence policy, issues and programs to strengthen our approach to tackling family and domestic violence. At the time, the member for Armadale made some very good suggestions about policies that we could put in place, and I am very proud to say that most of those have now been actioned. There is now 10 days of family and domestic violence leave for public sector employees. We do not like to think about the fact that we might be working with people who are experiencing family and domestic violence, but I can guarantee that we are working with people who are experiencing it. We might never know because they may never talk about it. Similarly, I hope that the private sector takes on board the commitment that we have made and considers putting it into some of the agreements for their staff. This is a scourge in our community. We have a horrendous death rate because of it. In the last couple of months, there have been some truly dreadful incidents in my electorate that I do not want to talk about because they have been so widely covered by the media that there is no point in me elaborating further.

I am proud to point to the tenancy law changes to support victims of domestic violence. In December 2017, there were extensive tenancy reforms to support, not penalise, victims. I want to specifically go through some of the reforms. Victims are now allowed to deal directly with a landlord or property manager without having the perpetrator's consent, which does happen. A tenancy agreement can be terminated by providing the landlord with evidence of domestic violence, such as a restraining order or a letter from a medical professional. People can stay in their home if they choose. They will be able to apply to court to have the perpetrator's name removed from the tenancy agreement. There are provisions to deal with property damage, unpaid rent, disbursement of bond et cetera to ensure that victims do not carry the financial burden after a tenancy ends. Finally, people can change locks without having to wait for permission from a landlord. These are simple things. When I ran the Western Australian Council of Social Service's consumer utilities project, we had a very close relationship with Western Power's credit management system. We would speak to Western Power often about the need for policies to stop the carryover of debt that a woman, usually, would find herself in if the marriage broke down or there was a family violence situation and the partner left the home. When things were finally sorted and she would look for another property to move into, she would find that she could not get the water or power connected because she had a residual debt. We used to speak a lot about that. I am very proud and very happy that that strategy has become operational since we have been in government.

Of course, there is also the National Redress Scheme. The Attorney General, John Quigley, and the Minister for Child Protection have been part of forming the apology and looking at the strategy into the future. Those members who were here in the previous term of government will know that I chaired the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People. At the time, we did an extensive examination of the Blaxell report and the recommendations that were to be implemented as a result of the abuses that took place in Katanning. It is an issue very near and dear to my heart. Last week I and the Leader of the National Party and our colleagues in the upper house, Hon Alison Xamon and Hon Donna Faragher, opened the Parliamentary Friends for Children group to make sure that everything to do with children is always near to the hearts of parliamentarians. I look forward to working on that with those members into the future.

We have of course reinstated the hardship utility grant scheme program, which I have mentioned before. That program has to be managed carefully because, if it is not, there are opportunities for a bit of skulduggery to happen, as there always is with programs that aim to help the most in need. With the right management, it will be fine.

I have mentioned the Morley-based financial counselling service. That is a partnership between UnitingCare West and Blue Sky Community Group. It is going very well as a partnership. The service has a lot of referrals, which is distressing, but it is good that it is able to provide help to people and to help them see the future a bit more positively.

The final thing I want to talk briefly about on this subject is the Pets in Crisis program. Members will know that this was very much my commitment when we were working on family and domestic violence projects. The link between violence and abuse and family and domestic violence is extremely well documented. The Pets in Crisis program provides a safe haven for the pets of, generally, women who are escaping family violence. Abusers often harm or threaten pets as a way to control, intimidate and frighten their victim. All of us know that too many people stay in that situation because of the threats to the pets. I went to the opening of a project called My Saving Grace

several years ago, which is an online service to deal with the issues around family and domestic violence and the abuse of pets. I am very proud that we have been able to fund that through the RSPCA.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Pets in Crisis is run by RSPCA WA. People need a referral from a domestic violence shelter, and Pets in Crisis will find a foster home for their pets. The very last thing people in that situation should have to worry about is the health and safety of animal members of their family while trying to deal with children and their own health, safety and protection. It is great to know that by going through the right process, a foster carer can be found for a pet that might otherwise be left behind. Thank you very much to the McGowan Labor government for making sure that the Pets in Crisis program has been funded. It will have the capacity to take in another 30 family pets over the next 12 months. I am sorry to say that that is probably just the tip of the iceberg because I hear all the time from rescue groups about the demand for services like this.

I turn to another policy that I am exceptionally proud of being involved in and one that I worked really hard on in a bipartisan capacity all the way back in 2015, when the first report was put together by an independent group. I was part of that group and I pulled it together, but all members were politically independent people. We produced a report into the puppy farming industry in Western Australia and why we need it to stop. We took that report to the Premier of the day, Colin Barnett, and briefed him fully on its contents and recommendations. He was absolutely charming—I know he loves animals—but he did absolutely nothing. So we took it to the then Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, who read through it and—possibly because he has to face me in caucus every week; I am not sure about that—started to take this issue very seriously. He understood the capacity and role that companion animals play in family lives. He certainly recognised that no-one wants to see puppies bred illegally. For anyone who sits in this house who is opposed to stopping puppy farming, I think they had better have another look at their ethics and moral code.

That policy is now 12 months into implementation, and we have just finished the consultation process with the public of Western Australia. Members formerly involved in ministries might remember the numbers that come back after a consultation paper is put out. We probably get 300 or 400 replies—1 000 submissions is really great. We had nearly 5 000 public submissions after calling for comments on the puppy farming policy. That is no mean feat. Anyone in this house who thinks this is not an issue had better have another a serious look. Nearly 5 000 people said this policy needs to go ahead. In the next 12 months I hope to be able to brief all members so that everyone understands what is involved. Not everybody will be 100 per cent happy, of course, but we think we are onto a winner with the strategy. The strategy has four legs—which is always good for a puppy farming policy—that I am sure we will go into in some detail with members of his house a bit later on.

In the little time left I want to thank the Minister for Local Government for his work in this area. It was with some trepidation that he realised that local government would be charged with progressing the stop puppy farming policy, and he did blanch a little during the early stages. I am proud to say he has picked up the ball and run very hard with it and he has been a pleasure to work with. I thank the Minister for Local Government. I also thank all the major companion animal groups that have been with me throughout this process. Dogs West has been at the table since 2015—fantastic! Yes, it has raised issues that we are dealing with. We are dealing with the issues of Australian Working Dog Rescue. Oscar's Law is a fantastic group to have in the room, as are the RSPCA and the Australian Veterinary Association. I could go on: rangers, local government—everybody! It has been a fantastic crew to work with, and some really good issues have been raised. We have been trying really hard to make sure the policy is as watertight as it can be in its final stage.

I can point to other good things that are not mean-spirited. We have been working really hard with the greyhound rescue groups and charities that rehome those beautiful dogs. Members know that in WA the industry is quite small, and there have been limited opportunities to work really closely with those groups. I am very pleased to have spent the last 12 months with the major charities and Racing and Wagering Western Australia to try to find ways of improving the lives of the dogs involved in that industry. It is a hard task. Members can imagine the ideological challenge for rescue and rehoming groups that basically do not agree with the industry, but recognise that the dogs trapped in it need help. They have been working with us over the last 12 months, and we are now coming to the end of that work. Hopefully, we will be in a position to give members some information about what has happened as a result of that good work.

Before I sit, I have to thank the Attorney General, who is a bit of a machine with legislation in this house.

Several members interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** He is a machine! He just keeps churning it out! I think I have a handle on the first one—the Historical Homosexual Convictions Expungement Bill 2017—and I know that the other side of the house was fully supportive of that legislation because I spoke to the then Premier and Deputy Premier about it during the previous regime. But we had to wait for Labor to get into power before we managed to get it through. Again, there

is nothing mean-spirited about that very positive policy and change. Along with that, I mention the surrogacy legislation that has just been through this house and was spoken about in great detail. Members spoke about the need to make sure that we as quickly as possible allow surrogacy access to people who perhaps have the least ability to get a secure link to a surrogate and desperately want a family. I am very pleased that happened, and there is nothing mean-spirited about surrogacy.

Finally, just last week we talked about the Gender Reassignment Amendment Bill 2018. I would really love anybody in this house to call those changes mean-spirited. Those changes had to happen because of the new marriage equality legislation that drove a whole range of changes in Australian legislation. That will have to happen quite soon.

As research for my contribution I looked back at what I thought were mean-spirited decisions under the previous regime of the Liberal–National government. I can now look at the things that ring true to me and my heart and my community that are not mean spirited. There have been some really positive community outcomes, and things that will make not only the people of Maylands happy, but also, I hope, a much broader audience. I thank members for listening to my contribution. I could have picked up on many other topics that are specific to my electorate, but I thought it was more appropriate to speak about the broader based things because this motion attempts to throw a shadow over the work of the current ministers. I hope I have been able to give members some examples of the very, very positive, good-spirited contributions we have made.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA)** [6.19 pm]: I rise to support the motion that the member for North West Central moved —

That this house condemns the ministers of the McGowan government whose inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and politically fuelled decision-making has undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians.

I listened with interest to the member for Maylands' contribution. It was lovely that she could find a few nuggets in the last 24 months since this government has been in power. I have to say that as we travel around our electorates, as the member for North West Central and the member for Warren–Blackwood have pointed out, there are ripples through our communities as a result of some decisions and the way these decisions have been made. The National Party had its state conference a month ago now—on 4 October, not too long ago. When I stood to speak to our members, I talked about the fact that over the last 12 months, we have seen our communities not ask for investment in their communities for something new or something that will meet their aspirations or work with government to have a new project or new initiative, but ask for investment to protect the things they already had that were the fabric of their communities. They were things like the community resource centres; the Schools of the Air; the south west rescue helicopter service; the camp schools, which the member for Warren–Blackwood touched on; the agricultural colleges; and the inconsistency in the way the government has approached the gold tax and the impact that would have had on the goldfields and Murchison communities, Kalgoorlie in particular. There is the fly in, fly out camp debate, a very interesting debate in this house since the National Party state conference; members of the Labor Party have opposed a motion predominantly taken from its own policy platform. It is remarkable. If anyone is saying there is no inconsistency in the way this government has come to power, the things it has promised and the way it has made decisions, they are, quite frankly, wrong. One thousand people met in Katanning about live exports with a minister who came down with a tin ear and did not understand, or was unwilling to be, the voice that that community needed at a time when there was enormous uncertainty. That is not just in the live export area; it is across the agricultural sector. There is a real concern that that minister does not understand the sector she represents and is supposed to be the champion for. We have seen the issues with residential colleges. The member for Moore will stand; we would like to commence debate on another motion this evening on education specifically, so I will not go into that in detail. These are all issues that affect not just regional communities because when we talk about education issues it touches the hearts of many people living in the metropolitan area. There was huge disenchantment from the broader community over the way the government has made decisions around education.

Something that goes to the heart of every regional community is the way this government has dealt with royalties for regions. It is now a corrupted program that bears no resemblance to what it was when it was introduced in 2008. There is simply no resemblance to what many regional people campaigned on and agreed was incredibly needed because we had seen such neglect in our communities for so long. When the royalties for regions policy was brought into place, there was no overreach; it was simply a reflection that 25 per cent of the population lived outside the metropolitan and highly populated areas of the south west corner and 25 per cent of royalties collected by the state government should be reinvested; and 75 per cent of that royalty collection would go into consolidated revenue for expenditure across any area of need. There were 3 600 projects at the end of eight years and a real change in the way our communities had a relationship with government and an expectation that they could get more from their government in relation to regional development.

I think about what the member for Warren–Blackwood was saying about the difference in the way the Minister for Regional Development has dealt with the Carnegie Clean Energy project as opposed to the Busselton airport. I think that is an exceptional example of how we approach regional development and there was some pointing out by members opposite about how we made decisions. Regional development is hard. The member for Warren–Blackwood said it very succinctly. There is a chicken and egg argument when we do these things. Treasury will always say that the cost–benefit analysis does not stack up; there are not enough people; there is always a project that will deliver a greater bang for your buck where there are more people in the highly concentrated, more populated areas of the state. That is why regional development is difficult. That is why we need a framework to work to. We should not pick winners; we should go through the regional development commissions and have a structure—a structure that was the envy of every other state in Australia. We should then say that if we put this in place with good milestones and a commitment from government to make sure that a project works, which was the commitment from our government, there is no reason that we should not aspire to have a significantly upgraded airport in Busselton. Likewise in Carnarvon for the aged-care facility and the aged-care projects that had to take a haircut in my electorate as a result of this government coming in and rebadging its election promises into Local Projects, Local Jobs and shunting them into royalties for regions where it could. By its own admission from somebody within its own organisation, it said, “We needed to change the name because we needed to make it look like it fitted in with what we had been promoting as part of our election commitment.” We can understand why people have some cynicism given the way government makes these decisions and promises and selectively picks up programs and the way it has picked up royalties for regions in name only and completely corrupted the way it is supposed to operate. It is with great disenchantment that I think most Western Australians view a lot of these decisions.

There is no confected anger as I think the Minister for Health pointed to earlier about something one of our colleagues was saying when we say there have been inconsistencies; there have been mean-spirited decisions because we have seen them in our electorates. We have seen politically fuelled decisions that have undermined some of the fabric we have tried to put in place as part of a strong regional development agenda but more broadly than that. I think the member for North West Central touched on the fact that there are a number of examples in which we see behaviour from ministers that is less than what we would expect from the Premier or people who are supposed to be statesmen and stateswomen of this state.

I go back to the Minister for Regional Development and another document that we touch on quite regularly and that is waved around in this house, the Langoulant report. The Langoulant report cost taxpayers \$1.1 million. It was absolutely politically motivated. It was the first step towards being able to say from a Labor Party perspective that royalties for regions needed to be changed fundamentally and it gave the government a cover to do it on the surface at the very least. I do not think anyone in regional Western Australia believes a word of it. They know and they could see straight through it. They absolutely understood what was going on. The amount of \$1.1 million for the Langoulant report and some of the key recommendations Mr Langoulant put as part of his platform was that business cases need to be done for every project. We have spoken about this in this house before. The government stood up and said, “This is the new standard. We have come in; we have promised you rolled-gold transparency and accountability; we have a \$1.1 million report and Mr Langoulant says we need business cases.” There was a little asterisk that said, “But not when we have made an election commitment, so don’t worry about that; we won’t do that. We do not have to put Local Projects, Local Jobs through any sort of business case planning either.”

Let us look at what was written by Gareth Parker on 4 February 2018 headed “Cash for votes”. I think it was on the front page. Gareth Parker states —

A McGOWAN Government program that has splashed millions of dollars to hundreds of schools, sporting clubs and community groups has been slammed as a “slush fund”. Analysis of the \$39 million Local Projects, Local Jobs scheme reveals not one dollar was spent in a safe Liberal or Nationals-held seat.

Was it politically motivated? Yes. It did not adhere to its own standard of transparency and accountability because not one business case was done for this. In fact it was worse than that—there was no business case. The article continues —

But community groups did not apply for “grants”; instead projects were nominated by Labor MPs and candidates and signed off by a committee of Labor campaign chiefs and senior frontbenchers in the party’s leadership team.

Candidates and MPs had to explain to the committee why the funding was necessary but also how they planned to exploit the commitment in political campaigning, including a plan for local media.

In the lead-up to the March election, dozens of stories appeared in local newspapers, with candidates promising to spend money on local upgrades.

After Labor won the election, these promises were funded in the Budget under the \$39 million Local Projects, Local Jobs program.

...

A campaign insider—who defended the spending as legitimate—told *The Sunday Times* the program originally had a different name but that it was renamed because “jobs” was a message that had resonated better in the party’s research.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Cash for votes!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is cash for votes. On the next page, there is a lovely photo of the member for Willagee with a big cheque that has \$50 000 written on it, titled “Local Projects, Local Jobs”, making out that he is personally delivering that money to his electorate. There is no accountability, it is politically motivated, and it was shunted, where it could be, through to the royalties for regions project, which did have a structure for accountability and was requiring business cases. My commentary at the time, which I think was pretty succinct, was —

Nationals Leader Mia Davies said it was hard not to be cynical when country families suffered cuts to services “due to Budget repair challenges”, while Labor splashes out \$120,000 on two new Perth dog parks”.

This was at a time when the Minister for Regional Development was also saying that there was no space for petunias, as the previous government had gone about —

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

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is right, referring to main street upgrades—significant programs initiated under the SuperTowns program that has delivered amazing upgrades in the facilities that this government is now trying to sell as part of its regional road tourism project. I refer to the foreshores in Busselton, Dunsborough and Esperance. There is a whole raft of them in Exmouth. It is telling everyone to go out into the regions and jump on the road trip, but the Minister for Regional Development said, “There’s no space for petunias!” and then announced an enormous program in Collie, pretty much the same as we had done—using the Collie slush fund—for the member for Collie–Preston and the member for Bunbury to oversee and deliver. If that is not politically motivated, I am not sure what is. It is overt and it is noted in the communities that we are representing and are a part of. Whether we have members representing those electorates in this house or not, it is noted. There might be a short-term sugar rush on this type of thing, but we know—because in 2008 we inherited a regional development agenda that was non-existent—that that quickly falls away and the government will be left with something that has no integrity and a whole raft of communities that are disillusioned with the way the government treats them. They will feel they have no connection in terms of decision-making. That is what will happen under this government. We can already see it occurring. I think the member for North West Central’s motion is spot-on when it comes to things that we see occurring in our electorates.

I want to talk very briefly about the community resource centre network. This is another example of something we have raised again and again in this house. Although this government has seen fit to reverse the decision that it made at budget time, it did it after it spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a review that told it exactly what we knew before it started. The government took the cash, made the cuts, and put the fear of God through every community resource centre in regional Western Australia, caused an enormous amount of stress to the volunteer boards and the executive officers, and insulted them in the process. The Premier stood up on multiple occasions and was incredibly insulting to the people who work in these community organisations and provide services where government does not. That is what I think people do not, and still do not, understand—that is, if they do not have one in their electorate and they do not have a community like mine in the Central Wheatbelt. The biggest population area in my electorate has 12 000 people. The majority of the communities in my electorate have around the 500 mark, if they are lucky. Community resource centres provide services in areas where there is never going to be a government presence, yet this government came in and said, “Right, we’ll have a bit of that money because we’ve made some promises around Local Projects, Local Jobs so we’ve got to shunt a little bit of that into there.” There was no process to ensure that was actually aboveboard or needed; it was simply, “We’ve come from the election and here we go. Langoulant is telling us we should have business cases but we’ll ignore it on this occasion because that’s probably easier for all of us. We’ll just push through the challenges.” The community resource centres, after a long fight and a very difficult campaign, managed to have their funding restored. That was only after we had a review and thousands of dollars spent to tell us exactly what we already knew. This is inconsistency. There is inconsistency in all of these decisions. It is not just one minister. That is the point that the member for North West Central and the member for Warren–Blackwood have tried to make. We see this in portfolios right across government.

The last matter I want to briefly touch on before I sit down is the relationship this government seeks to have with the resources sector. When we first started in opposition, we moved a motion—I think it was at the beginning of this year—around a review of state agreements. It was very interesting to me to go back to 2008. I found a headline from 13 February 2008 in *The West Australian*, “Wyatt backs Lib plea for State rein on ore giants”. It contains an interesting quote. This was about the time when Rio Tinto and BHP were looking at merging. It is not the same context as some of the debates we are having here, but the sentiment from the now Treasurer still rings true. It was certainly the point that we were making when we brought the debate around state agreements to this house about

Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Shane Love

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the fact that government has the right, on behalf of the people of Western Australia, to ask the hard questions and make sure we are getting the best outcome in relation to a finite resource. The quote from Mr Wyatt at the time, now the Treasurer, was —

“It’s incumbent upon the entire Parliament to take the lead and set the parameters on what the State expects from these resource companies,” ...

[Member’s time extended.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Mr Wyatt is also quoted as saying —

“I think these companies forget who owns those resources and the terms under which they’re entitled to mine them.”

We had an entire debate off the back of the election campaign that we took to the 2017 election. We lost, and we acknowledge that, but this was about making sure those legacy state agreements were operating appropriately and that there was a fair return to Western Australians for that resource. We were not asking Parliament to make a decision there and then. We said, “Send it to a committee and you can have control of that committee.” The government said, “No, we’re not interested in having that debate. We will find other ways to make ourselves look like we’re being tough on the resources sector,” but it will just be a bit of window-dressing. I think that is what the people of Western Australia can now see. We have raised this again and again. We have the local jobs portal that was announced with the Premier standing next to a representative from Woodside. I am yet to see any real outcome in relation to that. We are monitoring it. I do not think the City of Karratha has any great confidence that that is delivering anything. I do not even think the policy settings on that are right. It is not a local jobs problem they have; it is a local people problem. They need the people to fill the jobs. They do not want the jobs they have siphoned off into the mining sector. That is a real challenge. It is about the relationship the government has in not being able to say no to any request from the mining sector. I do not think that being seen to be so close to them is a good position for a state government to have. There needs to be some healthy tension between those companies and the state government.

We asked the Premier a question yesterday about the fly in, fly out camp and whether he backed the City of Karratha on the conditions it asked for in relation to a new FIFO camp in the city, but he continued to evade answering that. He went one step further. He evaded answering the question and then said he would do anything to get the Browse project over the line. We all support increasing the number of projects for Western Australians to increase the number of jobs, but the Premier’s job is to make sure we look after the communities in the Pilbara that will be impacted at the same time and potentially communities here in the metropolitan area as part of those FIFO families. Saying he will do anything is not the balance that the City of Karratha needs when it is negotiating with Woodside. “I will do anything” says “to hell with anything that the community wants”. No matter what the impact on these communities, after going through a period of enormous growth and of saying that we no longer want to be a dormitory town, the Premier stood in this house and said “Bad luck, we’re ignoring that. We will do anything. If Woodside wants to do it, we are backing it.” That is an appalling position for government to take.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Especially the local member.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Agreed, and no commentary from the local member other than to say that we support them wholeheartedly. There is an imbalance in that relationship. I know that the government likes to say that we are at loggerheads with the industry. That cannot be further from the truth and I have explained that in this house many times. Anyone who says that we do not understand what makes this state tick, does not listen to what we say and has not looked at the way that we have operated over the last 10, 20, 30 or 40 years. We understand the resources sector and we understand the agricultural sector. This is about making sure we have a balance. Every time this Premier says he backs Woodside or Rio Tinto or BHP, he weakens the opportunities for the communities that are impacted the most to have a meaningful negotiation and to make sure that the amenity in those communities is maintained and their aspirations are met. This government has let the community down again and again. The member for North West Central’s motion, as explained by him and as outlined by the member for Warren–Blackwood, is absolutely spot on.

*Question to be Put*

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore)** [6.40 pm]: I move —

That the question be now put.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

**Extract from *Hansard***  
[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 7 November 2018]  
p7964b-7990a

Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Shane Love

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Ayes (14)

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

Mrs A.K. Hayden  
Dr D.J. Honey  
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup  
Mr A. Krsticevic

Mr S.K. L'Estrange  
Mr R.S. Love  
Mr D.C. Nalder  
Mr D.T. Redman

Mr P.J. Rundle  
Ms L. Mettam (*Teller*)

Noes (25)

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

Mr T.J. Healy  
Mr M. Hughes  
Mr F.M. Logan  
Ms S.F. McGurk  
Mr K.J.J. Michel  
Mr Y. Mubarakai

Mrs L.M. O'Malley  
Mr D.T. Punch  
Ms M.M. Quirk  
Mrs M.H. Roberts  
Ms C.M. Rowe  
Ms A. Sanderson  
Ms J.J. Shaw

Mr C.J. Tallentire  
Mr D.A. Templeman  
Mr R.R. Whitby  
Ms S.E. Winton  
Mr D.R. Michael (*Teller*)

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Pairs

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

Mr P.C. Tinley  
Mr M.P. Murray  
Mr M. McGowan  
Mr B.S. Wyatt

Question thus negatived.

*Motion Resumed*

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore)** [6.45 pm]: Unfortunately, we have not been able to vote on the motion moved by the member for North West Central earlier this afternoon. We are still discussing the first motion of private members' business, which states —

That this house condemns the ministers of the McGowan government whose inconsistent, mean-spirited, reactionary and politically fuelled decision-making has undermined the trust and goodwill of Western Australians.

Had we been able to vote on this motion, no doubt we would have seen many members supporting it. No wonder the government wanted to shut down the ability for members to vote. It was very undemocratic of the government to deny us the opportunity to vote on this motion.

We have heard about the failures of government ministers, including the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Tourism. The member for North West Central outlined how the Minister for Tourism omitted whole communities and regions from the map. People have just disappeared off the face of the earth. They have not been promoted. We all know that plummeting tourist numbers in Western Australia is a huge issue. Although this government talks the talk, it does not seem to be able to walk the walk when building up tourism in the area.

The Minister for Regional Development came in for a bit of criticism from the member for Warren–Blackwood over the whole debacle that is going on around the Carnegie Clean Energy situation.

Of course, we have the Minister for Corrective Services sitting over the other side of the chamber. He presides over mass prison riots and the huge problems in Corrective Services.

We have heard about the Minister for Housing. He thinks it is his role to attack the federal government. The state government is attacking the federal government, using our taxpayer dollars in an advertising campaign to denigrate the federal government. What does he expect from the government? Does he expect it to roll over and do what he says because he is a big fellow with a big stick from the west? Watch out for him! Actually, he has made a fool of himself. That is not the way for ministers to conduct themselves. It is another example of the incompetence of ministers in this government.

Another great example of incompetence was outlined by the member for Central Wheatbelt when she spoke about the community resource centres, again involving the Minister for Regional Development. Like the member for Central Wheatbelt, a number of communities in my electorate rely upon CRCs to perform a range of functions. They do not just provide communication points, but also banking services, post office services, child care and aged care. You name it and they are in there doing it. Wherever there is a service gap that the community needs and they can find an intelligent and effective way to fill that gap, they do that. They make great use of volunteer contributions. They make great use of all the latent potential within their communities and all the volunteers who

they can bring to the table to make sure that the community has services in areas where services otherwise could not be provided.

The Minister for Health is an absolute failure. We have the situation with Laverton Hospital. Has the member for North West Central been to Laverton Hospital?

**Mr V.A. Catania:** I certainly have.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** What is it like?

**Mr V.A. Catania:** It is disgraceful.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It is an absolute disgrace. Why are those people treated so poorly? It is because they are in the regions. Obviously the member for North West Central knows the issue. He has highlighted that issue very well for the people out there. We know that that hospital is desperately needed but it has not been provided. The member for Central Wheatbelt spoke about the aged-care facilities that have been cut from regional development spending, rather than health spending, I suppose. Again, it is the minister for no regional development, I think! Those services were cut. It affects communities in my own electorate, such as Toodyay, Victoria Plains, Moora and Dalwallinu—all those places that have an ageing population. They have a need. That need was demonstrated. A project was announced and funding was put towards it. What happened? Nothing. The funding was pulled and diverted to paying the bills in Perth. Of course, a very vital health program in the coastal and peri-urban areas of my electorate, where there are virtually no services for most of the constituents, had been awarded by the previous government. It was a \$20-odd million program for which planning had been put in place to get it up and running. That has been pulled as well. Now, those communities are facing the twin problems of trying to adjust to the new National Disability Insurance Scheme situation and the change in the home and community care program, at a time when services that would have been provided in the area have been pulled.

Of course, no minister has presided over the same level of chaos and dysfunction that we have seen in the education portfolio. Right from the very get-go of this government, decision after decision has been made in haste and poorly thought out. Some decisions seem to be politically or class motivated in some way to get at certain groups—“We don’t like those rich people, we don’t like those farmers, we don’t like those regional people, we don’t like the people in Carnarvon or the people in Moora, so we’re going to get them.” That seems to have been the mantra and thinking behind it. Of course, we saw the debacle over Perth Modern School, when the government was going to develop a school in a high-rise building somewhere in the middle of Perth. That was a thought bubble and a half! Hopefully we will not see the likes of that type of proposal ever again in this state. The community reaction against the Minister for Education and Training and the government’s policy was swift and effective. It saw that decision reversed.

Not content, the minister and the government have been doing all sorts of other mischief right across Western Australia. One of the early manifestations of that was the government’s attack on regional communities that have to send their children away to boarding school. Royalties for regions had, for a number of years under the Nationals and Liberals in government, been providing a boost to what is known as the boarding away from home allowance. One of the first and very mean cuts the government announced was that it was reducing the increase that we had put in place using royalties for regions back to zero—back to the position that existed prior to royalties for regions boosting that allowance and aiding families throughout Western Australia. I have here a report from *The West Australian* of 21 September about the parents of the isolated children whose boarding subsidies had been slashed by the government. Long before we heard of further disastrous cuts, regional communities were given a taste of what education minister Sue Ellery had in mind for regional education. Basically, if people live in the bush, forget it; they are not important. The government does not care about them and will not provide them with a decent education. The first instance of that was to pick on kids living out on stations and farms and in isolated towns who do not have access to an appropriate school in their area and who are forced by that circumstance to go away for school. What did the government do? It picked on them first. That was fairly mean—it was more than fairly mean; it was very mean. That cut remains. Those cuts are still in place and will continue to hurt rural families for generations to come, because there is nothing more fundamental to any family than the ability to send their children to school to get a decent education.

Not content with that attack on the regions, as we know, on 13 December 2017, the minister announced a raft of \$64 million worth of cuts. The rationale she put forward was that the Liberals and Nationals had chosen to protect profitable goldminers. She said that this meant other parts of the community, like education, were forced to shoulder more of the burden. What a load of rubbish. Because the government did not get a new increase in the royalty over the line, it attacked a fundamental right of Western Australians—the right to a decent education. That seems to me to be the last area a government might attack. It might have attacked Local Projects, Local Jobs and stopped wasting money on dog parks and big signs. I think the big cheques must have cost hundreds of dollars each. There are a few members, so thousands of dollars would have been wasted just drawing up those cheques,

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let alone the money that was wasted on the dog parks! Instead of targeting something like that, the minister looked for \$64 million from cuts to education. One of the things the government chose to do included closing five different Schools of the Air. What more iconic representation of bush life in Western Australia could we have than the Schools of the Air? The Royal Flying Doctor Service might be up there with that same level of association as an icon of regional life. I think the fact that government members chose to attack the Schools of the Air illustrates their thinking. It was more than just mean-spirited; I think it was deliberately targeted to hurt regional people.

The next on the list were the closures of residential colleges in Moora and Northam. Obviously, I do not have much time and people in this house would be sick of me talking about Moora Residential College, but I can tell members that the people in Moora are sick of them and very sick of the Minister for Education and Training and her performance. The member for Warren–Blackwood has spoken about the camp schools. There are camp schools up and down Western Australia. They play a very important part in education and we have now been told that a not-for-profit organisation is somehow going to be able to run those schools without \$3 million of government funding. There is a bit of money towards a capital injection but no ongoing funding. I think somebody in this government has a view that the not-for-profit sector has a magic pudding that it can suck money and resources out of and everything will be okey-dokey; it will not be. The camp schools will collapse, the program will come to an end at some point in the future, and the children of Western Australia will be poorer because of it.

The government also chose to have a go at a few programs in Perth, including funding for the gifted and talented program at 18 schools. In an economy and a dynamic in which we are trying to encourage young people to reach their potential and trying to become a country that is clever about the way we do things and about making the most of the opportunities we have with abundant natural resources, why would the government attack a program aimed at extending children to reach their full potential? It is quite bizarre. It is as though we do not need to educate people in the future; we will just educate them to work in delicatessens or something. It is a very mean-spirited and a not very far-sighted program.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Local government —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I do not have time. There are only four minutes left, but I can tell members that local government is not tracking very well in this state at the moment. It is not very well supported. It certainly needs to have a minister who is more in tune with the needs of the community.

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I will get back to the minister for education, if I could.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** No, you can just be quiet. We are running very close to the end of our time and I want to be able to talk —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members, please allow the member for Moore to finish his remarks.

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The member for Wanneroo is —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy):** What is your point of order?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** — annoying the chamber.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Sit down.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am very, very disappointed that the member for Wanneroo, who has a background in education, would seek to interject on this very important topic and try to deny me the right to have my say. Why would the minister attack regional education? Is there a view that regional education is of such a high standard that it does not need extra support? Is there a view that country kids have a better education than kids in Perth? If that is the view, the minister should perhaps look at some of the findings of the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre report “Educate Australia Fair? Education Inequality in Australia.” The report outlines that, as is the case with many socioeconomic indicators, regional and remote areas across Australian states and territories, especially in

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Western Australia, generally suffer from higher levels of disadvantage than those closer to the coastline. Those areas that are further away from the centre are shown to have a level of education that is challenged, brought about by the fact that there is geographic dispersion; parents have to incur extra costs to provide children with education, there are costs for travel to and from school, and there is already in some areas a level of social disadvantage.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.