

Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Josie Farrer; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Quigley; Mr David Templeman; Ms Janine Freeman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Dr Mike Nahan

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2016–17) BILL 2016

Third Reading

MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef — Minister for Environment) [5.30 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [5.30 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the third reading of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. In the 15 minutes that I have to talk I cannot revisit everything I have gone through in the budget since it was first tabled, but I want to make one particular point and some comments around the space of Aboriginal affairs in particular. During the second reading debate, I went through at some length about the Treasurer's argument during his budget speech around the value of the state's public sector asset base. I listened with interest to the Deputy Premier when she ran a similar line on 6PR radio during the parliamentary recess that we just had. I made the point during the second reading debate that the Treasurer focused very much on the increase in the asset base but not net state worth. Net worth is still a part of the budget and was actually a measure of the government's financial performance up until the former Treasurer Troy Buswell removed effectively measurements of the asset base, if you like, as a financial strategy of governance. I went through in some detail unpicking, if you like, the Treasurer's comment that the public sector asset base had increased by 55 per cent since 2008. I was curious about that of course because the Treasurer did not refer to liabilities as well. The Deputy Premier said on 6PR radio —

... I think people need to understand we have got \$190 billion worth of government owned assets and leveraged against that is \$28 billion of debt.

The problem there, and I know the Treasurer would know this, is that the Deputy Premier is somewhat confused because she is comparing a gross asset position with a net debt position. She has taken assets on both sides by way of comparison. Of course, if the Deputy Premier was being sensible and logical in the comparison she made she would have said that we have \$190 billion in assets but borrowings of \$54 billion. That is just the debt borrowings, but what we have done in this state for a long period, indeed up until the changes made by Troy Buswell, is that we used to measure net worth. For those who perhaps are not following, that is total assets minus total liabilities. If the Deputy Premier perhaps understood this issue, she would have said \$190 billion of government owned assets and leveraged against that is \$77 billion worth of borrowings, not \$28 billion of net worth debt. She got herself confused, which I understand because the Treasurer did not go through, interestingly, the liability side of the balance sheet when he made his case around why we need to sell assets because our asset base has grown. During the second reading debate I made that point that the liabilities have grown extraordinarily. Yes, they have grown by not just 55 per cent, but by 146 per cent. That means that during the Liberal–National government asset investment program that has seen \$51 billion spent over its lifetime, the net position has increased by only \$8 billion. I know that the Deputy Premier would have made that point had she understood it and she would not have been trying to mislead the listeners of 6PR on the position of total assets, because in Western Australia, as the budget shows, we always look at the net worth as we look at the net debt when it comes to understanding the position of the balance sheet of the state. We cannot look at one side of the balance sheet while ignoring the other. Although that has been the longstanding practice of the Premier, and I note that the Deputy Premier is perhaps following a similar vein, we cannot compare a gross position with a net position. It is simply inaccurate because it effectively drags in some of the assets that make up the total asset position to compare that net position. As I said, I assumed the Deputy Premier was confused and did not understand the operations of the state balance sheet as opposed to deliberately trying to mislead the listeners of 6PR.

In my last 10 minutes I want to make a couple of points about Aboriginal affairs, specifically in reference to *Four Corners* last week. *Four Corners* has been going through what can no doubt be described as an outstanding series of investigative reports on a range of areas. I want to make one point about Aboriginal affairs. For those who watched the program, *Four Corners* talked about a range of Aboriginal communities and organisations that have been ripped off by crooks who have taken money or made decisions for their own benefit to the detriment of the Aboriginal community. Warmun community was discussed and I have raised in this place the problems with, for example, the Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation in the Pilbara and Gumala Aboriginal Corporation in the Kimberley. I have seen that *Four Corners* report, and I have said this figuratively, colleagues, many times. This is about vulnerable Aboriginal communities being ripped off by non-Aboriginal people, but also by Aboriginal people who have come from positions of poverty but do not have the functional corporate literacy to take on these positions. In the last 10 years in particular we have seen extraordinary growth in the wealth of Aboriginal communities and organisations, usually by way of agreements struck through the native title process or outside that

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process with mining companies that generate lots of revenue into those corporations. Of the two examples I mentioned, perhaps the starkest example of late has been the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation and WDLAC. I hope I am wrong, but it seems that Western Australia has not been able to create outside of Perth the depth of Aboriginal people with the functional corporate literacy required to take on those responsibilities. This is a failure of our system. What I mean by that is if we take an Aboriginal person who may never have had a full-time job, who may at the very least have done the one-day Australian Institute of Company Directors' course for Indigenous people, and we stick them on the board of a company or an organisation, regardless of whether it is an Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations company or an Australian Securities and Investments Commission company, it is unreasonable to then expect them to be able to cross-examine the chief executive officer and challenge the position of other directors. We have created a system that expects Aboriginal people to take on those corporate roles when they do not have the functional corporate literacy to do so. We leave them in an incredibly vulnerable situation. Time and again I have come across independent directors who, by and large, have come on to Aboriginal corporations, usually from a non-Aboriginal background but with extensive corporate experience, because they want to provide that experience. Within a year or two they find themselves effectively traumatised by the process and leave. The number of Aboriginal corporations that started out with significant numbers of independent directors has shrunk until there is almost none or none. That is a problem because now Aboriginal people may not, for whatever reasons, be they cultural, relationship, or illiteracy reasons—and by illiteracy I do not mean the ability to read and write but the ability to scrutinise a balance sheet, ask questions around finances and strategy, and ask questions of the CEO who inevitably in these large corporations is white—challenge them on the decisions made in respect of the money coming into that Aboriginal organisation. I have commented publicly before, both in and outside this place, that I think the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations as an organisation is hopeless. I think the current registrar has been compromised by his relationship with one person in particular that has resulted in an ongoing review into Gumala Aboriginal Corporation.

ORIC aside, independent directors need to have a much more prominent role in Aboriginal corporations, particularly in regional and remote areas. I am not at all saying that Aboriginal people are incapable. I know I will probably get push back from family members about this, but the reality is that we have not been able to create the depth of functional corporate experience needed. What keeps me awake at night and terrifies me is that we have come out of the most extraordinary period of wealth creation probably in my lifetime in terms of what has happened with commodity prices, and I worry that the wealth that has been given or bargained for by way of native title or the corporate responsibility of corporations will not be utilised so that when I am dead in the ground, that wealth is growing and being well utilised.

So, what do we need to do to, I guess, to get to the point that we create that depth of Aboriginal skill base? I chair Clontarf Aboriginal College and I see kids come through there from all over Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia, and the smart kids move into different jobs. I think the corporates of WA need to take on more Aboriginal people who have come out of universities or TAFEs or wherever their further education has been, and take them into the board setting as an observer so that they spend a year or two watching how boards operate. That will give Aboriginal people skills and confidence in that scenario. They will have seen how an effective board, chair and chief executive officer operate and will know what the roles are. That way, the skill base will start to be created that can really be generated only through practical experience and watching how effective boards operate. They will then, hopefully, move into Aboriginal organisations and take on similar responsibilities. I hope, and would like to think, the corporates of WA would be willing to do that. We need to make positive, proactive decisions in this place to improve the Aboriginal skill base, and by that I mean the functional corporate literacy that not everybody has—Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal; that is just the reality. But we are not going to get it by simply dropping somebody in who perhaps cannot read a balance sheet, does not know finances or does not know the appropriate relationship between a director and a CEO so they can cross-examine them. Without that, that person and organisation are being set up to fail. We will then see more of these sorts of *Four Corners* stories that we see time and again. I made the point earlier on that, by and large, there are lots and lots of situations—I have seen them—in which non-Aboriginal people have ripped off a community or organisation, disappear, change names and pop up somewhere else. But we also get Aboriginal people who do the same—rip off their own community. That is generally not because of any ill intent, but if a person who has grown up in abject poverty, surrounded by people without full-time jobs, suddenly finds themselves in a situation of being manipulated by a CEO to make decisions, they are vulnerable to being captured by a person of ill intent with the skills, knowledge and functional corporate literacy to take that on. I hope the mainstream corporations—the Australian Securities and Investments Commission companies in Perth and throughout Western Australia—are able to think about that and bring people in with observer status. They do not

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need to be on the board, but to be there with observer status—perhaps over set periods of time—to create that skill base. It worries me that we are not doing that. I think the Aboriginal people in the south west of Western Australia have that skill base. The Premier is not in this place at the moment, but as we set up the final settlement with the Noongar people, this is an important consideration that I hope the government is taking very, very seriously. If we do not, we will be watching that *Four Corners* program again with different company names and names of individuals in another two years' time. What is different now, I think, compared with any other time in my life that I have watched this happen is that there has been such huge wealth created for Aboriginal groups and organisations. I am not convinced that we have been able to create, in many of those organisations outside the metropolitan area, the skill base within my community—the Aboriginal community—to ensure that people know how to make decisions on how to spend money, how to invest money and, importantly, how to cross-examine the chief executive officers about balance sheets so that they know they are operating a functional and appropriate corporation for the benefit of the community. That is a comment purely around the financial and strategic management of organisations, not the cultural community priorities; of course, Aboriginal people are the only people to make those decisions and provide that advice.

I hope we are able to do this because we in this place ultimately rely on the business community in corporate Australia to take up its responsibilities as well. A never-ending supply of independent directors—people with goodwill—want to come on to Aboriginal corporations, but I have also seen the backend when they leave the corporation, traumatised by the process and terribly stressed that they have been unable to have any influence on sometimes closed-shop Aboriginal corporations or organisations. When ORIC eventually catches up with those organisations, they are put under review or administrators are appointed. That is not a sustainable way to go into the future, and it is the responsibility of us in this place to get it right.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [5.45 pm]: I will make a few comments about the worst budget in the state's history—massive debt and massive deficit. With a budget like this, it is hard to know where to start, because once we do we just cannot stop! I have only 15 minutes, so I will try to keep to a few issues and one that is of particular interest to my local community.

A central part of the budget speech was the government's \$15 million commitment to a methamphetamine strategy. I think the Treasurer's speech described the methamphetamine issue in Perth as "growing pains". I think the Treasurer said that over the last eight years Perth has grown a bit and we have had some growing pains. That was the introduction to the Treasurer's meth strategy. I thought that was a fairly understated way of talking about some of the really serious difficulties that Western Australian communities are having with the methamphetamine issue and drugs in general.

I raise one issue that affects the people of Eden Hill in my electorate. In recent weeks, I have had a number of contacts from people who live around Jubilee Reserve in Eden Hill. Tim Hammond, the federal Labor candidate for Perth in the upcoming election, has also been approached about antisocial behaviour and drug use around Jubilee Reserve. Tim and I decided to have a public meeting at Jubilee Reserve. We did not spend a lot of money on it—we put a few leaflets and Facebook posts out—and more than 30 people who are concerned about the state of Jubilee Reserve and the drug problem that surrounds it showed up on Sunday. Within two minutes of being there, half a dozen people told me where the drugs are coming from. People have been selling drugs from one of the houses that face onto Jubilee Reserve for well over 12 months. People said that they had been watching taxis pull up, people jump out, run in, buy whatever they need and run out again. Half a dozen people said to me that they had contacted the local police, only to be told various things such as, "Oh, well, we're looking at it. There's not much we can do. We're doing the best we can. Don't worry; it's all under control", but in more than 12 months nothing has happened. A junior football club, a junior soccer club and a cricket club all play on Jubilee Reserve. Before each game commences, the parents walk around the oval to make sure that there are no needles in the park. If the game is first-up in the morning, parents inevitably find needles. That is an appalling situation for sporting clubs in Eden Hill in my electorate to find themselves. I was there at two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon so a number of pitches were being used and the sporting clubs said that they are absolutely fed up with it. Anyway, we had the meeting and 30-odd people showed up. After the meeting they asked me to come for a walk and within a few minutes of going for a walk—there are bits of remnant bush around that park—I saw half a dozen needles at the cricket pavilion and on the verandah. Clearly, people had been using the verandah to take drugs. Packages and syringes were stuck under the doors of the cricket pavilion. People did a search of the oval before the match started, but around the oval, in the remnant bush and behind buildings, there was clearly evidence of drug use, and, importantly, there were syringes.

That group of residents have decided they have had enough. They formed the Jubilee Action Group at the end of the meeting and I will work with those residents, along with Tim Hammond, to see whether we can push this

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issue along. It is not good enough that the community's really lovely and beautiful-looking reserve—it still looks fantastic—is now a dangerous park for people playing sport because of the amount of drugs that are being sold under everybody's noses. It is simply not safe for people to use that park to walk their dogs or play with their kids; they are worried that they will step on a needle or that the people taking the drugs that they have bought from the house across the road will consume them at the park and be in such a state that they pose a threat.

By coincidence, I had a meeting arranged with the new officer in charge at Kiara Police Station. I was scheduled to meet him on Monday. Unfortunately, he cancelled that meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, so I will apparently catch up with him next week. I want to know from him and the Minister for Police what will be done to clean up Jubilee Reserve in Eden Hill. I know these problems are difficult, but it is simply not acceptable at a significant community resource; a recreational area in Eden Hill used by football, cricket and soccer clubs and people walking their dogs. People now live in constant fear of being harassed by someone under the influence of drugs or are concerned that their kids will stand on a syringe, and we all know the serious consequences of that. To those members on the government side of the house, I am expecting some answers on this issue and so is the community.

I also wanted to raise the latest chapter in the debacle that is the Bennett Brook Disability Justice Centre, which opened halfway through last year on Lord Street on the border of Lockridge and Caversham. It was supposed to house 10 individuals being held under a custodial order because they have been charged with criminal offences but have been found unfit to plead because of an intellectual disability. That facility can house 10 of those individuals. As I have always said, I support the idea that there should be facilities so that those people in that cohort are not held in a mainstream prison, but I have spoken many times about why the government threw away the rule book when it located that centre. Its own guidelines said not to place it close to schools or residential areas. The government placed that centre 400 metres down the road —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Members! I need you to keep it down a bit.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The government placed that centre 400 metres from Lockridge Primary School and directly across the road from residents. I have spoken about that many times. The centre opened in August. It is now empty because the government has had to take away the two people who were housed there because the security arrangements at that centre have proved themselves to be hopelessly inadequate. I was told by the chief executive officer of the Disability Services Commission that the people who would be held in that centre were such that they were not capable of organising an escape. The truth is since that centre was opened in August last year, there have been two escapes. On New Year's Eve two of the three people being held in the centre simply climbed the fences and ran away. One came back within 24 hours and the other one, I think, came back after seven days. After those two individuals escaped, we received further assurances that the security arrangements at the centre would be upgraded.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excuse me, member. There are five conversations going on and it is extremely distracting. If members cannot hold their conversations, I ask them to leave.

Mr D.J. KELLY: After being given assurances that the centre would be upgraded, on 8 May, Mother's Day, only two people were being held in the centre and one of them climbed the fence and got out and was out for four hours. The centre is now closed. We understand that both people who were housed there have been moved back into the mainstream prison. The government is spending \$640 000 on upgrading the security of the centre. This centre cost \$8.5 million in the first place. The government is now spending \$640 000 to double the size of one of the fences. The internal fence will go from, I think, 2.1 metres to 4.5 metres and the external fence is around three metres. This centre has been an absolute disaster. The government has completely disregarded the community concerns about its location. The security arrangements have been completely and woefully inadequate. It has never had more than three people in it and even with that number of people being held there, the security arrangements were still inadequate. It costs \$2 million a year to run. It is an ongoing disaster. If we wanted to make some savings in the budget, we would relook at this facility.

While I have a few more minutes, I will say that the government put up water prices by 4.5 per cent in the budget. Every year that this government has been elected, it has put up water prices by more than the rate of inflation. We have seen a record number of people paying penalty interest or having their water reduced to a trickle because they cannot pay their bills. We recently saw a record number of notices threatening people that they would have their water cut off because they were behind in paying their bills. Ironically, the minister said that the record number of notices being sent out is because we have now gone to two-monthly billing. Two-monthly billing was supposed to make it easier for people to pay their bills, but in actual fact two-monthly bills has meant that a record number of people are now behind in their bills. This government is using the Water Corporation as a cash cow to fund its problems elsewhere in the budget. It is putting up the price of water

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every budget by greater than the rate of inflation and taking ever-increasing dividends out of the Water Corporation to plug its budgetary holes elsewhere.

In my final minute I wanted to give a plug for a pizza parlour in Fremantle. Water has been running outside the shop for five hours. When I spoke to them about an hour ago, the water was one metre from the front of their shop. It has taken at least five hours to get the water turned off. I hope when I finish speaking and head out and give them a call, I find out that the water has not entered the shop. We have been told by this government that we can cut the capital expenditure of the Water Corporation and we are not doing any harm because all the hard work has been done. The experience of that pizza shop in Fremantle tells us that something else is going on. Five hours to have a truck come out and turn the water off at a burst water main is appalling and I hope that the minister gets off whatever else she is doing and fixes that problem.

[Member's time expired.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [7.00 pm]: My contribution to the debate tonight on the consideration of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016 goes to two of the areas in which I was involved during the estimates committee hearings and relates to my responsibilities as shadow Minister for Housing; Training and Workforce Development. When we received the information from the estimates committee hearings and the budget papers for the Housing Authority, which was division 69 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, a number of things were missing. One thing that was missing was any reference to what the government intends to do about the Auditor General's report that was handed down in May, entitled "Fitting and Maintaining Safety Devices in Public Housing—Follow-up". This was a follow-up audit to a previous audit that had been undertaken. The Auditor General basically put in his audit report that he could not state that Housing Authority housing in Western Australia is safe. He could not give a guarantee, after the audit that he had undertaken, that properties belonging to the government of Western Australia and that are rented out to 36 000 tenants across Western Australia are in fact in a safe condition that will protect the tenants, for whom the Minister for Housing is responsible. The Auditor General pointed out in the report —

Housing recognises that it cannot give assurance that each property has working electrical safety devices. In April 2016, it commenced a \$26 million, 3-year, electrical safety device inspection and testing program ...

So in April this year the Housing Authority began a program that was around when I was the housing minister in 2005 and allocated \$12 million towards it! Over that period, nothing had been done, yet the money that the Department of Housing kept coming back to the government asking for as a follow-up kept growing. What happened to the previous money that had been allocated under previous budgets, nobody knows; it disappeared into the black hole of the Department of Housing never to be seen again. Now it was back, prior to the budget coming out, seeking a further \$26 million. Whilst there was a very, very brief budgetary line item referring to the Housing Authority's allocation of that money, there was no explanation of that allocation and it certainly did not go to the Auditor General's report, which, as you would know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton), absolutely condemned both the Housing Authority itself and the minister for failing to follow up on what is a scandal. If a private landlord was treating their tenants in the same way—if they had multiple tenants and placed them in an unsafe environment because of the residual current devices—we would not have heard the end of it; people would have been going ballistic about the whole thing. This happens to be the largest landlord in the whole of Western Australia called the government of Western Australia. Meanwhile, the budget papers do not say a peep about this scandal. It could have been in the issues affecting the agency, which is the obvious place for something like this to be incorporated into the budget papers.

The second issue I wish to raise about the Housing Authority is a press release put out by both the Treasurer and the Minister for Housing about funding for the 164 remote Aboriginal communities in the next financial year. In the press release, the Treasurer and Minister for Housing indicated that there would be a further allocation of \$25.6 million to deliver what was the MUNS funding from the commonwealth government—that is, the municipal and essential services funding for remote communities—to provide such things as diesel for generators, maintenance of electrical devices and maintenance of sewerage and water services. Things like that were funded by the commonwealth for the last 40 years under an agreement between the commonwealth and the states. A couple of things came out of this. The first is that the \$25.6 million that the Treasurer and the Minister for Housing are so happy about because that funding is continuing is really only a part of the \$90 million that was thrown at the government of Western Australia by the commonwealth when it said that it was not going to be part of this agreement anymore. This happened under Tony Abbott's prime ministership.

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The commonwealth said that the state government could take over and fund all the essential services for remote communities itself and it gave the state government \$90 million to get on with it. The \$25.6 million allocated under this line item in the budget papers reflects that agreement. What did we hear from the government when that agreement was basically torn up by the Abbott government and the states were told to get on with it? It said, “This is terrible, but what can we do? The commonwealth has walked away from the agreement.” The response from the Premier was that a significant number of those communities should not even be in existence anyway because there are no jobs for people out there, there is no life for people out there and the communities are too small, are not effective, are not efficient and should be closed down. We then went into that long, tortuous debate about the closure of remote communities. What did not happen at the time—here we are in the middle of a federal election and it is still not happening—was a demand by the Western Australian government that the commonwealth reinstate that funding. It should have said, “Give us the money back that you have taken off us”, or it should fight for the continuation of that funding. The former Minister for Housing shakes his head. I bet he never fought for that funding. I bet he never took the fight up to the commonwealth government and threatened the commonwealth government or the federal minister.

Mr W.R. Marmion: How do you threaten them?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: By sparking them up in a meeting and giving it to them.

Mr W.R. Marmion interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Member for Nedlands, there are plenty of agreements between the commonwealth and the state and when the state says that it will start walking away from them, the commonwealth will start listening. We cannot sit there and just ask, “What can we do?” The state government, whether Liberal or Labor, should fight for its state. We just have to give it to them. The state government just copped a \$25 million cut to a critical part of its budget and is wondering what it can do, so it comes home and kicks the dog; that is, it wants to close Aboriginal communities because the state government does not have the funding anymore. That is ridiculous. We are in the middle of a federal election. I do not hear the Minister for Housing demanding that the commonwealth reinstate that money as part of the election campaign. He has not been putting pressure on the Prime Minister, who is in this state today, and demanding that that money be given back to the state because it is funding for essential services for Aboriginal people. No, I do not hear him saying that.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Maybe the minister needs to pay \$10 000 to talk to the Prime Minister and make demands.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That could be it, member for Cannington. It could be that the Prime Minister of Australia does not want to talk to anybody at all from the Western Australian government. He certainly does not want to talk to or be seen with the Premier. I do not know. All I know is that the situation for Aboriginal people in remote communities, although it continues because the funding has been allocated for this year, will be a different story next year. That funding will not be there in 2017–18. The chickens will really come home to roost for those Aboriginal communities then. It will be a case of either the state finding funding or those organisations will be closing. I do not know.

The 2016–17 budget reflects a continuation of the dismal state of vocational education and training that has existed since 2009. Since 2009 there has been a succession of budget cuts, job losses, student and curriculum hour cuts and there has been a reduction of funding to the colleges. Since 2009 that has been a continual process in every single Liberal–National government budget. This year is no different. In this budget, in both the capital and the appropriation, a further 230 TAFE jobs will go. I cannot get an extension, can I?

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I had to try!

This year, 230 jobs will go from both TAFE colleges and administration. A further round of funding cuts will be made to the colleges themselves. I questioned the minister on one of the line items. I asked why maintenance and capital works for colleges had been significantly cut in this year’s budget and the minister said that that was all part of the budgetary review process and that costs had to be curbed. Another way of curbing those costs is by cutting back on maintenance and capital works for individual colleges.

Student fees are increasing yet again, but the minister argues that the government is capping that increase in fees this year at four per cent. When I asked a question on that line item about why course costs are going up by four per cent given that CPI in Perth is only 1.6 per cent, I was told that fees have to rise. Nonsense, which somehow related to a commonwealth agreement, was provided to the house that a target was set that 25 per cent of fees should be funded by students. There is no commonwealth agreement on any such budgetary matter whatsoever. The minister could not point that out or even take me to any reference; it was simply a case of “We are

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putting up student fees.” For those certificate IV and diploma students who have already had a 520 per cent increase, there will be a further four per cent increase. For many, many students, courses that will result in a diploma outcome will become more and more difficult to achieve because of the costs involved, some of which in vocational education, as I have indicated in the house before, cost more than courses at universities such as the University of Western Australia. The course costs of a vocational education and training course are more than a university course. That is a ridiculous outcome. Decisions should have been made to reverse that.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [7.15 pm]: I rise to contribute to the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016, which I understand is about the services the government has to offer. It is a recurrent budget that comes up—it is not capital related—so I want to talk about some of the specifics around services and how this budget affects people in my electorate. I wanted to start by mentioning education, because it is probably one of the central issues for people in my electorate. I have a lot of young families living in my electorate and a lot of them are interested in how and where children are being educated and about the facilities around education. I start by mentioning that I am very pleased that two schools in my electorate have received significant funding in recent years. In fact, in 2014–15, Hillcrest Primary School had big works done on its administration. I know that is capital works, but it is about making the school and the services offered at the school more effective, and that is what drove Hillcrest to approach the government for that funding. I am very pleased to have had a hand in helping that get released and helping Hillcrest get into a higher priority area so that work could be done. Indeed, it should just about be finished now. Also Inglewood Primary School has been given a significant boost in this year’s budget with money for work to try to cope with the additional children attending the school. A range of services are required urgently at Inglewood Primary School.

It is very interesting that John Forrest Secondary College is a significant stopover point for the Speaker, who is not in the chair tonight; the Acting Speaker (Mr N. W. Morton) is. The Speaker spends a lot of time popping into John Forrest Secondary College, although it is not in his electorate, talking about the kinds of things that that school requires so that it can meet the demands of that school’s growing population. There is a growing demographic in that area. My electorate includes a component of Morley, Embleton and Bedford and, indeed, a bit of Bayswater and Inglewood, which are areas that feed into John Forrest Secondary College, and the population of those areas is said to increase by 10 000 people in the next 10 years. The City of Bayswater has done a lot of work on a structure plan for that region precisely because the government was willing to support investment in Morley so that it could become a major regional site for metropolitan growth, so it is important to make sure that the school in the middle Morley is well serviced. Despite the 10 000 people coming to Morley and the 8 000 people coming to Bayswater over the next 10 years, and despite the fact that John Forrest Secondary College is a specialist school in three areas—tennis, cricket and music—that school has suffered badly from neglect over the last eight years. I am completely aware that the principal has approached the Department of Education on a number of occasions seeking some resolution to what I would think are extremely grave problems with asbestos on that school site. A bid goes in every year asking, “Could you please do something to remove the asbestos?” I should tell members that it is in a building separate from the main buildings in the school. It is a very, very old building; it is kind of a little extended shed that is part of the trade training section of John Forrest Secondary College. The Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton) was a teacher by profession and would relate to the fact that when there are kids training in trades and are learning how to use their tools, they are not as safe or as careful as they might be. To put a whole group of trade trainees in an asbestos shed at the back of John Forrest and let them be subject to the risks of putting a hammer or paint brush or something through the wall where it is all asbestos is more than severe cause for concern. Despite that, the risk continues to be ignored by the department and comes out as being a moderate risk. I cannot imagine how any parent at that school can look at that site and the asbestos in that building and look at the fact that the children are in that building learning a trade where it is likely an accident might happen. If a window or a wall gets broken, that is direct exposure to asbestos. That is a severe risk. My colleague, Labor’s candidate for the electorate of Perth replacing Alannah MacTiernan, has been out there. He is a barrister and his speciality is in asbestos victims and asbestosis. He has been out to the site and had a look at where the asbestos is at the college and at the risk. I said he is a barrister—he is not an expert assessor in asbestosis risk—but given that he has successfully prosecuted many of the cases against the likes of James Hardie and others in Western Australia and Australia for asbestosis conditions, I am more inclined to take his view about what a risk is and what is not than I am about a department that is stretched for funds and continues to bounce John Forrest Secondary College down the priority list, claiming that it is only a moderate risk. If that is a moderate risk, heaven help us if we come across what a severe risk is. I assume it means that a person sleeps in an asbestos bed with asbestos sheets and eats asbestos. I seriously do not know what can be more dangerous than this. Despite that, there has been a continual and ongoing rejection of the reality that this is a very dangerous safety hazard for the children who attend that school.

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I also want to mention that it was interesting to see in the budget papers that Wembley Primary School got an extra \$3.5 million in funding. I happen to know that Wembley Primary School did not put in a bid for any funding and—this is hearsay—I have been told by people related to the school that it got a phone call the week before the budget, asking whether it wants \$3.5 million; it had not applied for any additional funding. When we look at its school population projections, it is a very tiny increase in the number of children going to Wembley Primary School next year, and an even tinier increase the following year. The third year—you know what? It is a decrease.

Mr P.B. Watson: It is a Liberal safe seat?

Ms L.L. BAKER: It is in the electorate of the member for Churchlands, surprisingly enough. It managed to now have \$3.5 million, much to the gratitude of the school. Of course they are not throwing money out the window and sending it back, and neither should they, but it is somewhat of a mystery to all those involved that they should receive a \$3.5 million windfall, with no application having gone in and no request for extra facilities, because it was very aware that its population was in decline over the out years. That is a fairly clear case of funds not being put in the correct place, when we have John Forrest down the road having children go to school to learn trades in an asbestos shed. That is not okay, and I think every Western Australian would agree with me that that is not fair.

I want to draw attention to another issue that has come to my attention. I am very aware that the Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People, since his new appointment at the end of last year, has been working very hard to bring more of a focus on Aboriginal children into the commissioner's office. It has done amazing work in the past; I am not undercutting any of the wonderful exemplary work that has been done to consult with Aboriginal children. Indeed, it has done more consultation with Aboriginal children than ever before in this state. What I am aware of is that the commissioner has had an application pending, until recently, to allow him to employ a specialist in Aboriginal children to work in the commission, which is urgently needed. That has been pending for some time, because we had a salary freeze that was brought into this state, some would say, through the budget crisis that the government found itself in. That has been lifted now. I hope that that position is very quickly making its way off the Attorney General's desk and into the advertising columns of the newspaper as a matter of priority. It is simply not okay for any government anywhere to use poor budget management as an excuse to not adequately staff child protection or the positive growth and development of children in our state. I have yet to check with the commissioner, but I am relieved to think that that position will have come off the "We can't fill it now, because we've got no money" list and we will see an advert in the newspaper fairly soon.

The final issue that I want to raise in relation to services is on the funding that the government puts into RSPCA WA. In particular, puppy farming is one of the areas which the RSPCA has targeted to do some work on. Given what the RSPCA has been through in the last couple of years, most members here would understand that the Western Australian government gives the RSPCA \$500 000 annually, which is six per cent of its operating costs for any given year. Remember, that is six per cent. Today we had Dennis come to Parliament, and I want to read Dennis's letter, because he delivered it to the Leader of the Opposition today. It states —

Sorry you had to wait for me Mr McGowan but my legs are sore and I take time to warm up.

Thanks for inviting me. It's a long way from a puppy farm to Parliament House. But I was determined to get here and stand with you if we can help each other to stop puppy farms.

I'm not a political animal but I want to tell you that your plan will work. It's really important because puppy farms are awful.

Mine was very crowded and dirty. I was in a very small space with 57 other dogs. I didn't sleep much and I was always hungry. I didn't get to run around outside or even go for a walk. I was always frightened.

My Mum wasn't very well. She had a lot of us to feed.

The only good thing for me is I really love other dogs. I was lucky because most of us in puppy mills are lonely in separate cages.

I had a very scary start with humans. Our breeder used to get angry and shout at us all the time.

I love my life now but bad memories come back when I get stressed. I have bad hips too because I was in-bred. They can't be fixed.

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I would like more people to be like you, to understand what dogs need, especially dogs like me.

Can you please get everyone who is a politician to support your plans for ending puppy farms? I can't see why they wouldn't.

The first thing we need is all breeders to be registered, mine wasn't.

That letter is from Dennis, from a puppy farm; he is fortunate to be owned by the president of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mr P.B. Watson: It can talk.

Ms L.L. BAKER: He can not only talk, but also write. Lynne Bradshaw, the president of the RSPCA, brought him to Parliament today to tell his story and highlight the call that the RSPCA continues to make for appropriate resourcing of investigations into the supply chain that supports puppy farming and to stop the heinous practice of intensive puppy breeding for what is basically a quick turnover in an unregulated market that is very cruel and runs to the detriment of animal welfare in every respect.

We cannot see any more commitment in this budget to the RSPCA. Indeed, I think we could say it is a negative commitment because the RSPCA grant of \$500 000 a year is not indexed. That will never meet the costs of administering the components of animal welfare in this state delegated to the RSPCA let alone allow it to look at any other animal welfare issues around the state. It is simply not possible for the RSPCA to administer the act.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [7.30 pm]: It is very hard to speak after a dog whisperer has spoken!

I have great pleasure in speaking on the third reading of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. During the Assembly estimates hearings, I was sitting in on the Minister for Regional Development's session. We have heard where the big amounts of royalties for regions money have gone. Some people say some of it has been spent on things that are not very productive and some say it is being spent in a way that will keep the Nationals in government. However, just recently I was at the Gardner River sports day and I was talking to one of the ambulance drivers from Wellstead who said that as volunteers, they are called out at any time of the day or night to attend accidents anywhere between Wellstead and maybe Ravensthorpe or areas very close to Albany. In between those towns, they have to put up with gaps in phone reception and therefore they want a satellite phone service. If at three o'clock in the morning there is an accident on South Western Highway and the ambulance is called out to take a critically ill patient to Albany, the patient is put in the back of the ambulance with a paramedic while another drives. The paramedics are limited in their capacity to treat patients, so when necessary they have to talk to people by phone either in Albany Regional Hospital or Perth. Unfortunately, there are a lot of black spots between Wellstead and Jerramungup, Jerramungup and Esperance and back to Albany. If something happens to a patient when an ambulance is being driven at any time of the day or night, there is no way for the paramedics to find out what they should do. They can triage their patient but if something serious happens, they might have to drive very quickly on that terribly dangerous road or make a split-second decision to stop by the roadside. If they had satellite phone service, it would be much easier for the paramedic in the back of the ambulance. They do not want the phone at the front of the ambulance; it should be at the back where the paramedic is sitting beside the patient. If we cannot provide that service for our emergency services in this day and age, there is something wrong.

Just the other day one of our firefighters was fighting a fire on Pfeiffer Road, Many Peaks. When they reached the fire, they saw that it was a lot worse than they thought it would be. They could not contact anyone else to attend because although they had two-way radios, the people with the two-way radios were both at the fire, so there was no way they could get extra people to help unless they went 10 minutes back up the road to use their phone. When one of the firefighters was getting out of his truck—his son was standing probably 10 metres to his left—a road train cleaned up the truck and knocked the firefighter down the road about 30 or 40 metres and the truck driver became trapped in his truck. Another fire unit was there but they could not get any phone reception. The son of the firefighter who was knocked over had to go and see how his dad was, get back and take action to prevent another similar incident happening with a road train coming through. The other driver had to go 10 minutes up the road so they could ring for an ambulance. This was in 2016. That 10 minutes could have been a matter of life or death. I was talking to the firefighter who was knocked over and he will be okay. He said that he is the luckiest guy in the world as he lay in a hospital bed flat on his back. He had bleeding on the brain, a broken collar bone and a broken hip and I think both legs were broken, but he reckoned that he was the luckiest guy in the world because his son, who was standing very close to the spot where the road train came by, was not harmed at all apart from being emotionally affected. He suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder because he had seen his father knocked up the road. His father has recovered. Although he is still lying on his back, the

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bleeding on his brain has stopped, but he considers himself to be one of the luckiest people in the world. That incident could have been a lot worse. If he had been more seriously hurt, the fact that someone might have had to go up the road to get phone reception could have meant that he did not survive. What should we do? We should be providing satellite phones to ambulances so that in situations like that good decisions can be made. We also have to get Telstra—I know it is not a state government issue but it can apply for them—to get the towers working full time. Just because people live in regional areas does not mean they cannot have the same sort of services as people have in the city. In my opinion, we need to see that royalties for regions funding go to the right places. It is no good building tall buildings. It should go towards ensuring that people in country areas are safe. As I said, the other day I drove to a sports carnival at Gardner and every time a truck passed us, we could see the truck driver's tension. If a truck driver has to veer further to the left, they are at risk because the shoulder of the road slopes downwards. I cannot imagine how uneasy it must make the truck drivers feel. I was there with Hon Darren West, who drives trucks, and he said he would not like to drive trucks on these roads. I must have passed probably 20 trucks from Albany to Gardner or through to Jerramungup and the roads are downright dangerous. The government has allocated some money. I think three or four trucks have rolled over on the road just outside Many Peaks. Thank goodness there have been no fatalities. We want tourists to get in their car and come down from Perth but the roads are very, very dangerous. Even country drivers who are used to those roads think that if a truck comes, they will move a bit to the left, but if they do that, they will roll their car because the road slopes down sharply. Many people have done that and it is really important that these sorts of problems in regional areas are looked at. As I say, royalties for regions is a tremendous scheme, which I have supported throughout but we have to use that funding to make our roads safer. If we want people to live in regional areas, we have to make it safe for them.

Today I asked the Minister for Transport about Rex airlines. I am not having a crack at Rex airlines; I am having a crack at a policy that was passed by the Department of Transport without any consultation with the people in Albany. I was not consulted, and I know that the federal member and the City of Albany were not consulted either. They put in this thing to Rex airlines. The minister says that I am always having a crack at Rex. I catch a plane to Perth on a Sunday night. As I am walking to the plane, the pilot—who should be in the cockpit—is putting luggage on and taking luggage off. I asked him what he was doing. He said that people could not have the luggage that was there; it would go on Monday morning's plane. Another bloke said he would need his luggage because he was flying on to Sydney. He was asked how much his luggage weighed and he said 20 kilos. Two cases had to be taken off. That was out on the tarmac; not inside the terminal. The pilot said, "Take that one off and that one off." I was thinking, "Where is my camera?" People who were already on the plane and looking out the window saw their luggage on the tarmac. People were hopping off the very small plane and saying, "I need it tomorrow; I've got a job in Perth; I'm going to a conference." They were told, "You'll have to take out the things you'll need tonight and we'll get it to you tomorrow." Luckily enough, I got to the airport early and my luggage was right in the corner, so I stood there to make sure my luggage did not come off! A young girl sitting across the aisle from me said, "This is the first time I've ever been on Rex." Everyone is saying that we are very lucky to have an airline. The young girl asked me what she was going to do; she had no luggage. She said that she had never been to Perth for a conference before. She said, "Now I'm going to a conference but when I get to my hotel I've got no clothes to get changed into!" Some people did not even know their luggage was not on the plane. By the time this young girl got to the airport, the pilot said, "That's it! This here is not going; this is going." The way it was handled was like Uganda Airlines. People did not know what was going on.

Mr R.H. Cook: That would never happen in Uganda!

Mr P.B. WATSON: They would probably shoot you if you did it there!

Rex airlines provides a good service. I told the Minister for Transport probably three months ago that it was an issue. I think I have it here; I said it in Parliament on 17 March, so it is longer than that. The minister said, "Yes, I will fix this issue." Has he fixed it? I asked the minister today and out came the big —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: He spat the dummy and said, "You're lucky to have an airline", which is great for me because it will be make a great headline in the local paper tomorrow. He keeps on giving! Why should we be lucky to have an airline that leaves luggage on the tarmac? Tourists from overseas and people travelling to Perth for work are on their hands and knees on the tarmac, right next to the propeller, taking things that they might need out of their luggage. People are told if they have big cases that can fit under the seat that that is all right. The weight is either in there or it is inside the plane. I do not know if he got confused. As the member

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for Albany, I am absolutely disgusted with the minister's attitude today when he said, "You're lucky to have an airline." The government should have done due diligence at the start. If Rex had put in its promos, "If we've got a full plane and the weight is too high, we're going to leave your luggage behind", people might not fly with them. I know it has happened in Esperance. Dr Jacobs, the member for Eyre, would know that. I think he mentioned that it has happened a few times down there. This is not a regular occurrence; it does not happen every week but it should not happen at all. People pay but they do not get a refund. If their luggage does not go on the plane, they do not get a refund. There is no insurance or anything like that. People just get their luggage the next day. In this day and age I cannot believe it.

I will also refer to the football stadium. The Premier said today that everyone will be able to go; there will be proper costs. Football clubs want to retain their members at what will be a 60 000-seat stadium. They have to whack extra money on. I know they are getting very nervous. In a 60 000-seat stadium, a lot of people will say, "I'm not going to pay that cost. I will just go along and hope to get a seat." We know there will be corporate boxes, a bit like the club at Etihad Stadium where people probably pay \$10 000 —

Mr W.J. Johnston: In stadium memberships.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes; the Medallion Club at Etihad. It will put people off football. I think it is a great stadium, but it is no good having a great stadium like that if the main people using it will be unhappy. I have been approached by the West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Dockers and they are not happy. This government has built the stadium and now it is looking at things going wrong and saying, "We have to try to work it out." The government rushed in. It should have had all this done before it went in. What it has done now is a complete stuff-up.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.46 pm]: I rise to make some brief comments about the recurrent aspects of the health budget. Health consumes 30 per cent of the overall state budget. What happens in the context of recurrent funding for health is significant in terms of its impact upon the government's finances. It is obviously significant because it also impacts upon the level and type of services that people receive. Part of our responsibility as members of Parliament is to cross-examine the government and stress test its budget to try to find out whether the government is performing its functions in the area of health to an appropriate level of standard and efficiency. That process is not always easy. The health budget is very large and complex and from time to time I guess one could be forgiven for not understanding every nuance within it. There have been some changes recently in the health budget that should provide more transparency and should allow any person looking at it to understand at a glance what this government is doing in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of the health portfolio. Over the last three or so years we have seen this continual process of the government revising its matrix, language and benchmarks, and a whole range of different aspects of the health budget in a constant slippery, sliding sort of approach to make sure that it absolves itself of any level of accountability or transparency.

I want to take members back to the 2013–14 health budget. That budget refers to the transition that health has made from block funding for hospitals to activity-based funding for hospitals, which started in 2010. It was an important initiative on the way to creating a more accountable and transparent health system. In its 2013–14 budget, the government said the state is well positioned for the commencement of the national health reform funding that was to commence in July 2014. This was to more closely align the state's ABF framework with the national ABF framework. Once and for all Western Australia was going to be benchmarked or pegged against similar operations in hospitals operating in other states. In that year, the government was fairly transparent. It said —

In the 2013–14 financial year, the Government has purchased 782,489 units of weighted hospital activity at the State Transitioning Price of \$5,319 from WA Health.

It is stated on the next page —

In 2013–14, the State Transitioning Price will be \$167 higher than the PAC.

That is the projected average cost. The PAC was the national efficient price—that is, the price that we expect WA hospitals to be pegged at in terms of overall performance against hospitals in other states. That was not a bad start, but from there we have seen this use of language year after year in an attempt to try to hide the government's lack of performance in health. The 2014–15 budget papers state that the price determined for activity was \$5 540 per weighted average unit, inclusive of an agreed community service subsidy, which was estimated at around \$320.2 million in 2014–15. In this particular year, there is no confession about the difference between what is going on with the weighted average unit price in Western Australia and the national efficient price. At this stage, the government is already starting to say that this is information it is uncomfortable with

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regarding what it is doing in health care and it would rather not have that information made too easily available to WA taxpayers and, I suspect, to the opposition.

In 2015–16, the government’s language got even more slippery. The 2015–16 budget papers state that the price determined for the 2015–16 activity was \$5 587 for each health weighted average unit and this price was inclusive of a community service subsidy component of \$464 per weighted average unit. So now the government is looking at it from the other direction. Now the government is saying what the community service subsidy is, but it is not saying what the national price is. Again, the government is inviting the reader to try to delve in and recalculate to provide a year-on-year comparison between what is going on nationally and what is going on in this state. What you will notice there, Mr Acting Speaker, is that in 2013–14 the weighted average unit price was \$5 319; in 2015–16, it was \$5 587. In Western Australia, the cost per weighted average unit price for hospital activity is continuing to rise, but something else has been going on at the same time; that is, the national efficient price has continued to fall. In a debate in this place previously, the Treasurer said that it was not fair to look at the difference between the weighted average unit price and the national efficient price because the national efficient price is actually falling. But that is the point: the national efficient price is an average of what it costs to deliver hospital care to patients across the country. If the national efficient price is reducing, it means that governments in other states are achieving efficiencies against Western Australia, which is building in greater inefficiencies. While the national efficient price or, in some states, the price of delivering health care is continuing to go down, in Western Australia it continues to go up. It is also significant that although the price is increasing in Western Australia and decreasing in other states, the Department of Health has continued to say in each year that the community service subsidy it receives from the Department of Treasury is part of an agreement with that department to see a convergence between the weighted average unit cost in Western Australia and the national efficient price. This was originally predicted to converge in 2017–18, when we would be pegged level with the other states. In the last budget, that convergence was abandoned or pushed out to 2020–21. But of course we have seen a continuing divergence between the weighted average unit cost and the national efficient price. As I say, while other states continue to become more efficient, Western Australia is becoming more inefficient. Although there is an agreement between the Department of Health and the Department of Treasury—the minister happily sits to the Minister for Health’s left—that there would be a convergence, in 2015–16 the difference was 12 per cent and in the 2016–17 budget the difference is almost 18 per cent.

The director general of Health provides a valiant defence of Western Australia’s price on the basis that 48 per cent of it is made up of the outcomes from enterprise bargaining agreements. One enterprise bargaining agreement was between the Australian Medical Association and the Minister for Health; the other enterprise bargaining agreement that had a significant impact on it was between the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Australian Nursing Federation—an extraordinary deal struck in the caretaker period of the last election. This government, unlike any other government in the Westminster system—so, throughout almost the entire history of Western democracy—went about making new budgetary decisions in the middle of the caretaker period. Apart from that aspect, there is also a built-in component of about four or five per cent that is due to Western Australia’s diverse and dispersed population. A significant chunk of the health budget can still be solely based upon the inefficiency being driven by this government and its inability to manage its health budget.

In 2016–17 the slippery language continues. In this budget, the government has given up on the national efficient price and any pretensions that we might one day converge towards it. It is a bold new declaration by the government to say that it has failed but will continue on nevertheless. The language has changed. No longer does the government talk about the national emergency access target or the national elective surgery target. It has invented a whole new language in this particular budget with terms such as the “Western Australian emergency access target” and the “Western Australian elective services target”; it is almost an act of recession. This state department is now giving up any sort of aspiration to create a level of efficiency in the state health system that might come some way to meeting the efficiencies gained in other states. In addition, no longer can this stuff be found in the Department of Health section in budget paper No 2; it is now hidden in budget paper No 3 as part of an effort to try to hide what is essentially a fiscal cliff that the Department of Health continues to fall down. It takes someone to hunt for this information in budget paper No 3. Unfortunately, it was an element of the budget that eluded the media on the day, because it was of course looking, as it usually does, at budget paper No 2 to find out these things, but of course, it has now slipped into budget paper No 3 with a whole new language and set of parameters around the health budget. It is extraordinary that we have a government that once talked so proudly about the fact that it had shifted to activity-based funding in 2010 and then touted the fact that it was participating in the National Health Reform Agreement process around pegging hospitals against each other and

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benchmarking them against the national efficient price. We roll forward now to the 2016–17 budget in which essentially the government has thrown up the red flag in health around any sorts of thoughts that it could control the health budget and create efficiencies in the health system that departments and governments across this country have achieved.

Remember, if we are 18 per cent above the national efficient price and the national efficient price is an average of what health systems around Australia are achieving, it is also fair to say that there are potentially state governments that are 20 per cent under the national efficient price. There are huge gains in efficiency and driving better value for taxpayers to be made in the health system, but this government has fundamentally failed that challenge. The agreement struck between the previous Minister for Health and the previous Treasurers is all now but a distant memory, as this minister finally throws up the red flag and says that WA is not up to meeting the challenges that were set for it by the national efficient price, the Treasurer and the Department of Treasury. In Western Australia, we are now going to go it alone, ignore the efficiencies that have been gained globally through new ways of doing health and simply accept that we are going to do it in the old-fashioned way and continue to rack up millions and billions at the taxpayer's expense.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [8.00 pm]: I intend to comment tonight on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016, and tomorrow on the Appropriation (Capital 2016–17) Bill 2016. Debate on the recurrent bill provides an opportunity to talk more broadly about the budget that has just been brought down. I have regularly seen the comment that this is the worst budget in history. I saw it written, and I heard it broadly explained as that in the media, and I can understand why. With the worst set of debt and deficit figures in the history of Western Australia, by a country mile, is it any wonder that this has been described as the worst budget in history? Our debt levels are heading towards \$40 billion in the forward estimates—in a couple of years, in fact—and our deficit in the coming financial year is \$3.9 billion. As I said in my second reading contribution, when this government came to office, the state's net debt was \$3.6 billion. Therefore, the deficit in one year is greater than the entirety of the state's debt accumulated over the previous 108 years. Think about that. That is the legacy of this government, and it will take many terms of government to eradicate it. There is no short-term fix. I get asked questions by journalists as though we can fix this problem in a couple of budgets. It cannot be fixed overnight; it will take a significant period of time to fix what this Liberal–National government has foisted on the people of Western Australia. If Labor is elected, a lot of budget repair by the Treasurer will be necessary over the course of a future Labor government.

This level of debt and deficit, and the government's lack of any plan to deal with it over the past six years, will probably result in a further downgrade by Standard and Poor's. We have already had two downgrades by Moody's, and one by Standard and Poor's, and we will probably see another downgrade by Standard and Poor's in the future, which will mean that we have the worst rating by both credit rating agencies of any government in this country. Bear in mind that just eight years ago we had the best; we were the gold standard. The Liberal–National Party has taken us from the best regarded economically and financially managed government in Australia to the worst, in just eight years.

It does not stop there. The figures in budget paper No 3 for next year show that the unemployment rate is expected to hit 6.75 per cent. That will mean about 100 000 Western Australians out of work. That does not include all those people now working far fewer hours, who are still counted as employed. There has been a huge transfer of people from full-time to part-time employment, who are still regarded as employed for the purposes of unemployment statistics. A 6.75 per cent unemployment rate will translate into the highest number of unemployed Western Australians in the history of this state. That will happen in the next financial year as well. The real tragedy of the financial management over the last eight years—the debt and deficit and the unemployment rate—is the simple outcome that there is limited capacity for the state to spend to deal with the unemployment situation confronting it. Conventional economics provides that during the good times we drive up the surpluses and drive down the debt, so that in the bad times we have the capacity to spend to create demand in the economy, through capital works and other aspects of government spending. This government has done the opposite. During the good times it has racked up debt and deficit. At a time of the greatest inflow of money into the state Treasury in the history of the state, the government racked up the greatest debt and deficits in its history, so that now, when it has turned around, we have limited capacity to spend, and so our unemployment rate will be much worse than it otherwise would have been.

We now have a domestic economy in recession, as has been the case for the past three or four years. We see it in retail in particular, in the shopping centres and main streets. The loss of confidence in the economy over the course of this government is visible everywhere. We do not need to look at the statistics. We hear it from people concerned about their jobs and their employment prospects, we hear it from people who are now working far

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fewer hours, and we see it in the broader economy when we walk down main streets and around shopping centres. It is tragic; I hate to see those things; I hate to see people lose their businesses and their savings. I hate to see people lose their jobs, and the limited prospects they currently have for re-employment.

That is what is going on today in Western Australia, and the government has no plan to deal with it. It does not have a plan for jobs. We are the opposition. I have 12 staff, and I have a plan for jobs—all sorts of initiatives and ideas to broaden and diversify the economy. The government does not have a plan for jobs, and it shows. The people of Western Australia have little confidence in the government's capacity to deal with the situation it has created, and I do not blame them. Every time an issue arises, the Premier organises a press conference at Elizabeth Quay, although more recently, in the light of recent events, he has gone somewhere else. These days, it is Perth Stadium. Anytime there is an issue, the Premier is wandering around over there at the stadium, saying "Look at that; here's a stadium. Ignore the unemployment rate, ignore the deficit, ignore the debt. Look, there's a stadium." That is the answer. Sure, we did not ask the commonwealth for any support. Why would we do that? Every other state did.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Did you?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are not in government, my friend. I do not know if the Treasurer notices, but we are not in government.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Ask Shorten what he's going to do.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Here is the Treasurer. I am glad he has intervened. Maybe he can explain to us exactly what happened there, in the Shenton Park arrangement—the Shenton Park imbroglio, back in the spring of 2014, when suddenly two shady characters arrived at his front door. He opened the door, and suddenly there they were, wearing their hats and overcoats, coming in to discuss things he will not reveal. When asked the essential questions, about his good friend and colleague, the member for Alfred Cove —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): Member, is this a statement on the —

Mr M. McGOWAN: He interrupted me, Mr Acting Speaker, so I will just finish this. I think it is amusing. When asked about whether he raised the leadership issue, the Treasurer said, "I'm not going to comment on that."

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thanks, member. Moving along.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He interrupted me.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Did the member for Cannington talk to you about leadership?

Mr M. McGOWAN: There he goes again, so I have another opportunity.

What did the member for Forrestfield have to say? What was his role in these events? Where is he? He has disappeared from public view.

The ACTING SPEAKER: He was in the Speaker's chair a moment ago, until I got here.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Well, he is not now.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is why I am encouraging you, member —

Mr M. McGOWAN: I keep getting interrupted, Mr Acting Speaker.

There was Scott Morrison commenting on a state government project in the member for Forrestfield's electorate and the member for Forrestfield was nowhere to be seen. Why would that be? Why did he just disappear? Could it be that he does not want to be asked about his role in arriving at the Treasurer's front door in the overcoat and big hat? Could it be that he does not want to comment on that? I can tell members from experience that he is not going to get away with hiding forever. One day, one of the journalists will get him on it and he will have to answer to a degree. I hope he will have to answer the questions.

I go back to the domestic economy in recession. What is the government's answer? It is a privatisation plan when the market is at its worst. I will talk about this also during the third reading of the Appropriation (Capital 2016–17) Bill 2016. The plan is that if the government is re-elected, it will consider privatising these assets. That is the government's plan. The Premier's part of the plan is to say, "Elect me, we'll consider privatising these assets subject to a bunch of conditions and then I'm going to retire." That is the government's plan. It is a breathtaking plan. I can see the people of Western Australia taking in their breath rather rapidly when that plan is explained to them. I will talk about that issue tomorrow.

What else did we see in the budget? We did not see increases in taxes, despite the fact that over the course of this government there have been 11 different tax increases, whether it be to stamp duty, land tax or payroll tax or

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increases in stamp duty on specific aspects of property transactions and the like—11 different sets of tax increases—or the withdrawal of tax cuts that were already scheduled. Eleven! We saw that land tax finally cut through with the general public. As far as I am aware, Liberal Party branches are not too happy about that. I was walking around the Gidgegannup show and a bloke stopped me and pulled his land tax bill out of his back pocket. He said, “I was hoping to see you”, and he showed me it. In the Christmas holidays I was sitting in a spa and a Liberal Party member accosted me about the land tax increases.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He did! He was absolutely outraged about these land taxes. I am not joking. It was quite confronting. I had to tell him that it was his own party that did it.

New tax increases have been limited in light of the massive tax increases that have been put in place over the course of the last eight years, whereby the government taxed and spent. The domestic economy is now in recession. We now have debt and deficit beyond anything possibly imaginable a few years ago and now we have limited capacity for government at a state level to spend to deal with the economic situation confronting the state. It is a very poor record and the people of the state are the ones who are enduring it. During my budget reply I talked about a commission inquiry into some of the financial decisions that were made and about ensuring that there is transparency and accountability in public spending. It rolls on. We still do not know the exact cost of the stadium deal. On Sunday it was announced that there will be a Socceros game in Perth. The government would not reveal what the cost of that is. It rolls on and on and on. The taxpayers, who provide the money for the government to spend, do not know how much the government is spending on various deals. Every single day the government has these commercial-in-confidence arrangements. Not revealing the cost of the Socceros playing in Western Australia: I mean, honestly. The culture of this government and its addiction to secrecy is extraordinary. The default position for the government is that it just does not tell; it does not tell anything. That has to change. If we are elected, we will reveal the cost of these deals, because taxpayers have a right to know. Transparency and accountability mean something. Taxpayers will find out if Labor is elected.

MS J. FARRER (Kimberley) [8.15 pm]: I would like to use this opportunity during the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016 and the Barnett government’s budget to highlight a number of important budget-related issues that remain major concerns and priorities for the people living in the Kimberley. The 2016 state budget has been described by many commentators as the worst state budget to be handed down by a Western Australian government in our history. The city-centric focus of this government forgets that there are so many issues that must be dealt with in regional and remote parts of the state. I have on numerous occasions in this Parliament highlighted the serious issues impacting on the people living in our larger regional towns in the Kimberley and in the communities, including very remote communities, of my electorate. These issues impact on the day-to-day lives of children, families and older people, yet this government still does not understand the complex nature of so many of these issues and that the ongoing bandaied solutions by this government will not address these concerns.

I refer to the budget handed down by this Barnett government. There is a need for a comprehensive mental health strategy to be delivered across the Kimberley whereby people have immediate access to mental health services as close to where they live as possible, where they can be treated and can continue to be supported by their families in their local communities. Embedded in this mental health strategy must be a clearly articulated plan to address the absolutely appalling suicide rates amongst young people in the Kimberley. We have talked about the high number of suicides that have happened right across the Kimberley.

Some amazing programs have been developed focusing on working with our young people, but they need more funding and support so that they can do more. One is the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Leadership program, known as KAYLP, which is funded through philanthropic funding including donations from some of the big foundations, but it does not receive any state help. This program is all about building the self-esteem of young Aboriginal men and women and developing their leadership skills. This group is doing important work, but receives no state support. The Kimberley Empowerment, Healing and Leadership program focuses on the social and emotional wellbeing of Kimberley Aboriginal people, but its funding allows only two sessions to be delivered a year. Two sessions a year is a lot, but it really is not a lot for the people up there. More funding from this government would help expand what that program can deliver. This program is unique because it teaches participants to look within themselves to recognise the issues that are affecting their lives. The program utilises a sense of spiritual healing and acknowledgment to assist the person to address the issues and challenges they face from within. It is referred to by my people as liyan, which means “your spirit from within”. One of the programs that deserves funding support from government is Kimberley Girl. This program is designed to assist young Aboriginal women to build confidence, self-esteem and resilience and to provide them with a capacity to

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mix with other young people in their peer group and the wider community. Because of this program we have seen many young Aboriginal girls and young women now encouraged and confident to go on to further education and university, seek employment and follow successful career paths. I know of one young woman who participated in this program and is now a successful model in Perth, so she has come a long way from the shy young girl from One Arm Point she was before she participated in this program. She is now a wonderfully confident, articulate and proud young Aboriginal woman from the Kimberley. It is these things that we look to when Aboriginal people design these programs to suit their people. However, they also need funding so that more young women and men are encouraged to find that confidence and self-esteem so that they can grow and learn to know who they are.

A couple of weeks ago we heard about the rehabilitation program in Carnarvon that helps young people with drug problems. We do not have anything like that in the Kimberley. In East Kimberley there are a lot of needs. Some of the things I talk about here are mainly about West Kimberley, in the Broome area. In East Kimberley there is no headspace program or Kimberley empowerment, healing and leadership program for our people, but if we were able to get funding for more of these programs to be set up, it would greatly benefit our young people. We want to make sure that their health and wellbeing is being cared for and that they are helped to respect themselves. These programs are needed because young people need to be able to look inside, to their spirit, to understand who they are and to understand themselves better so that we do not have any more suicides. These preventive programs are very effective.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [8.23 pm]: I rise to contribute to the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016, which of course has seen significant expenditure in the recurrent, or the operating, side of the budget. Basically, it shows a record deficit of \$3.9 billion and a recurrent cash flow deficit. That all means that the state government is borrowing to fund recurrent costs and that for the second time in three years the government is having to borrow to fund recurrent costs. For three years in a row, the cash flow statement for operating activities is negative. I liken that to borrowing or extending a mortgage to put milk in the fridge. That is where this Liberal government and Treasurer have taken the state.

It has been informative again, because once again the government has tried to ignore some of the costs that it has incurred. The classic is the cost of Perth Stadium. As I say, with each budget we learn a bit more about the stadium. I am now at the point at which soft media stunts that refer to the width of the chairs or the fact that people will have drink holders are not enough. The government has to inform the public of the total costs of the stadium. The Treasurer has said, “Did we ask for money for the stadium?” We still do not know the full cost. The government has never come clean on the full cost of the stadium. Through the estimates process, I asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation three times what the total obligation of taxpayers for this stadium. She would not answer that question. I will go through the total costs in more detail in the debate on the capital bill, but I want to talk about the operating costs.

After hiding them for three years, we now see some, not all, of the operating costs of the stadium. Page 132 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, the government’s own book, shows that Perth Stadium has the following impact on the state’s finances: \$900 000 in 2015–16, \$6.4 million in 2016–17, \$39.7 million in 2017–18, \$66.5 million in 2018–19 and \$65.5 million in 2019–20. That is the operating impact. Now a portion of that is expected to be recovered through the Perth Stadium contract—through the operator.

I want to make it very clear in this place that this budget shows us that the following costs are incurred in the budget because of the stadium: the pre-operating costs in 2015–16 are \$886 000, \$6.4 million in 2016–17 and \$5.9 million in 2017–18. That is a significant amount. Depreciation is \$10.6 million in 2017–18, \$21.3 million in 2018–19 and \$22.3 million in 2019–20. The finance lease charges are \$16.4 million in 2017–18, \$32.2 million in 2018–19 and \$31.4 million in 2019–20. That is an annual cost to the budget of over \$50 million. That is what the stadium is going to cost taxpayers at the very minimum. Then the supplies and services start at \$6.7 million in 2017–18, go to \$13 million in 2018–19 and then to \$12.8 million in 2019–20. It is assumed, we understand, that that component will have enough revenue to cover that cost over 10 years. I am not going to even talk about that component, but there will be over a \$50 million impact.

When the Labor opposition highlighted this in the budget, what did the Treasurer do? He rang journalists and tried to attack the opposition by saying that its numbers were wrong. I want to read what the Treasurer said about me in media commentary at the time. He is quoted as saying —

“She concocted a story of \$50 million, which is false and she also said it relates to the finance and operating costs. She knows that’s not true ...

I will read from the government’s own budget papers —

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A total of \$179 million will be spent from 2015–16 to 2019–20 to meet the cost of operating the Perth Stadium.

The Treasurer said that I was concocting a story when I actually read it from the budget papers. Let us go through it. Over the next four years, \$13.2 million for the one-off payments, \$80 million for the finance lease charges and \$53.2 million for depreciation expenses.

The same article stated —

Dr Nahan said all operating costs would be covered by operating revenue from the stadium.

That is absolutely false. Yet again the Treasurer has tried to bully his way out of an argument. He does it all the time. He attacks third parties and tries to bully journalists. I see it all the time. When people do not agree with this Treasurer, he tries to bully them. But the budget papers are the budget papers and the facts are the facts. The Treasurer said that all operating costs would be covered by operating revenue. That is false. That is untrue. The cost to the budget will be over \$50 million per annum. His budget papers say that. He does not understand the finances of the stadium. We saw that in estimates. Richard Mann understands them, but the Treasurer does not understand them. The Treasurer says that we concocted a story when we read it in the budget papers. I will keep telling the public that the stadium will cost it over \$50 million per annum at least. These are the other components. The public transport subsidy is \$7 million per annum. Under the current situation, all the users cover the public transport costs. As a football goer, my membership ticket covers public transport costs. If I choose to use public transport, it is covered. If I do not, I am paying anyway, but that is a good thing because it encourages people to catch public transport. Taxpayers are not covering my costs to the footy each week. Under the government's proposal, taxpayers will be covering 50 per cent of the stadium users' costs. A new cost of \$7 million appears in the budget papers. While the government is cutting services in other areas, it is bringing in a cost of \$7 million per annum. In 2018–19 it is \$21 million, plus \$32 million, which equals \$53 million, plus \$7 million. I have the figures up to \$60 million. I think the Treasurer was right; I was wrong quoting \$50 million; it is actually \$60 million.

I refer now to the other key point; namely, the agreement with the West Australian Football Commission. I keep hearing how completed the stadium arrangements are, but only cricket has signed up to use it. No other users are signed up yet so WA football has not signed up. It is seeking an agreement to ensure that it cannot be \$15 million per annum worse off. The Treasurer's budget indicates that that is the agreement but he has kept secret the amount and how the government will pay for it. We know the figure is \$15 million and the government is saying the Australian Football League will chip in. Honestly, its record of negotiating to get funding from anyone else, particularly other tiers of government or other associations, is abysmal. I do not think the government's idea that someone else will pay for its guarantee will happen. That is a potential \$15 million exposure. The day after the story was out, there was the Treasurer ringing journalists putting out untruths in the public arena. Not only I understand budget papers; journalists can read budget papers too, and the number is the number.

I want to quickly touch on the concept of depreciation, which the Treasurer said is not a cost to the budget. He said it was not a cost. We got some answers back yesterday about the operating costs of public transport—the cost-recovery model whereby a certain percentage of the cost is recovered. When costs are determined around cost recovery they include depreciation.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Look at page 25 of the budget papers.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I had it marked, member for Cannington. On page 205 it shows depreciation and amortisation of \$1.4 billion for 2016–17. The idea that appreciation is not a cost to the budget comes from a Treasurer, who I think has spent more time having secret meetings on a Saturday afternoon as backbenchers rock up, escorting prospective leaders to his house than understanding the budget papers. It is an embarrassment that we have a Treasurer who said that depreciation is not a cost. I have heard many comments from people across industry about a Treasurer who does not accept that depreciation is a cost, who does not understand the finances attached to the stadium and does not understand that taxpayers will be exposed to costs of more than \$60 million per annum as a result of this stadium. Yes, for that amount of money we want bigger seats, a cup holder and a few TVs. But, honestly, the government has to be transparent. As I said, I do not think we know the total cost yet. The Minister for Sport and Recreation has no idea and the Treasurer constantly does not tell the truth. His performance today on Roe 8 was comic. I have never heard of a road that can do so many things. It reminded me of one of those late Demtel shopping commercials, when a crazy person tells us what a new vacuum cleaner can do. That is a little like what the Treasurer said about Roe 8—the idea that Roe 8 will cure every transport ill in WA.

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The former Minister for Planning is here. I am sad that he does not have Planning any more because he did a great job covering up all the issues at Elizabeth Quay, but now it is all coming undone. His office was talking to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority about getting the water park open. Honestly, he is the Steven Bradbury of politics.

Mr J.H.D. Day: What are you alleging?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am alleging that you rushed the opening of the water park. I have said it 100 times and I will say it another 100 times.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You are plain wrong; you are absolutely wrong.

Mr P. Papalia: A well-planned activity, yes!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. We know you rushed it. We know that right up to the day before the opening the Department of Health had concerns about the water quality and said that it should not be opened without a proper test to show there were no bacteria. The negative test was not provided before the water park was opened. That was always our point and it has been proven. A negative test was not provided before the park was opened. That was critical.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You are questioning the decision of the executive director of public health.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course I am. I am questioning the way the government handled it. I have questioned it from day one, in case the Leader of the House was not here. I have questioned it dozens of times.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Treasurer and the Leader of the House are both incessantly interjecting and are not being called to order.

THE ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): Members, as was pointed out when the previous speaker was up, when you engage across the floor, you have to expect a little bit. If the member would like to come back to the substantive debate, namely, that the bill be read a third time, we will go with it.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister signed off on Zumba and hula-hoop classes, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars, and allowed the water park to open without a test showing negative bacteria.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Who gave the approval?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is what you did; you rushed it. We heard today that an hour and a half before the water park was due to open, there was communication; people were ringing the health department urging it to get that document over. That is what happened; we know that.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You are questioning the professionalism of the executive director of public health.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No; I am questioning the politicisation of your public service and the way you handled this project.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [8.37 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this third reading debate on the state budget, a budget of debt and deficit and a reduction in funding for one of the few projects the Barnett government was looking at funding in my area. It was for the grade separation of Nicholson Road and a freight line but soon to be a passenger train line as well as a freight line. This is a big grade separation. The word was that it would cost \$36 million to create six lanes of traffic eventually over four railway tracks. However, the government has seen fit to reduce that allocation by \$8.6 million to \$27.4 million. It is a very substantial reduction, which seems to be a clawback and suggests that the government does not really care about funding this project properly. I am very concerned about that because so far I have seen no commencement of works, just some signs saying that the works are expected to be completed late 2017. That is all we have seen. We have seen no actual shovel work, just signage that this project might be completed by the end of 2017, yet the government has seen fit to reduce its overall budget by \$8.6 million. The signs indicate that the project is part of the Bigger Picture. It is a building our future project because \$18 million will come from the federal government. What has gone on with the clawing back of this money? I think it suggests that the government is

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taking neither this project nor the possibility of extending the railway line through to Cockburn and to the Mandurah line seriously.

I noticed during the Minister for Transport's speech earlier today that he said the cost of extending the Thornlie line through to the Mandurah line is now going to be somewhere between \$350 million and, I think, \$500 million. That was news to me; it was the news of the day for me that he said that that project could actually go up to \$500 million. That is astounding news because it means that the government's initial budgeting had not been done properly. I would have thought it was possible to get a very tight assessment of what the cost would be because there is no land acquisition involved; the easement is already there. It is simply about construction costs, and I am unaware that those have increased dramatically in recent times. For the transport minister to now say that that project will cost somewhere between \$350 million and \$500 million is a rapid departure from the sorts of commitments we have had over the years for this to be a project in the \$350 million range. It is a dramatic change.

I turn now to matters of my shadow portfolio and I have to again comment on the reduction in amounts allocated to the environment. Overall, in the last two years we have seen an \$18.6 million reduction. The Minister for Environment today talked about his Kimberley science and conservation strategy and how he believes that there is \$103 million going into that. We have to look at that in the context of time and the fact that it is over the forward estimates. If we really look at where that money is going—things like the geological survey and certain state development projects—it really suggests that, overall, funding for Kimberley environmental and conservation works has barely changed at all. We could probably average the amounts going towards the environment over, say, a 10-year period to closer to the \$8 million mark. It is not, as the minister is trying to suggest, a one-off dollop of \$103 million. He is just spinning it a little there, and he has not actually declared how much goes towards geological surveys or various state development projects. That is not being made clear at all. I know that considerable amounts of money were flowing through to the Kimberley through the Department of Parks and Wildlife; there are other tourism ventures and things that the minister is supporting through this allocation, so it is not the amount that he is suggesting—\$103 million—as a one-off contribution to the environment.

Let us look further across the portfolio, because there is a theme and a picture to be seen here. As I said, there has been an \$18.6 million reduction in funding over the last two years across the portfolio for the Department of Parks and Wildlife. It has gone down from \$239 million to \$220 million. There has also been a drop in funding to the Department of Environment Regulation from \$3.7 million to \$3 million. The minister has even dropped the budget for the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority from \$15 million to \$14 million. Likewise, the budget for the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority drops from \$15 million to \$14 million.

Then, when the minister has had the opportunity to raise revenue through his portfolio, he has been incredibly tardy. I refer, of course, to the Pilbara strategic conservation fund. I first raised this issue with the minister back in Easter 2014. During the recent estimates hearings the minister said in response to a question from the member for Moore that he had just received a report from a working group that he had commissioned in 2015. The fact is that I raised this matter with the minister in 2014 when I identified a series of Pilbara-specific projects that had been signed off on. Some of those ministerial approval statements predate the minister's time as Minister for Environment, but some of them are his. They had been signed off on, and it had been agreed by the companies and by the minister that money would be paid to a Pilbara strategic conservation fund. I did my best to work out how much money should be in that fund by now, and my estimate is that it should be around \$40 million. Back in Easter 2014, when I first did the calculations, I thought it was more like \$30 million, but now, looking at it, I think it is probably getting up to \$50 million.

The minister is cutting back on the amount going to the environment but he is being incredibly tardy about bringing in money that should be going to conservation works in the Pilbara. Why would he be so flippant and casual about it? The minister is sitting on the report of the Pilbara strategic conservation fund right now and considering its implications, but what can there be to consider? The companies have already signed off on it. The minister said there was some problem about the structure of the fund. To my mind, it is simply about opening up an account for the money to be deposited into and then working out what projects the money is going to be spent on, but the minister should get the money in. Why is he delaying this? Fortescue Metals Group, with its Cloudbreak project, agreed that because of its definitive destruction of certain areas of the Fortescue marshes it was prepared to pay substantial amounts—in the tens of millions of dollars—into this fund. FMG agreed and the minister agreed, but the minister did not collect the money. He has let FMG off the hook; something has gone wrong and now he is sitting on the report that is going to define this. I am very concerned about the minister's

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attitude towards letting the budget shrink while at the same time not using the revenue-raising aspects of the portfolio to bring money in.

We had an interesting discussion during the estimates hearings about the demise of the Land for Wildlife program. It has since emerged that the minister has entered into an agreement with the various natural resource management groups and that that is somehow going to help keep the Land for Wildlife program going, but how much money is actually involved? None. The minister is not giving the NRM groups anything to run the Land for Wildlife program. This program helps extend the idea of conservation beyond the conservation estate and into private land. It is true that we have much biodiversity in the conservation estate, but bearing in mind that the conservation estate occupies only about nine per cent of the surface area of the state, that leaves a lot of other land tenures that are not covered. Biodiversity occurs in all those areas and we should have conservation programs to help people with private lands who want to be involved in conservation. We should have programs to nurture and encourage them along and assist them, and Land for Wildlife was doing that in a very gently, gently kind of manner, yet the minister is not funding that program. It is a volunteer conservation program, and the minister is not prepared to provide a little bit of money to make sure it ticks over. Instead, he comes up with some sort of agreement with the natural resource management groups and, from what I am hearing, he is not giving them a cent to do that job. The minister should really present to us a copy of the agreement he is signing with those groups so that we have a clear idea of what those arrangements look like, but I know for a fact there is no money in there. Maybe the minister has other things in there such as other enticements or other benefits for the NRM groups. Why can we not see what that looks like? It would be perhaps useful for the rest of the community to see how these sorts of agreements are struck and what they actually look like.

We also touched on the issue of policies the minister has seen fit to cancel. I have counted about 52 such policies. Most famously there are the three environmental protection policies that the minister got rid of through this place. When asked what sort of community consultation he had done on the dismissal of those policies, he said that he had had advice from the Environmental Protection Authority, but there was no community consultation. Masses of community consultation went into the creation of those policies, but the minister saw fit to just have some report handed to him on the basis of which he scrapped those policies. There are at least another 49 other policies in the EPA documents and the minister said—if I have read him correctly in *Hansard*—that he had been advised of some of them but not most of them because he felt that they were operational documents and that would have meant the EPA disclosing operational matters to the minister. How can that be, when these are policies that set out how we are going to respect various aspects of the environment? Surely an environment minister would take a passionate interest in those policies.

One policy in natural resource management was an Environmental Protection Authority position statement on environmental protection in natural resource management. Another one—a very topical one—was the sustainability of the rangelands. The minister was happy for that position statement to be wiped off, because it was archived. It can still be consulted but it is archived; it is not to be referred to. In the meantime of course we have the Quinlan review into the EPA's policies. That is fundamentally about the structure of how the EPA's policies are organised; it is not about the content of the policies. The minister has to work with the EPA to make sure the content of those policies will deliver the level of environmental protection that all Western Australians expect. The sustainability of the rangelands document plays a massively important role. After I gave the minister one example he said that that has been replaced. Where is the replacement for the sustainability of the rangelands document? I do not think there is one. It has not been replaced at all. The minister was happy to archive the position statement, yet there is no replacement for it. The rangelands cover a massive percentage of the surface area of this state. Just looking at the pastoral leases, we are talking about 35 per cent. Looking at the rest of the area known as rangeland, we could say it is about 86 per cent of the surface area of the state. It is massive. The good management of those areas, whether it is fire management, livestock grazing, pest animal and weed control, all of those things, how we look after that sparsely populated land, is very challenging. It was wonderful that back in 2005 the EPA took the initiative and put out a policy, but the minister has seen fit to archive it. This budget is a poor reflection on the minister's commitment to the environment because he is not bringing in the money where he should be bringing it in for things like the Pilbara conservation fund. He is letting that budget dwindle away. Over the last two years \$18 million has been cut from the Department of Parks and Wildlife's budget, and millions elsewhere as well. The minister's commitment to the environment portfolio seems to be more about trimming the budget rather than bringing in the money where he possibly can.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [8.52 pm]: This debate gives me the opportunity to reflect a little on how clearly the government has been exposed as being far more focused on spin and media opportunities than on real, tangible commitment to trying to diversify the economy and create jobs in Western Australia. That is no more evident than in the tourism portfolio, now held by the Premier himself. It was good to see some indication from

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the government that it felt that it at least had to look like it was doing something about diversifying the economy earlier this year when the Premier decided that he would take on the tourism portfolio. It was not really a hard decision for him because the opposition had been saying for three years that there was a desperate need to diversify the economy. We had been telling him in this place that there would be a transition. Everyone knew in Western Australia that the commodities from mining and offshore would transition from the construction to the production phase, resulting in large numbers of job losses and lost opportunities for Western Australian businesses. The government needed to prepare. There was something that the government could do. In this place last year—it may in fact have been in the corresponding debate last year, when the Premier and the Treasurer were sitting across the chamber from me—I reflected on the fact that those mega projects were ending, that there were no others in sight, that they would all end and thousands upon thousands of Western Australians would become unemployed. At the same time the economy would be tanking because, unlike the east coast, particularly New South Wales, Western Australia's economy was not being pushed along by a housing boom. In fact, it was quite the contrary—in Western Australia the housing industry was collapsing. That was a year ago. I looked across the chamber and said that to the Premier and the Treasurer and they laughed and ridiculed us. They suggested I did not know what I was talking about. I said when Western Australians sensed uncertainty around their jobs, when they felt their wealth was being diminished as property values dropped, they would be less inclined to spend in the retail sector and so that sector would suffer. Again, they laughed and ridiculed the suggestion. I said, "If you're trying to diversify the economy and create jobs in the near term, there weren't too many options."

Agriculture is a sector that is increasingly automated. There are not many jobs created anymore. Agriculture is not a sector that can be expanded rapidly, but even if the government was able to do that, it is increasingly not employing large numbers of people. I advocated for defence, but there is one really large sector that has the capacity to respond to this demand to diversify the economy and to give opportunity to people who are losing their jobs elsewhere and for young people coming into the market, and that is the tourism sector. But it had to be done in a serious fashion. It was obvious that even the government had finally woken up at the beginning of this year when the Premier announced he would take over the portfolio. It was clear that even the government had recognised that tourism was an opportunity. The government's problem is that it cruised through the boom. It had been slumbering for years and whilst it had been doing nothing to promote the tourism sector, some other things were happening on the east coast of Australia. In November 2014, Victoria had an election; in January 2015, Queensland had an election; and in March 2015, New South Wales had an election. During those election campaigns, every single winning side from those three states committed to massive increases in funding for destination marketing and events funding. The things that draw people to the state are international visitors and domestic tourists—people who travel interstate. They are drawn by the money the government spends. It is a simple equation: the money invested in destination marketing and events funding will be recouped through revenue to businesses in the state, and jobs and opportunity for people who work in that sector.

This government slept and slumbered and cruised through the boom, expecting that record royalties would go on forever and that there would never be a downturn, that it would never have to save money and invest on behalf of the taxpayers of Western Australia. Whilst it did that, Queensland funded \$112 million a year in destination marketing and events funding. In comparison, last year Western Australia spent \$74 million, Queensland spent \$112 million, New South Wales spent \$176 million and Victoria spent \$185 million. New South Wales' increase in funding was a 25 per cent increase. As part of its election commitment, it made a 25 per cent increase to destination marketing and events funding. Meanwhile, the Western Australian government did nothing. WA Labor went out early this year, well in advance of the election campaign proper, well in advance of any other historic announcement of significant policy, to drive the argument towards increasing funding for tourism. In January, the Labor Party announced Brand WA—the need to have a unifying brand across all portfolios to ensure that we magnify the impact of expenditure in whatever portfolio, in the same way that New South Wales and Victoria pursued a unified brand. In April, noting that the government had bizarrely cut funding to the Perth Convention Bureau in last year's budget by \$5.3 million, the opposition announced 12 months in advance of the next state election its commitment to the Perth Convention Bureau, increasing its funding and giving it certainty over a five-year period—beyond the forward estimates. It was done for two reasons: firstly, because we believe in the Perth Convention Bureau. It is an outstanding organisation that returns \$30 for every \$1 invested by taxpayers and creates hundreds of jobs. Secondly, we wanted to shame the government into some action. Having announced himself to be the tourism minister, having declared that the Barnett government cared about tourism, after demonstrating no interest in it for the last seven years, the Premier, we hoped, would be shamed into taking action. Fortunately, that was the case. A year after the Barnett government created uncertainty within the Perth Convention Bureau and undermined future planning by depriving it of certainty and therefore denying it the ability to achieve better returns for taxpayer dollars by knowing exactly the amount of money it would be

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getting in the future and having adequate funding way in advance of when it would be negotiating delivery of events, conferences and conventions, finally, in the budget this year, the government, having been shamed into it, announced it would refund the cut it made to the Perth Convention Bureau in last year's budget. That is extraordinary. It completely exposes the stupidity of the last tourism minister, the Treasurer and, in fact, the entire Barnett government cabinet. At a time when we desperately needed the tourism sector to step up and create opportunity, these fools declared that they were cutting the Perth Convention Bureau—the best performing organisation within tourism that operated with a very small budget but returned \$30 for every dollar expended. Last year when we asked the tourism minister whether he had consulted with the Perth Convention Bureau prior to making such a stupid decision, he confirmed that he had not. I do not even think he knew what the Perth Convention Bureau was; but, assuming that he may have, he did not even bother speaking to it. When we asked further why the government made this ridiculous decision, it confirmed that it was because it had cut every portfolio, every section of the budget, and everyone had to take to take a cut and so that is where tourism was cut. That is the extent of the planning and foresight into tourism within the Barnett government.

When the Premier finally took on the portfolio, we had hopes that we would expose that and compel and shame him into taking action, and he did. In the budget he returned the money, but prior to the budget coming out, the Premier used backflipping and returning a cut to the budget as an opportunity to again spin the situation and create a photo opportunity, rather than creating a real deliverable to the state. Prior to the budget on 8 May, the Premier announced a \$30 million increase to funding for tourism for Western Australia. It must have been a Sunday, I guess, because the media reported it without much scrutiny and assumed the Premier was telling the truth; that was a mistake. By now we would expect that the Western Australian media would know that the Premier seldom tells the truth and frequently stretches it. Like the Treasurer, he will often tell untruths, but will never correct the record in public, so we are helping him tonight. It was not a \$30 million increase in funding to the tourism sector. It was a \$5.3 million return of funding that had been cut, plus a \$7 million increase in funding to match the commitment already made by WA Labor in April, \$1 million to the Treasurer's favourite group in Northbridge and then \$19 million towards activating events funding for the new stadium in fiscal year 2017–18. We have to ask what the stadium operator was chosen for. I recall some time ago when the announcement was made that the stadium operator was selected because of its vaunted ability to draw events to Western Australia. That was part of the reason that operator was selected as opposed to some of its competitors, yet the government was quite willing to throw in a \$19 million gift to the stadium operator. It will be interesting when the commission of audit takes place, should WA Labor take office next year, to find out all the intricacies of these funding arrangements and the negotiations around them that have been so opaque and secretive over all these years.

There is one other thing I want to cover about the recurrent expenditure on tourism. We had an interesting exchange in the chamber with the Premier about another announcement. Finally, in the budget it was announced that the Barnett government would be increasing funding to tourism. Again, WA Labor put out its job plan for WA well in advance of this election campaign, well in advance of this budget, to give the government the opportunity to at least match our additional funding. We committed \$116 million of new money to tourism over five years, giving the sector certainty. There is \$85 million in destination marketing and events funding for five years. The government has got a fair amount of easy, soft publicity for a commitment to tourism and it is well short of that. This financial year it is increasing funding from \$74 million in destination marketing and events funding to \$77 million. Next financial year, the top, the peak, of the Barnett government's commitment is \$80 million. It then drops to \$75 million and in the last year of the out years it plummets to \$55 million. That is a 27 per cent drop in funding in the last year of the out years. What did the Premier say, what did the Barnett government's tourism minister say, when he was confronted about that massive drop? He said we knew what his view about the forward estimates was. The concept that the forward estimates do not exist has returned to Parliament. It was embarrassing when we first heard of it years ago, but it is even more embarrassing now because in his announcement in May, the Premier said, and I quote —

“The stadium is about 40 per cent built but the events needs to be booked and planned well in advance,”

...

He said that in relation to the \$19 million gift to the stadium operators for operating the stadium. He is acknowledging there that events do not just occur. Tourism destination marketing and events funding is not just executed next year, it is developed. There are partnerships, agreements and marketing programs and policies developed years in advance; they are planned years in advance.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [9.06 pm]: I rise to make some remarks at this stage of the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. I want to draw attention to the solid work of the Minister for

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Finance at budget Estimates Committee B on 26 May, the transcript of which is on pages E611 and E612 of the *Hansard*. The minister took up about five paragraphs talking about dolphins in Bunbury while he was growing up. I think that is a very solid effort. It goes for five paragraphs and goes over the page. It even includes him questioning the member for Warnbro about where he went to school. That is an effective use of the very small opportunity that Parliament has to examine the budget.

I draw the chamber's attention to supplementary information B93, which details expenditure under common use agreement CUATPS2014 for the provision of temporary staff. Finally, after a long time we have now been able to discover that in 2014 the government spent \$107 403 645 on temporary staff. The reason that that is important is that that is money that goes to a company to bring temporary labour into the agencies. There are enormous overheads in doing things that way, because the employment agencies charge very significant overheads. The other point, of course, is that often the staff are paid much higher salaries than a public servant would be for those jobs. That is \$107 million in addition to the ordinary labour costs of the state for bringing in temporary staff and paying fat fees to these employment agencies. The fact that the government has spent years denying this information to the opposition shows that even it understands how embarrassing it is.

I also draw attention to supplementary information B94, which details the number of pensioners by local government area who are going to miss out on assistance with their rates. In Western Australia, 19 300 pensioner families will no longer be supported for their local government rates. They are two very important sides of the same coin, because it can be seen that the government is spending more than it needs to on agency staff, with the fat fees to the private companies at the same time as cutting support to pensioners out of the budget.

I want to draw the attention of the chamber to the fact that on 30 June 2015, the state's net debt was \$23.374 billion. The reason I am drawing attention to 30 June 2015 is that that is the last year that we have the annual report of Western Power, because obviously it will not table its 2015–16 annual report until October, so we will not be able to compare it with the budget papers until later in the year. On 30 June 2015, the financial statements of Western Power showed that it had \$7.192 billion of debt. Let us work that out. That is 30.8 per cent of the stock of net debt. Some cash and other cash equivalents were held by Western Power, but let us ignore those and focus on that figure. That is 30.8 per cent of the stock of debt. The current government spins this line that the reason it has such a large debt is the debt held by the government trading enterprises.

The first point I will make is that, if we turn to that wonderful table on page 205 of budget paper No 3, appendix 1 "General Government Operating Statement", table 1.1, the expenses and debts of Western Power do not actually appear in that table, because the general government sector is only the bit that the Parliament authorises. When the government refers to its budget deficit—for 2014–15 it is \$431 million, and for the current financial year it is \$3.914 billion—Western Power's activities are not part of that. They are separate; they are not part of the general government sector. Of course the money paid to the government from Western Power is part of the general government sector, but we will get to that later.

Let us have a look at where the government was when it came to office. I will use the annual report of state finances for the year ending 30 June 2008 as the baseline for the government. There is a matter of some weeks between 30 June 2008 and the election but, because the figures are not published at that date, we will just line it up with 30 June 2008. The total net debt in Western Australia at that time was \$3.634 billion, and Western Power's debt, which we can find in its 2008 annual report, was at that time \$3.118 billion. Again there was some cash on hand, but we are going to ignore that just to make it easier. That meant that, at that time Western Power accounted for 85.8 per cent of the outstanding net debt. Let us look at that. It has gone from 85.8 per cent of the total net debt to 30.8 per cent of the net debt, so it has actually declined relative to the total amount of debt held in this state. That is an important issue. The idea that the Treasurer promotes in the community, that somehow the reason that net debt has gone up so much is Western Power, is simply wrong. It simply shows that the minister has not actually read the budget papers.

Let us put it in the context of increase in state debt. Let us have a look at the increase in net debt between 30 June 2008 and 30 June 2015. Net debt went up by \$19.740 billion between those two dates. What did Western Power's debt go up by? It went up by \$4.074 billion, or 20.6 per cent of the increased debt. Let us keep this in the picture—79.4 per cent of the increase in net debt in Western Australia was not the responsibility of Western Power. The argument that net debt is so high now because of Western Power is simply not true; it is simply wrong. Western Power's share of net debt went from 85 per cent—in other words, almost all of it—to 30.8 per cent of the stock of net debt. It has actually fallen as a contributor to net debt. It is now a smaller part of net debt in Western Australia than it was at the time the government came to office.

Let us now take Western Power's debt out of the calculation, to just look at the stock of net debt not including Western Power. On 30 June 2008, there was \$716 million of state net debt that did not belong to Western Power,

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and on 30 June 2015, the stock of net debt that did not belong to Western Power was \$16.542 billion. There has been a 2 310 per cent increase in the stock of net debt not attributed to Western Power. That is the performance of this state government. That is what has happened, and every time it spins this line that somehow or other the net debt is the responsibility of the government trading enterprises, it is wrong, and it knows it is wrong. Government ministers may not know they are wrong because they may never have actually read their budget papers. If they had read their budget papers, they would be able to explain it to themselves and to the community.

The Treasurer made the point in February this year at the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia that the increase in the budget deficit was actually about recurrent expenditure, and not about capital investment. He himself made that point in February this year, so it is hardly surprising that I am also making that point. I do not understand why the Treasurer does not explain that to journalists in Western Australia when he is talking to them, instead of spinning this line that somehow this massive increase in net debt is due to Western Power, when it is not. Western Power has made a contribution to the increase in net debt of 20.6 per cent, but it is not the overwhelming reason. The overwhelming reason for the increase in net debt is the budget itself. Let us make this clear: \$3.914 billion is the expected budget deficit that the member for Riverton is asking the Parliament of Western Australia to approve in passing the bills that we are debating today. Not one cent of that \$3.914 billion relates to expenditure or investment by Western Power. Not one cent of any of the money covered by the bills that we are debating is part of Western Power, other than the money that is returned to the government through the actions of the corporation in dividends and other matters. That is the actual truth.

The Treasurer has referred to Western Power being allowed to carry its obligations to the state of Western Australia in terms of tax equivalents without paying them, because in the future there will be tax offsets for the current tax liabilities. I asked the Under Treasurer about that in the briefing that the Department of Treasury provided to the Public Accounts Committee following the handing down of the budget. I asked where that obligation was shown on the balance sheet of the general government sector. The Under Treasurer pointed out that it is shown as a debt owed to the Treasury. I draw the attention of members to the general government balance sheet on page 206 of budget paper No 3. That money is shown on that page. Whether it is paid in cash is not actually particularly important. It is an obligation to the state government for the general government sector. It may well be that in the future there will be tax write-offs to allow Western Power to recover that money, but that is because that will actually increase the carrying value of Western Power.

I want to make another point. I am again indebted to the Under Treasurer for pointing out to me that on page 205 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, under “Operating Result,” other amounts are shown that give the total change in net worth. Members will see that one item is “Change in net worth of the public corporations sectors”. There was a \$198 million positive outcome for that in the 2015–16 financial year. It would have been \$248 million in the 2015–16 financial year if it had not been for the sale of the Perth Market Authority, because the Perth Market Authority was of course sold for about \$50 million less, on a net basis, than its carrying value. Obviously that has to be brought to account in the accounts of the state, and that is where it is. We now finally know where the loss on the sale of the Perth Market Authority is shown. The privatisation of the Perth Market Authority was lauded by the government, yet it was sold for less than its current value. The government apparently cannot now sell Utah Point because, in evidence given to the upper house committee, the Department of Treasury said that if the legislation was not passed by 30 June, it would probably delay the sale to the 2017–18 financial year. Given that the upper house committee will not report until 24 August, we can see that that time line is not possible under any circumstance. If Utah Point had been sold for less than its valuation, that is where the loss on that sale would have been shown. That is not a problem for us because the legislation is not going to be passed before 30 June. It is legislation that the Labor Party opposes. It will be interesting to see what recommendations come back to Parliament from that committee, because at least the upper house has taken the opportunity to look at the bill and at the very large opportunities that that facility provides.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [9.22 pm]: At the outset, by way of introduction to my contribution on the third reading on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016, I would like to pay tribute to public sector workers, who provide the many services that our community expects and needs. I also pay tribute to those in the public service who are expected to do more with fewer resources, purely because of the government’s wanton profligacy and skewed priorities. Those personnel are shouldering an enormous burden and, in some cases, do so under considerable stress. That is no more apparent than when, across the budget, we see a reduction in staff numbers and service delivery targets, be it with child protection workers who with unsustainable caseloads are unable to scrutinise the care and protection of children to the standard they would like, or hospital emergency nursing staff who are unable to allocate beds because wards are full or who have to manage mental health cases that disrupt accident and emergency departments for hours on end because, again, mental health placements are

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in short supply. Then there are the police officers who are diverted from their traffic duties to other areas and who look at the escalating road toll and wonder why they are no longer on the road, or possibly financial councillors, whose numbers have been halved through funding cuts but who face increasing demand through tough economic times. Then there are the prison officers who face an increased risk of being assaulted due to overcrowding and who have to implement shoddy stop-gap measures, or the principals who have to ensure school cohesion and teaching excellence without the aid of education assistants. Firefighters are being spread more thinly throughout the expanding metropolitan area and are frustrated by the longer time it is taking to respond, while fewer or no apprentices are being trained throughout government and more contract personnel are being used, who are far more costly but are being used purely to evade Treasury's constraints on recruitment. Ironically, the deployment of these contract personnel is invariably more expensive.

What is occurring in the guise of economy is that, increasingly, services are being delivered online or purely through a help line. As I said in the second reading debate, it is now a hallmark of disadvantage to not have access to online information or the internet. Again, by placing more government services online or using help lines, it is marginalising many sectors of the community and making service delivery less effective. Also, the delivery of services tends to be only in English and there are few alternatives to have information delivered in languages other than English. Some of the problems sought to be addressed through the 1800 numbers are incredibly complex and require personal contact with the caller. It is just risible to think that the 1800 numbers are a substitute to what are very complex social problems requiring a variety of responses. I will give an example. In response to the awful death in police custody of Ms Dhu in Port Hedland lock-up, the government abolished the Aboriginal visitors scheme and replaced it with a 1800 number. I have to say that if this were not such a serious issue, it would border on high farce. Anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of the dynamics around Aboriginal deaths in custody would readily understand how flawed this decision was. I was really quite surprised when in February this year the Minister for Corrective Services and the Minister for Police announced this decision and badged it as increased support for at-risk individuals in custody—a free 1800 number managed 24/7 and expanded to all police lock-ups. I must admit that I was saying to a colleague today that I was tempted to ring it to see whether I got a call centre in the Philippines, but be that as it may, that decision in the guise of delivering better services in fact delivers worse services, shows a complete lack of understanding of the issue and marginalises many sections of the community.

Similarly—I notice that the Minister for Environment is here—having to use contractors in areas like bushfire mitigation is not optimal. The use, for example, of Working on Fire Australia by the Department of Parks and Wildlife has proved somewhat problematic. It was widely publicised that that outfit of contractors was on standby if the Waroona–Yarloop fire got near Collie. What is not so well known is that this same group, when doing some controlled burns, let a fire run out of control and it was DPaW that had to put that fire out near Worsley. I am saying that, in the guise of economy, services are suffering and the very people who require those services or responses are getting a second-rate response.

There is then, of course, the issue of what I call misappropriating or diverting funds earmarked for specific purposes to cover routine recurrent expenditure. The most obvious of these, which I often talk about in this place, is the emergency services levy. The ESL has increased by over 80 per cent under the Barnett government. It is no longer being used as expenditure for frontline services, equipment and training of personnel, but for routine recurrent expenditure within the department. The legislative intent was certainly there, and in hindsight one could say that the legislation should have been better drafted to prevent the wholesale diversion of millions of dollars for purely administrative purposes. People in metropolitan Perth are happy to contribute to the ESL, thinking that it gives statewide protection to both volunteer and career firefighters and that it will provide up-to-date equipment and resources. However, as it is not being used for those purposes, I think that there will be increasing resentment about paying the levels of ESL that have been imposed on the public.

The other area in which I would say there has been some misappropriation and diversion—this proposition is somewhat contestable, but after looking at the issue this morning, I think my claim is certainly justified—is Lotterywest. Many Lotterywest grants now are for expenditure in areas that, certainly in my recollection, would have been government expenditure rather than Lotterywest expenditure. For example, Lotterywest is now having its pocket picked to fund women's refuges and other things that I consider to be principally areas of government service delivery. We need to be mindful that not only is the budget in a parlous state, but also quarantined or hypothecated areas are being used improperly.

Another example is the road trauma trust fund. As everyone knows, the money in that fund is from speed and red-light camera fines. Some years ago the safer roads program became the safer roads and bridges program. There was no connection between bridges and road safety, but it suited the then Treasurer to get money from the

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road trauma trust fund to fix bridges, which are routine Main Roads maintenance. That is an example. Many of the expenditures under the road trauma trust fund are not expenditures that in fact have any connection to road safety outcomes but are just standard Main Roads expenditure. Again, I believe that is an area in which there have been lots of smoke and mirrors, and it occurs because the government has seriously mismanaged the budget.

I want to talk about a couple of other issues before I conclude. The first is the Smart Transport campaign. Almost \$1 million is being spent on this campaign for us, to use a Monty Python phrase, to be told the bleeding obvious. I know that under the Smart Transport campaign, which is costing \$900 000, that if I decide to travel to work at 6.15 in the morning, southbound on Mitchell Freeway, I will get the best run. I really appreciate being told that for \$900 000! For those in my electorate who have no other option than to travel by car, because the lousy Minister for Transport will not expand a bus service as he promised, that information is of little comfort. It might be good to have a free run at 6.30 in the morning, but the kids cannot be left at school until eight o'clock in the morning. I find this campaign objectionable because it is trying to engineer conduct by members of the public that is not consistent with their needs or requirements.

Finally, I want to talk about the recently released tourism campaign, although it is not my shadow portfolio. I think there are elements of it that show a level of naivety and lack of sophistication about our geographical placement, whom we need to cater for and what service we need to deliver to those tourists if, as the Premier says, they are paying good money. It seems to me that if we are really dinkum about having a sustainable tourism industry, we should be increasing languages taught in schools. In fact, the reverse is happening. Fewer and fewer public schools have language programs. In fact, I was horrified last year when a student from Murdoch University told me that the Premier had come to speak to the students. It was put to him that maybe languages needed to be more broadly spoken in schools so that we could liaise with our nearest neighbours—our trading partners, neighbours that we hoped would have more commercial and tourism connections with—and that maybe more languages should be taught in schools. The Premier told those students that our neighbours can learn English. That is just horrifying.

To conclude, of course we have the new hashtag #justanotherdayinWA. It made me reflect on the numberplate logo that we used to have—“The state of excitement”. It seems to me that we should now replace that slogan with “The state of insolvency”.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [9.36 pm]: I also rise to talk to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016 before the house. The seat of Collie–Preston has been completely forgotten by the government in the budgetary process. The only time it found out where Collie was is when it removed money or renege on promises made at the last election. That is a very sad state of affairs. It goes straight down the line of the political bias of this government. If we do not happen to be in a National Party or Liberal Party seat, we are certainly starved out by this government and used as a scapegoat to take projects away from the electorate. The Treasurer is sitting here in the chamber. I think I even saw him nod his head when I made that statement. It is unfortunate. Hopefully, things may change on 11 March and people in the electorate of Collie–Preston, which includes the towns of Dardanup, Boyanup, Eaton, Collie and Donnybrook, which also missed out even though it was on the edge of a National Party seat, will get their turn. I do not know at this stage but I certainly hope that will be the case. The Treasurer does not know where Collie is because he cannot even drive down there when things of his causing are in disarray and talk to the community and give us some direction into the future. A miserable amount of \$150 000 through the South West Development Commission to point Collie in the right direction for the next 20 or 30 years is just untenable when we consider that the Labor government gave out \$10 million for the same process, yet it was withdrawn when the Liberal government came to power. We are now very much feeling the pinch of that. We could have been so much further down the line in our transition from coal to other fuels and other jobs that would keep the people of Collie in employment and keep the town viable. Unfortunately, as I have said, we are in disarray; we have no leadership from this government. A very limited number of ministers go down to Collie. I was about to say that the ratio is five or six shadow ministers to one government minister. When they do go there, we could call them somewhat lost. When Minister Day went to Collie, people did not know who he was and asked, “Who’s that man who was walking down the street and who was at the hospital?” He is the Minister for Health. We can understand why it was with great disappointment that the Collie–Preston electorate looked at the budget. The removal of \$7 million to upgrade the Collie Senior High School with the excuse that it was of a high enough standard for the number of people was appalling. It was the main plank of the Liberal Party’s very strong and very well financed and run campaign against me before the last election. When the Liberal Party does not win seats, it reneges on its promises, and that is a slight on all politicians. Even in the upcoming federal election, promises are being made and people wonder why people are cynical about politicians when they make promises and do not deliver. In the scheme of this budget, the \$7 million is not a make-or-break amount given what has been wasted over the time

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I have been in this house. I am not talking only about the Liberal–National coalition government; I am talking about governments of all persuasions. Why should the Collie students have a lesser quality high school than other places have? Why should they have to be crowded into classes in light of the social problems small country towns have and when the headmaster himself said, “If only I had a bit more room, we could bring down some of the class sizes and address some of the social issues in high schools that should have been addressed in primary schools and in the homes themselves.” People in this chamber will know what I am talking about; that is, some of the school children need more than just the three Rs; they need a lot more help.

Just recently, I was trying to organise some extra funding, which unfortunately has not come to fruition, to pay for an extra psychologist to spend one day a week at Collie high school. Members may recall the problems that occurred a while ago at Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School. Most country towns experience the same problems in their high schools. Just recently, there were some awful incidents at Collie high school but, thank goodness, we have sorted them out. If we do not have the financial support to provide the infrastructure and the back-up for school teachers and support staff, not only in Collie but in all Western Australian towns, we will struggle in the future.

In talking about other things that recurrent funding can do for schools, I would like to talk about driver training being available in every school, funded from the road trauma trust fund. Despite the amount of money in that fund, we are patching up problems after events when we should be leading by example and providing driver training in every school. Every senior high school should have funding for driver training. I am not saying that each student should be totally funded because I believe that at that stage the students should be able to work towards helping themselves get their driver’s licence. They should not be given a licence but be helped to work towards earning their licence, subsidised to some degree by the road trauma trust fund. Not so long ago, over the long weekend, we had 11 deaths, many of which occurred in country areas. We do not have any compulsory structured driver training in our schools, but we make students stay in school until they are nearly 18—I think it is 17 and a bit. Mr Teacher, is that right?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes, it is. We could do a lot more for young people before they get on the roads and before they become a liability to themselves and to others who use the roads. I know that many of the people who were killed on that weekend were from country areas. They were not all young people, but a fair few of them were, and if we can save one life, we will save not only millions of dollars, but also heartache and pain. If someone else in the car also suffers a major injury, the cost to our community is huge, let alone the pain that parents, siblings and partners have to put up with. Fines from speeding and red-light cameras provide a guaranteed income, and my proposal will not make a great difference at all to the budget bottom line. We had \$130-odd million sitting idle in this fund while people were being killed. That is really appalling in a governance sense; it could have been utilised through a program that may have saved some of those people’s lives.

One of my hobbyhorses, which I will ride into the future, is funding driver training in high schools. Let me point out that driver training was provided in the Collie region for quite some time. It was sponsored by Worsley Alumina, which put in quite a reasonable sum for driver training for students. Again, once politics became involved, the program was moved away. It was also a good money spinner for the Collie Motorplex, because this motor sports complex was used on a daily basis. The complex is available to people from Bunbury, Donnybrook and any of those surrounding regions. People even came down by bus from Mandurah to utilise the motor sports complex during the week. Young people were taught how to drive safely and to understand the corrections that are needed at times if they should run off the road. They do not get that with normal driver training. It is something that I think the minister should really think about.

The last part of my speech will be very short and relates to the provision of teacher assistants and aides in schools for children with disabilities. Asking for help for these children is a continual process. Our disabled children are not getting enough services. I see that at close hand, probably more than other members because I am in a country town and I am closer to and know the people personally and can see the affect this has on not only the family, but also the child’s ability to learn. There has been many a case in which a child who was not expected to be able to speak but who has received intensive therapy has learned to communicate with their parents, which is a great occasion in those households. Another failing of this government is that basic services in our society are being left behind for the grandeur of projects such as Elizabeth Quay, Perth Stadium and many other areas. The government is now talking about tunnels to nowhere as well. When we look at that, we have a lot of work to do to prop up and make sure that our communities are solid as we go into the future. Children with learning disabilities should have opportunities and hopefully with those opportunities would come employment and family, and they could move on through society as normal human beings and not be left out to

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rot. It still surprises me that there are students in high school who cannot read or write; I just do not understand a system that can allow that. It is certainly a problem that we have to do something about in the future.

Turning to my electorate, I was amazed to see included in the budget funding into the future for a ring-road around Margaret River. I have never heard of something so ridiculous as a ring-road around Margaret River when not a great many people live on the other side of Margaret River, yet we still cannot get from Perth through Bunbury and Busselton in a safe manner on the way to Margaret River. Why would we not do this in an orderly fashion and start at one end and finish at the other? Why? It is political bias; that is all it comes down to. I believe the government already has some names ready for the Margaret River ring-road. There is a bit of an argument over whether it will be “Barry House Drive” or “Terry Redman Ring Road”; we are not quite sure, but I believe those are the two names in the ring for that ring-road. We see more than \$90 million going into that area and money being withdrawn from the budget for the Collie–Preston electorate. We had to screw the Minister for Transport’s arm to seal a road that he said he would not do; then, a fortnight later, the road was sealed. It just shows the disarray in this government. One hand says one thing, and the other hand does not know what the other one is doing. It is with much disgust that I stand and talk about a budget that has been special for some and very unfair for others.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler) [9.51 pm]: The state of the deficit that has now rounded out to \$34 billion speaks for itself, and speaks loudly of the government’s failure in economic management, which was once heralded by conservatives as the government’s strong suit. The “best economic managers” are now shown to be utterly irresponsible in taking state debt from something over \$3 billion, rounded out to \$34 billion and on its way to \$40 billion. The government’s responsibility and failure in this area is proven by the size of the deficit in this budget.

The government’s other claimed strong suit was law and order, which has been absolutely a comprehensive failure. We know from debates in this chamber and from crime figures released that the number of home burglaries has risen, month on month, in double-digit figures. We are, as has been truly said, the home burglary capital of Australia and the car theft capital of Australia. Assaults are going through the roof and there is a crime wave all over the metropolitan area and in the regions. The Minister for Police and the government like to talk about a crime “spike”, as though it will be self-correcting and that these figures are just a blip on the radar, but it has been going on for so long now that it is truly an out-of-control crime wave.

What was the government’s intended solution for this? I can remember back after the 2008 election when the Barnett government was in its first term and Christian Porter was Attorney General and subsequently Treasurer. His solution and the government’s solution was more imprisonment. When we raised the cost of this to the community, it was shown that it was not feasible, within the prison assets we had, to keep on imprisoning people at the rate the government intended to imprison them. Mr Porter said, “Well, just build more prisons. The answer is we’ll just build more prisons. Don’t worry about it; we’re going to get on top of crime by building more prisons.” In this budget, for the first time, the corrective services spend will top \$1 billion. Is this an effective answer to this crime wave? Clearly it is not.

We know that in Western Australia at the moment, over 1 100 of the people in the prison system are on remand. Half of the population of Casuarina Prison, which is our maximum security prison, is made up of remand prisoners. We know that it costs \$120 000 a year to hold a person in prison. We only have to do some basic mathematics to work out that the cost of holding people on remand prior to trial is \$132 million a year. Are these people in prison for just a short time? This government came to office in 2013 on a promise of fast, swift justice. The government said it would achieve that—laughably—by having a night magistrates court and a Sunday court. However, what did the government do? It abandoned the night magistrates court before it even got off the ground, and it employed a retired magistrate to hear bail applications on a Sunday. The Treasurer is now faced with a \$1 billion spend on corrective services. Is that effective?

The main population within the prison system is Indigenous Western Australians. I want to read from a paper delivered by the Chief Justice of Western Australia at the Law Summer School 2015. The Chief Justice stated —

In Western Australia, the adult Aboriginal imprisonment rate is 3,663 per 100,000. That compares to the national rate of 2,174, so if you’re quick at maths, the rate in this State is about 70% higher than the national rate. The next highest rate is in the Northern Territory at 2,808/100,000, so our rate is about 30% higher than the rate in the Territory. That compares to the non-Aboriginal imprisonment rate in Western Australia of 164/100,000, so the non-Aboriginal:Aboriginal ratio is 164:3,663.

The Chief Justice goes on to say —

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The rate of imprisonment of Aboriginal women is rising faster than the rate pertaining to Aboriginal men, and Aboriginal women now comprise more than 50% of the female prison population in this State.

...

The statistics relating to Aboriginal children are even more depressing. The disproportion of Aboriginal children in detention is 58 times greater than non-Aboriginal children per head of population.

He then goes on to talk about costs —

In 2008, the Auditor-General's review of juvenile justice concluded that the 250 children who have the greatest number of intersections with the criminal justice system in Western Australia will cost the State of Western Australia \$100 million (in 2008 dollars) when they pass between the ages of 10 and 17. If you are quick at maths, that is \$400,000 per child. Inflate that to today's costs and it is probably about half a million dollars per child. We could send those children to Geelong Grammar and to a Swiss finishing school and still have change.

His Honour then postulates the following questions: What are we getting? Is it working? Is it reducing crime rates? The answer clearly is no. The re-entry rate for these prisoners is phenomenal.

In the United States of America, which was incarcerating its citizens at an enormous rate, there has been a change of heart. The Treasurer of this state is allocating \$1 billion to this failed system in Western Australia. The United States, which is usually some years ahead of Australia in its thinking, has now, in a bipartisan way, conceded that this rate of imprisonment does not secure community safety. I will read from the report "Justice in Review: New Trends in State Sentencing and Corrections 2014–2015" that was published in 2016 by the Vera Institute of Justice in America. It states —

- longer sentences have no more than a marginal effect in reducing recidivism and shorter sentence lengths do not have a significant ... impact on public safety;
- many people can be safely and effectively supervised in the community rather than in custody at lower cost; and
- post-punishment penalties and restrictions ... hinder people upon release from prison or discharge from community supervision in addressing known risk factors for reoffending—such as mental illness, substance-abuse problems, lack of vocational skills, education, and housing—with now well-understood impacts on their families and communities.

It goes on to quote the President of the United States. It states —

And recently, in a surprising show of bipartisanship, Republican and Democratic leaders alike are rejecting mass incarceration as a cure-all for crime. In a speech in support of criminal justice reform in ... 2015, President Barack Obama declared that the overuse of incarceration "makes our country worse off," and that the punishment meted out too often is "disproportionate to the price that should be paid." Using the example of the harsh treatment of low-level drug dealers and parole violators, the President endorsed wide-ranging types of reform, including curbing the use of mandatory penalties; expanding the adoption of alternatives to prison, such as drug courts and treatment and probation programs; and improving programming and conditions in prison as well as after release.

Here is the bipartisanship —

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, a Republican, acknowledged in March 2016 —

Very recently —

that he was a "late convert to criminal-justice reform" and noted that tough-on-crime laws that imposed mandatory minimum sentences and three-strikes penalties —

Which this government introduced and sped up —

"ended up putting people [in] for long prison terms, which ends up ruining their life and hurting their communities where we could have had alternative means of incarceration, better means of actually dealing with the problem than basically destroying a person's life."

The Americans, both the Republicans and the Democrats, came to this view not because of a higher aspiration for social outcomes but because of the enormous cost to the community and the taxpayers of the United States

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for minimal outcomes. As I have said, we are paying \$132 million out of this budget to hold people on remand. We do not even know as a community the reasons for all of those people being held on remand because there has been no audit of the system as to why these people are on remand. Some commentators say it is the Monis effect or the Jill Meagher murder effect; that is, the person was out on bail when they committed these crimes. The Commissioner of Police, Mr O'Callaghan, however, says that bail should be used even less—more people should be held on remand because they commit crimes whilst they are on bail—without offering a scintilla of evidence that that is the problem.

The Western Australian government, despite calls from the opposition, refuses to inaugurate a sentencing database of all sentences and judicial decisions made in Western Australia. We are in the dark. We just have to trust the government's words, which are said in the heat of an election campaign, that it is on track to reduce crime, when we know by the published figures that we are in the middle of a crime wave and the government has no answer. As the Chief Justice says, mandatory sentencing does not deter people from committing crimes at all and longer sentences do not deter people from committing crimes, because the courts are handing out very heavy sentences, for example for ice trafficking. We have just seen the Court of Appeal in the Quaid matter uphold the 23-year sentence imposed upon that drug trafficker. What deters people from committing crime and what is known to deter people from committing crime is the fear of apprehension. We are spending \$1 billion on incarceration. The number of people being incarcerated has risen from 3 500 at the start of this government's term to over 6 000 people, yet at the same time the risk of being caught has diminished because per head of population the number of police officers is going down. In the community and the electorate Butler, people know there is less chance of being caught now because there is less policing. We are spending money on the wrong end of the system. The apprehension rates were falling so low that the Commissioner of Police stopped publishing the clearance rates because they were an embarrassment. As the Chief Justice pointed out, there is only a one in five chance of being apprehended. That is miserable. We should be spending more money on apprehension and reducing the billion dollar spend on the incarceration system. It must drive the Treasurer nuts when he looks at the figures in this year's budget that show that the figure on corrective services is climbing steeply and then sits in the chamber hearing about how the crime figures are climbing just as steeply, like in the United States. I invite the government to reflect upon the United States Speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan; we have all heard of him. He is no softy.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [10.06 pm]: I want to make some comment in the debate on the third reading of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. I suppose I make a plea in my contribution. Just before four o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday, 31 May there was a tragic shark attack in Falcon in Mandurah upon a surfer, Mr Ben Gerring, who despite a very courageous fight in hospital passed away a few days later. We know also that, I think, five days after the tragic attack on Mr Gerring another shark attack occurred in Mindarie just out from the marina, also taking the life of a woman. I suppose I need to tell the house that the Falcon area and particularly the area where Mr Gerring was attacked on the afternoon is a very special part of the coastline of Mandurah. Indeed, the attack by what was presumed to be a great white shark has effectively traumatised and numbed not only his family and so many people who knew Mr Gerring, but also a lot of people who live in the immediate area.

That afternoon Mr Gerring had gone out into the surf. The conditions were excellent for surfing because big swells were coming in across the Indian Ocean, and at least 20 people were out in the water. This time of the day is very popular, of course, because a lot of people knock off work early to go and check out the surfing conditions. Of course, a lot of young people, including kids, had knocked off school and grabbed their boards to go down to surf. We know that on that fateful afternoon some 20 people were in the water, about one-third of whom were, as described by Mandurah Boardriders club president Brian Williams, kids; kids aged 10, 11, 12—young kids. According to witnesses, Ben was sitting a bit further out than anybody else and trying to chase larger waves, when he was, it seems, attacked from behind and went under the water but came back up, obviously screaming for his life and that there had been a shark. Amazingly courageously, when some surfers—understandably particularly the young kids—were being called onto shore, a couple of surfers braved what was now a very dangerous and perilous situation. They went out further, grabbed hold of Ben and brought him to shore. From all reports of what occurred, the next hour was a frantic effort to keep this young man alive. The courage, the remarkable mateship displayed and the professional efforts of people to keep this young man alive, to resuscitate him, to ensure that he had the very best chance of survival was truly remarkable. The brave fellas who went out to get him, in my view, deserve recognition. But all those there that afternoon—whether medics, ambulance personnel and paramedics who arrived, or the off-duty doctor who happened to be on the beach that afternoon—are indeed heroes, and their efforts ensured that Mr Gerring had at least a fighting chance before he was transferred to Peel Health Campus. He was there worked on again by the emergency staff, and then transferred to Perth. I did not know Ben Gerring or his family,

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but I do know that they are very, very appreciative and certainly humbled, in many respects, by not only those who supported their son in what was a horrific shark attack and who rescued him or took him from the ocean, but also those who worked on him to keep him alive. I know that they are certainly very, very appreciative of all those people.

But what does this do for us? I could go on to give details of the woman who was attacked and killed only five days later, but I just need to put on record in this place the impact these sorts of tragedies have on communities. It is a very numbing feeling. I do not live very far from Falcon and I am not a surfer, but it is a very numbing feeling to know that such a horrific thing can happen in an ocean I have known, having lived in Mandurah for 27-plus years. That such a horrific thing can happen is quite bamboozling in many respects. The days since that attack occurred have been a very numbing experience. I know there have been debates in this place and publicly about drum lines, and about how we respond to an apparently increasing amount of shark activity in our waters. It is very sobering to live in a community that experiences this tragedy. We are not the only one, of course, because we know that there have been a number of attacks in recent years and a number of families have lost loved ones. However, when it happens in my own community, it is particularly sobering. I want to share with the house an email I received from a surfer and family man who has lived in Mandurah for a long time. I will not read the whole email, but I want to give an overview of the perspective of somebody who loves the ocean. He writes —

Hi David,

At the same time the night before Ben Gerring died my 8 and 10 year old sons were surfing at gearies —

That is the beach in Falcon —

with six similar age mates. The afternoon of ben's death there was also a similar amount of kids surfing at gearies under the age of 10 with my 2 about to paddle out when the commotion began and my kids were frantically told to go home. The kids and adults in the water that day are psychologically affected for life. I have had one of the male adults involved at my side last night crying because at this stage he can't return to the ocean with his 10 year old son who is entered in to the junior state surfing titles today in falcon

I am 46 and have lived in MANDURAH since 1976 and have surfed in mandurah since 1979. I have always told my kids not to worry about sharks because I have never seen one in mandurah in all of this time.

He goes on to state that, like most surfers, he is conscious of environmental requirements, and he is open-minded enough to realise the necessity of maintaining the amazing countryside, ocean and lifestyle that we enjoy. The email further states —

When I was growing up one of the sayings adults would use to make us stop and think before we stepped into a car as a 17 year old was that statistics say one of your mates will die in a car accident before they are 30. Since I turned 17 I have had one mate die in a car accident. No one told me I would have 2 mates killed by sharks(Brad smith was my first mate killed by a shark) that is because before 2003 when the attacks began there was no shark attacks in wa so there was no need to worry about it.

So the question the wa community has to ask is how many deaths from sharks per year is acceptable? If we were a company the answer is zero planned deaths for employees or the government/public won't allow us to operate.

He goes on to discuss the risk assessments, and the need to put everything that has been going on into perspective. The email further states —

We have been pussy footing around this issue for to long now. Queensland and New South Wales have been killing sharks via nets and drum lines for 30 years and I don't see sea Shepard or green peace in boat following the fisheries around.

He writes about the need for the creation of what he calls shark exclusion zones, which he identifies as being needed around metro areas and key regional coastal tourist precincts. I do not have a lot of time left to go through more of his email, but he writes about the need to rethink our approach to tragedies in our community and in many other coastal communities in Western Australia over the past 10 years or so. He writes about the need to educate everyone about what a shark exclusion zone might be and how it might operate. He acknowledges that it is not an easy decision. Ultimately, we cannot please everybody, because there will always be those who hold a particular view and others who hold a contrary view.

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I want to share with the house tonight that irrespective of what people's views might be—I support my party's position on this and indeed it is now very similar to the government's position—one of the things we all need to be mindful of is that we need to take the politics out of what is essentially a tragedy that has affected not only those family members directly impacted upon, including Ben's fiancée and his unborn child, who will grow up never having met his father. If science is the answer, we need to be putting everything we possibly can into finding a solution. If it is a mix of science and respect for sustainability in oceans, maybe that is what we need to look at too. Tonight I read with interest an article by Rick Ardon in tomorrow's paper, which also highlights the need to look at using technology. Whatever the solution, I do not know whether the Falcon community will be the same after what has occurred. We have lost diving businesses at Mandurah and I know other diving businesses have been lost in other parts of the state. We need to be very careful about the language we use and we need to think very carefully about how we approach this issue, being the beach-loving, surf-loving community that we are.

I express my sincere condolences to Ben Gerring's family, his fiancée and his mates and I acknowledge the wonderful efforts of all those who responded on 31 May.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [10.24 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. I want to point out that I have realised from this budget process that while the government has placed us in grave debt that will go on for some time, it has also done that to the detriment of the public service and the public sector. It has indeed gutted many of the public sector positions and jobs that deliver so much to our communities that we represent. We should be aware of the impact of that on our communities.

In particular, I want to talk about Legal Aid and what has happened with funding for community legal centres. Through the estimates committee and budget process, it was really clear that substantial cuts have occurred to funding for legal assistance in community legal centres. Community legal centres indeed had a cut of 4.5 per cent to their funding in this financial year. That has had a considerable impact on them being able to deliver services when services are increasingly pushed into the not-for-profit sector. This is combined with the 32 per cent cut proposed by the federal government in the 2017–18 financial year, which would be devastating to the community legal sector. In the course of the estimates committee hearings, I asked: given that Legal Aid had received an increase in commonwealth funding of 14 per cent in the 2016–17 financial year, why did the state government not reinstate the 4.5 per cent that it had cut from community legal centres in the 2015–16 financial year? The response was that the department certainly viewed the 14 per cent simply as a corrective adjustment and not an adjustment that would see funding go into those vital community legal centres.

When we combine those cuts with the situation in which centres are no longer getting public purposes trust grants, some centres' funding is going down; for example, the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre's funding is going from \$798 000 down to \$439 000, which is a massive decrease. Other areas have suffered smaller cuts in funding, but those cuts are still significant. For example, funding for the Geraldton Community Legal Centre is going from \$511 000 to \$489 000. The list goes on. The Citizens Advice Bureau's funding goes from \$142 000 to \$60 000; Sussex Street Community Law Services Inc goes from \$270 000 to \$76 000—again that has something to do with the public purposes trust, which I want to go to in a moment—the Wheatbelt Legal Community Legal Centre goes from \$350 000 to \$101 000; and the Youth Legal Service goes from \$497 000 down to \$338 000. This is happening at the same time that two services have been defunded; last year that was the Environmental Defender's Office and this year there will be no continuous funding for the Employment Law Centre of WA. When asked why the Employment Law Centre was no longer funded, the department answered —

The law centre would probably not be considered to be one of our priority clients. Our priority clients are, if you like, people who are very poor, and that is where we concentrate our efforts.

The fact that people cannot get assistance when they are having industrial relations issues with their employers and do not know whether they are being treated with fairness is doubly compounded by the fact that the labour relations division of the Department of Commerce has been gutted of staff as well. Parliamentary secretary, during the estimates I thought that that agency had lost only 27 positions, but from the supplementary information I have now received it appears that in fact the workforce has been halved from 98.3 full-time equivalent staff in 2013–14 to 49 staff now. That division has effectively lost 49 employees, including positions in the Wageline centre, senior education officers, labour relations officers, labour relations advisers, managers, receptionists and team coordinators. If one of my constituents has an employment issue, they now cannot go to the Employment Law Centre because the government is no longer funding it, despite it having had long-term funding, and they cannot go to the Department of Commerce any longer because this government has gutted the community services of that public service agency. This all happened at a time when the Law Society of WA's

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public purposes trust allocated funding was anything but transparent. How those funds are delivered is very opaque but many organisations have lost significant funding. It is no wonder the legal fraternity and the general community have embarked on a campaign to promote the idea that legal aid and the funding and benefits of legal aid need to be properly and decently funded. No wonder they have called for this to be an election campaign issue for the election in July. Basically, the Law Council of Australia has demanded that legal aid become an issue that we confront and properly finance. It says that because of government cuts, only eight per cent of Australians qualify for legal aid under the current means tests. An ABC online news item quotes Law Council of Australia president Stuart Clark as saying —

“These are Australians who may be a woman with two or three children whose marriage has sadly broken down and is now facing the prospect of trying to reach a financial settlement with her former husband in circumstances where she’s forced to go to court without a lawyer.”

This could be someone with an issue involving consumer affairs or another legal issue relating to their rights and entitlements. This could be any person in our communities whom we represent. They are not just people on the poverty line. These are people who need assistance with complex processes that have been set up by people like us in parliamentary systems, moving laws around commerce, industrial relations or various other things. Now we deny them the right to gain any legal assistance to get them through a difficult time. Most people will never come in contact with our court system but when they do, they want to know that they get good advice and have the capacity to traverse and navigate through difficult procedures and processes to get the best outcome for them without too much cost. We all know that the costs can be quite high and prohibitive for many people such that they will not even pursue their legal rights and their capacity. This is also happening at a time when the Equal Opportunity Commission has again lost significant staff. It will lose 4.5 FTE in the coming financial year, which follows from substantial cuts in previous years such that it now has a skeleton staff. If someone in the general community has an issue with how they have been treated relating to race or gender or any of those things that come under the Equal Opportunity Act, again, they are basically discriminated by the fact that the government has cut their funding through cuts to the public sector. It is not enough to say that people have these services; the government has to provide those services to make them viable. It is not enough to say that there is legislation around that; the government has to provide that.

Nothing is clearer to me about how desperately we need funding in legal aid than when we look at the number of calls that have been abandoned by Legal Aid WA’s InfoLine. These are people ringing in and not getting an answer. In 2012–13, 79 736 people called in, of which 17 000 people abandoned, so about 22 per cent abandoned the call. In 2013–14, 78 000 people called in and 12 000 people abandoned the call, so that is 16 per cent abandoned calls. In 2014–15, 85 000 people called in, of which 13 000 calls were abandoned. That is 16 per cent of calls abandoned. In 2015 up to April of this year, 81 000, so fewer people than the whole of last year, have rung the Legal Aid WA InfoLine and 21 000—26 per cent of people—abandoned their calls because they could not get anyone to answer their calls. If this does not show that we have gutted the public sector and taken away those jobs, taken away that funding and taken away those services, nothing does. These are vital services for our community. This government has gutted those services by gutting funding and also taking away vital public services and the human resources that deliver these vital services.

I want to conclude by talking about the way that that has worked in occupational health and safety. Occupational health and safety, or WorkSafe, has gone from having 182 full-time equivalents to 156 in 2015–16—it has reduced staff by 27. WorkSafe will employ two more legal officers because at this point in time it cannot do the necessary prosecutions. Its number of inspectors goes up and down, but it never fills the 107 FTE positions it has the quota for. In our workplaces we depend on our workplace health and safety representatives being registered with WorkSafe, which occurs through good education campaigns by WorkSafe to point out where workers should be covered by health and safety representatives. Those people are then registered and are required to do training and then work with employers and employees to ensure they have safe workplaces. In 2013 there were over 10 000 representatives in a total workforce of 1 325 000, covering 77 per cent of the workforce. This number reduced in 2015 to 7 604 representatives with a greater number in the workforce—1 352 000. The rate has gone from 77 per cent of the total workforce having health and safety representatives in the workplace to 56 per cent. This shows that the resourcing and the capacity on the ground to deliver to the people we represent has been totally undermined by this government. They are vital services.

In closing, I want to talk about the rental accommodation account, which funds tenancy advice services—another service under attack through reduced funding. This has come about because the rental accommodation account funds are earning less interest, but it has still been gutted in order to fund the Magistrates Court. For people on the ground—community members who need to access services when we have greater unemployment, greater

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uncertainty and greater cost-of-living—what are we seeing? We are seeing services ripped away from them. They are vital services. When there are not necessarily complex problems but issues in the community there are no services for them.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [10.36 pm]: I wish to speak at this third reading stage of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016-17) Bill 2016. A number of notable matters could occupy a lot longer than 15 minutes, but I want to talk particularly about road safety. Some additional information that came out as part of the supplementary answers I think is very illustrative of what is happening with road safety in this state. The government has been perpetrating a con on the people of Western Australia. It is now attempting to suggest that, in real terms, more money than ever is being spent in the area of road safety. It does this because of what it is now calling a hypothecation of all speed and red-light camera money going to the road trauma trust fund. But of course, the government has changed the rules. Once upon a time, the money allocated to the road trauma trust account was only one-third of that money but that was spent at the Road Safety Council's discretion, not at cabinet's discretion. A huge number of areas once included in mainstream budgets are now being taken out of the road safety budget. When I was Minister for Road Safety, we did not fund, for example, police or other agency full-time equivalent staff from that budget, nor did black-spot funding come from that budget. Black-spot funding was a separate allocation over and above the road trauma trust account. Whenever this government tries to pat itself on the back and pretend it is doing more for road safety, it is a con—a smoke and mirrors job. It is not comparing apples with apples. I particularly want to draw the attention of the house to supplementary information B30 requested in Assembly Estimates Committee B on 24 May. The response reads —

Question: Mrs ... Roberts asked: Can the minister advise how much money is in the road trauma trust account as at 24 May 2016?

The answer was that there was a massive \$116 656 739. As at that day, \$116 million was sitting in the account. I note that the minister decided to provide further information. This is clearly because that is an embarrassing amount of money to have accumulated in the road trauma trust fund. The minister said that the balance did not include expenses relating to May 2016 as these could be processed in June and are estimated to be \$23 million. No doubt it did not include all the money from speeding and red-light cameras for that month either. The minister said that if we take that into account, it would only be \$93 565 922. An amount just shy of \$100 million has been accumulated in the road trauma trust fund. The minister tried to justify that by saying that this year the government will allocate a record \$145.7 million. This government has played politics with this money. Road safety and road trauma should be above politics, but it has squirrelled away this money in an effort to spend it in a year leading up to an election so that it can wheel out a few promises and show a few pictures of the smiling minister at last pretending to do something for road safety. This minister and this government have been a disgrace when it comes to road safety.

Members opposite used to like goading me back in 2008 and 2009 saying, “Well, you never got round to implementing drug testing.” I wanted Western Australia to lead the nation in random drug testing for drug-drivers. It would have been a very smart thing to have happened in this state because, guess what? All of the empirical information shows that WA has a bigger amphetamine problem than in the other states and we have more people on meth and other drugs than in the other states. At the height of the mining boom people said it was because we had a lot of cashed-up young people earning big bucks who were easy prey when parting with money for those drugs. We had people hooked on these drugs and involved in crime. That leads us to a whole other area that I do not intend to go into right now.

The last year that I was police minister, in 2005, I said that drug testing should be a priority and that is where the Labor government was going. I had one of the Dräger DrugCheck units and demonstrated it to the media and said that we were going to implement a trial, but in the next couple of years under other Ministers for Police and Road Safety that did not eventuate. This government said that I had dropped the ball and did not do anything. These guys opposite dropped the ball for the next five or six years! Guess what? Every other state has beaten WA at this. We are the only state that does not have a proper drug-testing regime. We have the worst drug problem but no proper regime for drug-testing drivers. It is a disgrace, and it has cost lives. Government members should make no mistake about that at all, because in other states where it has been in place for years now people have been charged and prosecuted with those offences. The Minister for Police stands up from time to time and says that the government is going to do more. It is a national embarrassment to now be the last state to implement driver drug testing. The criticism of the Labor government for not implementing it, effectively ahead of every other state in Australia, is really pretty shrill, is it not, when this government has sat back and let every other state go first? It is a national disgrace. I went to a national road safety conference last year, and everyone in the road safety space said that Western Australia was the only state not doing random drug testing.

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We have one of the lowest rates of drug testing. We have had evidence before parliamentary committees that has indicated the drug testing was being done only in situations in which police thought someone seemed inebriated or under the influence of a substance, and when they tested negative for alcohol, they were then tested for drugs. To me it is a no-brainer. Everybody else seems to know that there are a whole lot of young people and older people who abuse both drugs and alcohol at the same time. Alcohol is a substance that disinhibits people and sometimes, having had a few drinks, people move on to drug taking as well. If we had a proper random drug-testing regime, we would have had many people charged and prosecuted and hopefully taken off our roads and off drugs.

That is one huge area in which, had the government acted five or six years ago, three or four years ago, or even two or three years ago, lives would have been saved on our roads and we would not have one of the worst fatality rates in the nation. Over the last two or three years, we have been either the worst or narrowly the second worst of any state, while some of the much bigger states population-wise—Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland—have done much better than us in their fatalities and serious injuries rates.

Another area in which this government has not acted is the area of point-to-point cameras. Again, they have been rolled out in virtually every other state. When the member for Hillarys was the Minister for Police; Road Safety, he stood in this place and announced that he was going to introduce a trial of point-to-point cameras. More than three years later, the current Minister for Police just sat back and did nothing. It was not completely nothing; she has made a couple of announcements over the last year. She stood and said, “Yes, we’re going to be doing this.” We waited about six months and she stood again and said, “Yes, we’re going to be doing it soon”, and she is again delaying it. Again, implementing that was really a no-brainer and it is something that would save lives. A lot of people think that it is a fairer system. Perhaps someone might creep up on the accelerator at a particular point, after becoming a little distracted or whatever, to 12 or 13 kilometres over the limit for a five-minute period and get caught out and get a ticket because of that, but for the rest of a 200-kilometre trip have driven at or below the speed limit. If they are assessed over a point-to-point system, there is an argument that that is fairer.

It also means that people cannot do silly things like go past a speed camera and think, “You beauty; I’ve passed the speed camera. I’ll be right to speed for the next 50 kays because how unlikely is it that they’ll have two speed cameras within a kilometre of each other?” This is a fair and reasonable system and it also gives people the message that they have to not look out for the speed cameras or have one of those contraptions that help them identify a speed camera that is coming up. They have to know that they need to keep to the speed limit for the whole journey, and I think that would really encourage people. Again, it is just another initiative the government has not taken.

The principal point I want to raise about the estimates committees is the way this government has really used smoke and mirrors to cover up what it is doing and pretend that it is spending more on road safety than it really is. I asked the minister how many full-time equivalents were being employed out of the money that goes to police each year and I was told that in the last year there were 50 FTEs funded as part of the WA Police allocation from the road trauma trust fund. Fifty police officers’ or staff wages—I expect most of them are police officers—are funded as part of the WA Police allocation from the road trauma trust fund. Once upon a time, the payment for all police officers, whether or not on traffic duty or in booze buses, came out of the WA Police budget. As part of this smoke and mirrors exercise, the government is robbing this money out of the road trauma trust account and putting it in the WA Police budget. The government is basically filling holes in the WA Police budget. According to the supplementary information that I have, that happened again in the midyear review. We were told this time last year that \$18.048 million had been allocated to the WA Police budget in 2015–16 from the road trauma trust account. However, in the 2015–16 midyear review, a further \$5.378 million was allocated across. Basically, the government needed to rob some more money out of the road trauma trust account and pop that over to plug the hole in the WA Police budget. That was for the funding of 50 FTEs. I am told that this year, \$26.669 million will be allocated to the WA Police budget. The government is saying at this stage that a total of 42 police FTEs will be funded, but that is subject to change depending on further projects and so forth. No doubt it will end up funding the wages of roughly 50 police officers. I have no doubt that the same thing is happening in Main Roads WA and other agencies that are getting money from the road trauma trust account. That money will be funding some of the FTEs that were once funded under that agency.

This is a smoke and mirrors exercise. This government has been absolutely political in its attitude to road safety. This government has the worst record of any state. There is no point in the government saying that the road trauma rate in this state is slowly going down. The rate in other states has gone down at a rapid rate. Part of the reason is that people are now driving safer vehicles. Just about all cars now have a four or five-star safety rating.

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Ten years ago, a lot of cars, particularly four-cylinder cars, had only a one or two-star safety rating. People are more likely to survive a crash if they are driving a five-star safety rated vehicle.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Treasurer) [10.51 pm] — in reply: I will be very quick in my response to the third reading on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2016–17) Bill 2016. I guess it is the task of the opposition to be oppositional and to find fault—fault might not be there, but they want to find fault anyway. With some exceptions, this was a pretty dismal performance from people on the other side. They whinged about the deficit but whined about the lack of spending in all cases. They went on and on about how we have not spent here and we have not spent there. They whinged about the deficit but whined about the tax increases. They whinged about the debt but whined about the lack of capital spending here, there and everywhere. They whinged about excessive salary growth. This is coming from the Labor Party, which claimed that it would keep wages tight. When they came into government, I note that wages grew by over 30 per cent. That is its record. Labor members whinged about the lack of growth in the public sector and in every sector that they talked about. They whinged about the royalties for regions level of spending but whined about the denuding of spending in regional areas. They gave no recognition whatsoever—with some exceptions—to the severity of the conditions facing this state, and therefore they have no capacity to address those issues. The policies of the opposition are quite clearly to whinge and whine their way into government.

Mr J.E. McGrath: World champions!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes; they are world champions at that. There were a couple of exceptions. One was the member for Mandurah, who did a great job in talking about a very controversial issue—sharks, and what we can do about them. He talked also about the tragedy of the young man who was killed by a shark down at Dawesville, who happened to be the grandson of a sailing partner of mine.

The second exception was the member for Butler. We have to give him credit. Sometimes the member for Butler can go off the shelf but sometimes he is on the money. One of the issues that he addressed today was very good. It was the challenge that we face with the rapidly growing incarceration rate.

Mr J.E. McGrath: He fluked one!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes; he fluked one. I give him credit. We have to give him some credit, member for South Perth. At the same time, he talked about the high proportion of Indigenous people in the prison system and the cost of that and the waste of life. That is a challenge that not only we in government but also any future government must face.

One of the things that the shadow Treasurer whined about was the lack of capital growth. All I can say is net worth—what we have is assets minus liabilities. He said that I skipped net worth. Under our watch, net worth in the public sector has grown by 76 per cent. In terms of assets minus liabilities, we have added \$50 billion worth of net worth over our period in government. To say that we have not been doing anything is ridiculous. Anyway, that is what we have. That is the opposition's job, I guess. Our task is to ensure that the opposition does not whinge and whine its way into government.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.55 pm
