

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 14 August 2012]

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Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Mr David Templeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Kim Hames

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2010–11 (SUPPLEMENTARY)
BILL 2011
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2010–11 (SUPPLEMENTARY)
BILL 2011**

Cognate Debate — Motion

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [7.10 pm]: I move —

In accordance with standing order 169, that leave be granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 to be the principal bill.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [7.10 pm]: I would like to confirm there will be general debate during the second reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011, and that when we move to consideration in detail—I know I asked this question last week—we will deal with the recurrent bill first and then the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 second.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Yes.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 1 December 2011.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [7.11 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011, which relate to spending outside the budget process. It is somewhat appropriate that one of the first bills that the Treasurer gets to deal with in his second incarnation as Treasurer is spending outside the budget process. It is appropriate in light of the spending that the Treasurer presided over in his first incarnation as Treasurer with 13.5 per cent expense growth in 2008–09 and 10.9 per cent expense growth in 2009–10, before we had another Treasurer in the Premier, then another Treasurer in the member for Bateman, then the Premier again, and now we have gone back to the member for Vasse as Treasurer. It is always interesting reading debates on spending outside the budget process. I note that the government has provided a lot less information than it once did. When the Parliament previously dealt with these sorts of bills, the government provided a lot more information. We have a lot less this time than I expected, so we will have to pursue that spending during consideration in detail.

The Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill (Supplementary) 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 were introduced by the former Treasurer, the member for Bateman, on 1 December last year, the last day of Parliament in that year, and we are dealing with them now. I note that the explanatory memoranda of both the capital and recurrent bills described the bills largely as machinery bills, implying that perhaps it is not the most important policy consideration of government and it is merely a matter of machinery that we are dealing with these two bills. Despite the fact that we are dealing with approving expenditure during the 2010–11 financial year of \$486.3 million for recurrent payments and some \$15.5 million for capital payments, people may be surprised to hear that such bills would be described as “machinery”. It is certainly true that the government did not breach the authorisation cap, so it does not require a Treasurer’s advance; it is simply a matter of going back and approving expenditure. As the member for Bateman pointed out in the second reading speech when he introduced this legislation, this approval is required courtesy of section 27 of the Financial Management Act 2006. However, I note section 27(3), which reads —

Expenditure may be authorised under subsection (1) or (2) —

That is what we are doing tonight —

only to make payments in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters.

What is extraordinary and unforeseen indeed causes some angst during consideration in detail when we learn what it is that the government has been spending its money on outside the budget process and we find that perhaps it is actually a budgeting problem and not extraordinary or unforeseen. That is because that spending on capital and recurrent items should indeed have been foreseen as it was neither extraordinary nor unforeseen. Section 27(4) of the Financial Management Act emphasises, I guess, the explanatory memoranda of the two bills that these are largely machinery bills. Section 27(4) reads —

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Payments made under subsection (1) or (2) in a financial year in respect of extraordinary or unforeseen matters are —

- (a) to be charged in that year to the Consolidated Account; and
- (b) to be provided for in an Appropriation Act in the next or a later financial year.

The Financial Management Act makes it clear that there is no sense of urgency to get these pieces of legislation through the Parliament, which is why the government has described them merely as machinery bills. Of course, the opposition is always keen to see where the government is spending money outside the budget process. But it is curious, when we look at the letter that we received from the Treasurer as acting Leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly dated 9 August 2012, which the Leader of the House usually sends prior to the parliamentary week outlining the legislation that the government wishes to debate, that we see the Corruption and Crime Commission Amendment Bill 2012. This is obviously an important bill for the government to get through on an important policy position it has taken. But there were three other bills that I want to highlight: the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill 2011; the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill 2008, which is still hanging around; and the Prostitution Bill 2011. Those three topics were in the Liberal Party's plan for the first 100 days of government; yet here we are, four years into the government, with only eight weeks of Parliament left before we rise before the general election, and the government is now resorting to spending a number of hours on what it calls a machinery bill, a bill under the Financial Management Act. There is not a huge sense of urgency in passing this bill, and there is no statutory requirement that it be passed at a certain time. The Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill 2011 was part of the Liberal Party's 100-day plan for government, as were the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill 2008 and the Prostitution Bill 2011. Yet here we are—I assume a few hours will be allocated to these bills—debating the appropriation bills for the 2010–11 financial year.

I note an article in *The West Australian* last week, on 7 August, in which the Leader of the House, the Deputy Premier, made a vow about the Prostitution Bill and stated that if the opposition frustrated or delayed debate, “we’ll go to the election on it.” The article shows a picture of the Deputy Premier vowing that he will go to the election on the Prostitution Bill. The problem is that he will not bring it on for debate. The opposition is waiting anxiously for the government to bring the Prostitution Bill on for debate. I dare say that it is not the opposition the government has to worry about; it is its own members. The government has to get its own house in order on the Prostitution Bill. The opposition looks forward to that debate, eventually—assuming there will not be other pieces of legislation that the government will try to bring up the list. I note the Premier's statement is on the bottom, and maybe we will go back to that before we deal with another very important bill for the policy initiatives of the government.

Ms R. Saffioti: Where is the Premier tonight?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I saw him get in the car and take off two hours ago; he is not around!

Here we have the vow from the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the House. The article then goes on to say —

Dr Hames said new lobbying laws, which have yet to be debated in the Lower House —

That is not quite right as debate has started —

and the anti-association Bill to deal with organised crime gangs, which is in the Upper House, were priorities that were listed for Government business this week.

They are just not a priority before the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011. It is interesting that when these vows were made by the Leader of the House he looked to the opposition to blame, yet he will not bring on the legislation to debate in the chamber. I want to put that on the record: it is not the opposition that is holding up legislation; it is the reluctance of the government to bring it on for debate. I look forward to the Deputy Premier bringing on those bills for debate. As I said, coming back to finance, away from the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill, the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill and the Prostitution Bill, which were promised in the first 100 days of government, I want to spend some time talking about the GST because I have noted some interesting commentary coming in at the federal level from both the Labor Party and, more interestingly, the federal Liberal Party on the GST. I want to start on a wonderful dorothy dixer asked of one of the former Treasurers, the member for Bateman, back on 1 May this year; it was not that long ago. May was a good month for GST debate.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Weren't you a former shadow Treasurer?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have been. There have been only three of us on this side, as opposed to five changes of Treasurer.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

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Mr B.S. WYATT: I have learnt! Unfortunately there has been lobbying of the Treasurer, who is somebody who understands the finances—the Premier certainly does not. The only problem is the Treasurer cannot control the Premier in respect of the finances. Coming back to that dorothy dixer —

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will keep focused on the finances, thank you, member for Bassendean.

The then Treasurer, the member for Bateman, was talking about a trip to Western Australia by federal Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott. It was quite a good week for Tony Abbott. The then Treasurer said —

I would say that one other thing has happened today—it just as a matter of chance happened—and that is that the federal Leader of the Opposition is in town. I must say that, as a member of a conservative government, I have waited with some interest to hear what he may say.

I am kind of curious why the then Treasurer would not have actually spoken with the federal Leader of the Opposition about the GST—he is from the same party. He was waiting to listen to what the federal —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will be interested to see whether the member for Bateman will continue to pursue with gusto the GST debate that he has appeared to pursue in this Parliament. The then Treasurer quoted Tony Abbott —

“I think that what ought to be very seriously considered by the government right now is the proposal that all the Liberal states have put up, that the GST revenue should be distributed on what is closer to a per capita arrangement.

The then Treasurer was very excited by this. He went on to describe how that would be very good for Western Australia. Indeed, it would be very good for Western Australia. The member for Bateman further said —

That statement from Mr Abbott is the most positive development in this debate.

...

In summary, the news is good; it is just that the good news is not coming from the federal Labor Party.

The good news did not continue to come from the federal Liberal Party—we will get to that shortly. I thought I would look at what it was that Tony Abbott actually said that got the member for Bateman, when he was Treasurer, so excited on 1 May this year. The then Treasurer got it right; this is what Tony Abbott said on 1 May —

“I think that what ought to be very seriously considered by the government right now is the proposal that all the Liberal states have put up, that the GST revenue should be distributed on what is closer to a per capita arrangement.

...

“This is the unified position of the Coalition premiers. I think it makes a lot of sense and I think that’s what the Government should be considering.”

Madam Acting Speaker, you will no doubt recall the then Treasurer, the member for Bateman, beating his chest about his huge success in the GST debate in convincing the man who, according to the polls, is very likely to become the next Prime Minister that the GST should be reformed.

I recall that the media reported that his next stop was Tasmania. I was curious to know, in this day of electronic media, immediate reporting and the 24-hour news cycle, what the Tasmanians thought of what Mr Abbott had to say. I asked the Parliamentary Library to get a copy of Hobart’s *The Mercury* of 2 May and an article by a journalist named David Killick and headed “Abbott backs GST rout”. Another article by David Killick on 3 May was headed “Dear Mr Abbott, do you really want to rip the GST heart out of Tassie?” I thought that Mr Abbott would have his stamina tested when he arrived in Tasmania. His fortitude about his commitment, as confirmed by then Treasurer, the member for Bateman, to GST reform would have been tested when he arrived in Tasmania. The article headed “Abbott backs GST rout” stated —

Tasmanian Liberal leader Will Hodgman said his federal counterpart was out of line.

“Tony Abbott is wrong to suggest the Government should consider distributing the GST on a per capita basis,” Mr Hodgman said.

The other article about Tony Abbott ripping the heart out of Tassie stated —

Mr Hodgman, meanwhile, said he had left a message on Mr Abbott’s phone to communicate his concerns, but the two had not yet spoken.

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When Mr Abbott does not return your call, that is probably not good news. I thought that maybe Mr Abbott would stick to his plan, and that maybe his fortitude would survive the rigour of Tasmanian media commentary and questioning. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for putting on his website this transcript of his doorstep interview in Tasmania, which made it very easy to find. This is a question put to Mr Abbott. It appears to be a very unbiased question —

If you are elected, will you rip off Tasmania's GST revenue as you suggested you might in Western Australia the other day?

Mr Abbott replied —

“Well, with respect, I made no such suggestion.

He immediately walked away from the comment he made just two days before —

“Look, I accept that Tasmania has special circumstances.

Maybe he has a special relationship with Tasmania. He was asked, “Mr Abbott, you have supported a per capita distribution. The WA Treasurer says you have supported a per capita distribution.” Mr Abbott said —

Again, that's not what I said at all. Go back and look at what I did say.

Which I did. I listened intently to the member for Bateman. Certainly it appeared to me that the federal Leader of the Opposition was supporting a per capita distribution. It is a great outcome for Western Australia. Unfortunately, of course, the agreement, as signed up to by the Premier, is that every state needs to be on board. That is the small but significant problem that we face, which is why I was interested in the Tasmanian reaction. Mr Abbott went on to say —

“Let's see what the Greiner group comes up with and then the Coalition will have more to say.”

Mr Hockey has had a lot more to say about this well before the Greiner group has even finalised its report.

I go back to the Tasmanian press reports after Mr Abbott had been in town and had said not to listen to what the Western Australian Treasurer has to say because he had not committed to all per capita. An article in *The Mercury* of 4 May, this time by journalist Nick Clark, headed “A tune for all seasons” summed up the performance of Mr Abbott saying whatever is required before whatever audience he happens to be in front of. I will rely on Mr Hodgman, the leader of the Tasmanian Liberal Party. To quote from that article —

Mr Hodgman said a Coalition government would not short-change Tasmania.

“He left me in no doubt that a Coalition government will not short-change Tasmania and we will get our share of GST,” Mr Hodgman said.

There was literally article after article in *The Examiner* and *The Mercury*, but Tasmanians were not terribly convinced by Mr Abbott.

I thought to myself: what does Mr Hockey have to say? Very rarely do Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey say the same thing, so I thought it would be interesting to hear what Mr Hockey had had to say. Thankfully, just two days later, on 6 May, Mr Hockey appeared on *Insiders*. Barrie Cassidy asked —

When Tony Abbott was in Western Australia he said he would seriously consider a per capita arrangement and that of course would hit some States very hard. And when he got to Tasmania he said that he would not short change them. So is it serious consideration of a per capita arrangement or not?

Mr Hockey was sympathetic but did not commit to a per capita arrangement. He did say —

But we're also mindful that the GST pool is not going to be broadened under us.

They will not be putting money into the pool of GST money. He then went on to make the useful point —

We want to have a constructive relationship ...

As we now know, on 27 July Mr Hockey put this issue to bed for the federal Liberal Party. He did it over here in Western Australia. To his credit, he did not do it from Tassie or South Australia or the Northern Territory; he came over to Perth, Western Australia and put this issue to bed as far as a future federal Liberal government is concerned.

An article by Daniel Emerson in *The West Australian* of 28 July 2012 titled “Hockey hints at tolls to pay for new roads” states —

Tolls roads could be necessary if WA wanted “extensive, expensive infrastructure”, shadow treasurer Joe Hockey said yesterday during a passionate speech in favour of WA subsidising other States through the GST.

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In remarks which he admitted would not be popular with Premier Colin Barnett, Mr Hockey said he would not “be a party” to the GST reform being pursued by the Premier, saying it would make Australia a “lesser country”.

The article goes on to state —

In a speech to a Perth business breakfast audience, Mr Hockey said towns such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Cairns had previously “done the heavy lifting” during gold, manufacturing and tourism booms and now needed a leg-up from WA.

“What do we say to those people, ‘Oh guys, don’t worry we’re just going to rip more money out of you and send it over to the West?’

...

Mr Hockey suggested if WA was having trouble paying for infrastructure, it could introduce tolls on roads.

In that particular case, Mr Hockey said in no uncertain terms that there will be no GST reform if he becomes Treasurer. That is crystal clear. He said this despite the comments made by Tony Abbott, his leader, in Tasmania, which were to wait until the Greiner report is concluded and then the coalition will have more to say. Well before the final report from Mr Greiner and Mr Brumby, we have the position of the federal Liberal Party that there will be no GST reform. What surprised me the most was the Premier’s response. As Colin Barnett has been talking about GST for quite some time, Mr Emerson went off to get comment from the Premier. He states in his article —

Mr Barnett refused to comment on Mr Hockey’s remarks.

For heaven’s sake; this is the man who, potentially, in a very short period will be federal Treasurer. We must bear in mind that the member for Bateman, the former Treasurer, said that the Greiner review is a very, very positive outcome for Western Australia. Finally, we have a federal government looking at this issue, yet before that review has run its course, the federal shadow Treasurer has knocked it on the head: “No, there won’t be. Listen here, Western Australia; if you want any more infrastructure and some good roads, you should look at toll roads.” That suggests to me that money flowing from the federal government may start to decline with Mr Hockey as federal Treasurer, because he would like to see Western Australia go down the path of toll roads. It certainly has been an interesting May and July in the GST debate, mainly of course due to the federal Liberal Party. I am surprised, and certainly the editorial in *The West Australian* made the point, that the Premier, Mr Barnett, made no comment at the time about what was obviously an embarrassment. But it also highlights the fact that Mr Barnett, the Premier, was more worried about making political points against the federal Labor government than he was about lobbying his own side. According to the member for Bateman, the then Treasurer, the Premier has been waiting for Tony Abbott to give his position. He has not been lobbying Tony Abbott; he has been waiting. Finally, this was manna from heaven from Tony Abbott, only for Tony Abbott to go to Tasmania and say something completely different from what he said here. I am curious to know whether the Premier made the effort to lobby his own side of politics about the GST reform. I dare say that he did not.

I will now move on to issues of state debt. This is an issue that I would like to think the Treasurer has some focus on and some concern about. It is something that the Premier is not concerned about. He has said that he does not think debt needs to be paid back. He thinks the cap should be \$20 billion. Of course, shortly we will breach that \$20 billion cap. Back in 2010—the member for Cannington immediately looked up, because he recalls this incredible quote from the Premier reported in *The West Australian* of 4 September 2010—the Premier said —

“In reality you don’t have to pay back the debt, what you have to do is make sure the debt is (under) control and as a guide I’m intending keeping our total level of net debt below \$20 billion,” ...

Of course, his budget papers suggest that we are not staying below \$20 billion, although his budget papers certainly indicate that debt does not need to be paid back. I hope that is the position I can take to my bank—that, in reality, I do not have to pay back the debt. This is the position we find ourselves in. In the words of the former Treasurer after he had introduced the 2011–12 budget, net debt in the out years will be declining. I looked at the debt positions and at the gross debt liabilities. Firstly, I will start with the net debt. By 2013, it will be \$18.6 billion, bursting its way through the Premier’s \$20 billion debt cap in 2014 to \$22.2 billion and continuing upwards in 2015 to \$23.1 billion. Then there is a decline in 2016 to \$22.86 billion. Gross debt liabilities continue to increase quite dramatically from \$35.6 billion in 2013. They continue their upward trajectory through to \$42.7 billion in 2016. I can only assume that that dip in net debt is the increase in liquid assets from \$16.9 billion to \$19.87 billion. I find that interesting. I dare say that we may get to debate that during the consideration in detail stage of this bill, but it may come up during debate on the future fund legislation that the Treasurer has

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indicated he will introduce tomorrow. I am curious about why there is this rapid increase in liquid financial assets to literally offset a dramatic increase in the gross debt liabilities of the state.

What is also clear is that the former Treasurer's comments about net debt declining in the out years are simply not true. We know that commitments made by this government are either partly funded or not funded at all. They have not been brought to book in their entirety or they have been funded in part and the rest pushed out beyond the forward estimates. Nonetheless, they are commitments that will require significant spending. My conservative estimate—I think it is fair to say that it is a conservative estimate—is that there is a looming debt black hole of somewhere between \$6 billion and \$6.5 billion made up of the spending commitments that I have just referred to and what I will call the hollow logs—government bank accounts flush full of cash.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Which ones?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will get to that, Treasurer; do not worry about that. I look forward to the Treasurer's response. I want to get him on the record about some of these hollow logs. Cash is sitting in accounts that are not expensed. I assume that at some point the government will spend the money in those accounts.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Get that story out.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No, I did not. It is the life of opposition members, Treasurer. Ninety per cent of the stories we want to get up do not get up and, God knows why, member for Morley, some other ones do get up. I do not understand it. There is a lack of interest in the ones that we think are great.

I think the Parliament will be interested in the \$6 billion to \$6.5 billion ongoing black hole that will continue to rise. I think it is fairly conservative. I hope that when the Treasurer gets to his feet at the end of the second reading debate, he will address all of these, because I would like him —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm sure it's in the bill.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is the beauty of general debate, Treasurer; we can talk about whatever we want. I am looking forward to the Treasurer's response on the finances of the state.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You may toddle off disappointed.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That may be the case, but I still look forward to the Treasurer at least attempting to address this debt black hole of \$6 billion to \$6.5 billion. We know that there is \$700 million in costings, for want of a better expression, for the Perth major stadium, of which \$273 million has been allocated.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Plus transport.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Thank you, Treasurer; I will get to the transport. That is a shortfall of \$427 million. That money will have to be spent at some point. As the Treasurer helpfully interjected, public transport infrastructure to the new stadium is estimated to cost \$300 million, of which \$102 million has been allocated, leaving a shortfall of \$198 million.

The floating Orrong Road project is close to my heart. I am still waiting to see funding for that project enter into the budget. Orrong Road is the boundary of my electorate and the electorate of Belmont. I am very interested in the floating Orrong Road project but it is very hard to get a costing for it. The only equivalent road I could find is in South Australia.

Mr T.R. Buswell: There's Singapore.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am talking about in Australia. The South Australians are building what is called the South Road Superway. That is an elevated roadway concept, which I assume is what the Treasurer is talking about when he refers to the floating Orrong Road. The South Australian road is not very cheap.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is right. It may have big tollbooths sitting on either end of it. The South Australian project is a 4.8-kilometre nonstop corridor, including a 2.8-kilometre elevated roadway. That will cost the South Australians and the federal government, which is putting in the majority of the money, \$842 million for 4.8 kilometres of road.

Ms R. Saffioti: You could build a railway line for that.

Mr B.S. WYATT: We certainly could.

I am assuming the Treasurer will build his floating Orrong Road along the straight—I do not know what the plan is. I would have thought it would be at least three or 3.5 kilometres.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is 4.2 kilometres.

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Mr B.S. WYATT: It is 4.2 kilometres. The comparisons are not very far off. I gave the Treasurer the benefit of the doubt and estimated that it would cost \$250 million, but it looks as though it might eat up the better part of \$1 billion, given what the Treasurer just interjected across the chamber.

The Bunbury to Albany gas pipeline was another election commitment that we are yet to see much of. The government has allocated \$20 million for planning. There are bits and pieces of media where we can find some costings of it from the government. On 3 February 2011, under the headline “Pipeline will run at loss”, Mr Barnett has estimated that the project would cost between \$200 million to \$300 million. For the purposes of today, I will assume that it is about \$225 million. Therefore, there is a shortfall of about \$205 million.

Roe Highway stage 8 is the Treasurer’s favourite road construction that he continues to commit to wherever he goes. The government has spent \$20 million on it. There is a hole of \$600 million for Roe Highway stage 8, confirmed again by the then Minister for Transport.

Mr T.R. Buswell: And Housing.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member was not the Treasurer at that time. The Minister for Transport confirmed that the costing was \$620 million last year, of which \$20 million has been allocated. We are waiting for another \$600 million for that project.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Can I ask a very quick question?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am running out of time. I will wait and see how I go.

The member for Ocean Reef was here earlier. The former Labor government spent \$700 000 on Ocean Reef Marina.

Ms M.M. Quirk: There is a sign there.

Mr B.S. WYATT: There is a sign. Will it cost \$60 million or \$80 million?

Ms R. Saffioti: I think that is a bit low.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will give the government the benefit of the doubt and say that Ocean Reef Marina will cost \$60 million or \$80 million.

The government has made an allocation of \$32.5 million for Willetton Senior High School, but, of course, there is a shortfall of \$48 million. The government gave a commitment to provide funding for Shelley Bridge. Maybe the Treasurer can tell us how much Shelley Bridge is likely to cost. I dare say it will cost between \$50 million and \$70 million. I was looking at the member for Riverton’s Facebook site where there is a lovely picture of the Treasurer and the member for Riverton up to their knees in a swamp in Riverton.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Are you a friend of mine on Facebook?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am not. I do not need to be the member’s friend to look at his Facebook site. The widening of Shelley Bridge is a step closer; we are getting there. The Shelley Bridge widening will happen. Do members know why? It will happen because the member for Riverton has had his picture taken with the Minister for Transport to prove it! That is why it will happen.

During the winter recess I took my family down to Busselton for a holiday. I headed down there to spend a couple of days there with my family.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Where did you stay?

Mr B.S. WYATT: We stayed at the Grand Mercure Busselton, which was very nice. I took the family down there; I even took the in-laws!

Mr T.R. Buswell: Not beautiful!

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is always beautiful spending time with the in-laws.

While I was there, I shuffled out one morning and picked up the *Augusta–Margaret River Times*, as one does, to find the Treasurer committing to a \$100 million airport upgrade at Busselton Airport. I thought, “Wow, Warren Hately, you have an exclusive here. I haven’t heard about the \$100 million airport upgrade!” I looked with interest at the Treasurer’s commitment. The article states —

Transport Minister and Vasse MLA Troy Buswell confirmed expanding Busselton Airport to take international as well as interstate flights was a major aspiration for his Government and he believed the project had to be considered regardless of whether there was an immediate demand from international carriers.

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It does not matter if no-one from China, Japan, America or England wants to fly there, we should build it anyway! The wonderful quote from the member for Vasse was, “If we don’t build it, they certainly won’t fly here.” That is true. I actually cannot find fault with that logic. It is quite unbelievable. The Treasurer went on to say that although he had anecdotal feedback from airlines that they would consider direct flights to the region, establishing infrastructure to support tourism and other industries was important. He said that the government has to have a broader perspective on this type of project. In other words, we do not need the demand, we just need to build it. It was quite an enjoyable holiday for me because in the same paper I found another commitment from the member for Vasse.

Ms R. Saffioti: You should go down more often!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I may have to spend more time in Busselton. In the *Augusta–Margaret River Times*, the member for Vasse confirmed the establishment of a professional firefighting station at Vasse. The member for Vasse said that there was no doubt there would be a career fire station in Busselton. That is another commitment from the member for Vasse. I do not know what the cost of a fire station is —

Ms M.M. Quirk: About \$7 million.

Mr B.S. WYATT: About \$7 million; I thank the member. We have seen more unfunded announcements such as the Aubin Grove train station, including the new railcars. The Minister for Transport rushed this announcement out and then admitted that the government does not actually own the land it is putting the car parks on but he said that the government will get there. I wish I owned that land, knowing that the government was very keen to purchase it from me. There is a shortfall of \$80 million for the Aubin Grove train station. I am looking forward to the mid-year review.

The Perth–Darwin highway is a \$250 million project that the Treasurer committed to —

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is a lot more than that.

Mr B.S. WYATT: How much is it?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will let you know.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am looking forward to it. Just last week in the *Pilbara Echo* the Treasurer described the Perth–Darwin Highway as a “priority project”.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Number one.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The project has been allocated \$8 million for planning. There is a shortfall of \$242 million, but as the Treasurer has just pointed out, it will cost a lot more. That shortfall is certainly conservative. The Mirrabooka light rail is a \$1 billion project, apparently, but has not been allocated any funding.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Number two.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Ellenbrook transit way —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Number three.

Mr B.S. WYATT: —was described in a media statement on 14 July last year as the government’s first priority. The Treasurer has forgotten which priority it is. He just said that it is his third priority but his media statement said that the implementation of the Ellenbrook transitway was the government’s first priority. Of course, there has been no allocation of funding for it, leaving a funding shortfall of \$62 million. Do members remember the article in PerthNow when the Premier talked about the waterfront cable car? That was costed at \$30 million. A second tunnel under the city, as announced in *The West Australian* on 12 July 2012, was estimated to cost \$385 million —

Mr T.R. Buswell: What did I say?

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Treasurer can tell me he will not do it; I look forward to it.

That is, let us say, another \$400 million shortfall there. The new Museum presents a shortfall of \$348 million. The Joondalup to Yanchep rail extension has also not been allocated funds. I refer to the Treasurer recommitting to the Joondalup to Yanchep rail extension on 13 August in *The Sunday Times*. The estimated cost of the extension is about \$400 million, I would have thought.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Beautiful!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Is it more than that, Treasurer?

Mr T.R. Buswell: It might be \$1 million more.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 14 August 2012]

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Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Mr David Templeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Kim Hames

Mr B.S. WYATT: As we can see, all these estimates are low. That is the beauty of being conservative on these estimates. The Treasurer keeps telling me that I am too conservative; it will be a lot more than this. I turn to those hollow logs, those pots of money —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, can I ask you one quick question? If there is no money in the budget for those projects, why is there nearly \$1 billion in the Department of Transport headed NB2, which is what they will all be?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I look forward to hearing the Treasurer explain that.

Ms R. Saffioti: Which projects?

Mr T.R. Buswell: They are still being determined. You did not read the whole budget paper.

Mr B.S. WYATT: They are still being determined. We have —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: We will talk about payouts. People have had payouts. Members may recall that a young lady up here was paid out. She went through quite an awful experience and had to have a payout. The member for West Swan had to deal with that at the time, and she may reflect on that payout and the circumstances that led to that payout when she gets to her feet shortly. I always find it interesting that the Treasurer goes immediately to those areas. He has caused his own fair share of payouts.

I come back to the hollow logs. An amount of \$339 million is parked in the account for the Oakajee development, which, unless the Treasurer walks away from Oakajee at some point, has the impact of reducing net debt by \$339 million. The Perth parking levy, not all of which is allocated —

Mr T.R. Buswell: What will be the balance in the Perth parking levy? It will be \$7 million.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will tell the Treasurer something; I will make my allegations and I look forward to his response.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It will be \$7 million.

Mr B.S. WYATT: By when?

Mr T.R. Buswell: About the last year of the forward estimates.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is interesting because at the moment the government has expensed about \$49 million of that \$120 million. That is another hollow log. The regional development fund, the Leader of the Nationals' fund of \$1 billion, is not an insignificant hollow log. The road trauma trust fund is about a \$240 million hollow log. Indeed, about \$1.5 billion is sitting in those cash accounts. The Under Treasurer confirmed those figures to Hon Ken Travers during estimates hearings not that long ago. We can see that these arrays of commitments, which are either partly funded or not funded at all, expose the line of the former Treasurer, the member for Bateman, that net debt in the forward estimates will reduce. That is clearly not the case. Net debt will continue to rise. The gross debt position is surging strongly in an upwards fashion and the liquid financial assets are offsetting that rise. However, no doubt the Treasurer will go through this and come up with his own costings. I hope he does. He has already indicated that I was too cheap on some, so I look forward to him telling me exactly how large some of those figures are. The debt management system of the government, as formulated by the Premier, is that in reality it does not have to pay back the debt. Ultimately, when the government has such a rapid increase in debt, we need to consider where it will peak. I do not think that the budget documents are accurate in that regard. I look forward to the Treasurer's response to the claims the opposition has made about those costings. When we eventually deal with the appropriation bills for 2010–11 in consideration in detail, we will indeed go through them in some detail.

I go back to where I started to emphasise the fact that despite the urgency and the vow made by the manager of government business that we would deal with prostitution, lobbyists, the Corruption and Crime Commission and Royal Perth Hospital, we are now running out of time. Three of those four issues were in the 100-day plan for the new Liberal government back in 2008. Here we are in 2012, some four years later, with eight sitting weeks left and, looking at the comments made by the Deputy Premier in *The West Australian* last week, Parliament is running short on time, yet we go to a machinery bill. Under the Financial Management Act, this bill does not have a statutory period in which it has to be dealt with and passed at a later year. However, the opposition always enjoys general debate and spending time talking about the finances of the state.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [7.55 pm]: I rise to talk on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011. In other years the opposition has received further information about —

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Mr T.R. Buswell: I am more than happy to table it when I do my second reading reply, then we will have a break and do consideration in detail later once you have looked at the additional information.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay. Normally, it is tabled before the second reading, but —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I did not table the original bill. I have it here, so I am happy to table it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Do you want to table it now?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am not sure I can, but I will.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Give it to me and I will table it for the member.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I think that is more than appropriate. Thank you for raising that matter, which I am happy to comply with.

[See paper 5114.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is lovely—beautiful, even! I will go through some of that expenditure. There is significant expenditure under the administered items under the Department of Treasury and Finance—\$121.6 million. I can only envisage that it is a higher-than-expected community service obligation being paid to Synergy. An amount of \$28 million will go to the Department of Treasury and Finance. Again, I expect that is probably a grant or subsidy that has blown out. There is \$80.7 million for the Department of Education for 2010–11. As I recall, the second year of the efficiency dividend was applied and I think that \$80.7 million was there to supplement the fact that the Department of Education did not deliver that efficiency dividend. There is \$129 million of funding for the Fire and Emergency Services Authority. I am not sure what that would have been for. There is \$2.7 million for the Department of Culture and the Arts. Given that the Treasurer is tabling that information, I will not go through and ask the series of questions I was going to.

I endorse many of the comments made by the member for Victoria Park. I want to go through some of the details raised that the Treasurer reflected upon. First of all, I want to talk about the GST deal and how disappointed we all were when we heard the comments of Joe Hockey, the federal shadow Treasurer. What have this Liberal–National government, the Liberal federal senators and people such as the federal Deputy Leader of the Opposition been doing if they have not sat down with the shadow Treasurer to inform him of the deal WA is getting? Everyone in this house agrees that WA needs a better deal under the GST arrangements. The fact that our percentage share is predicted to fall so dramatically has an impact on our ability to fund some key infrastructure. One of the key points that this government has always raised is what the Labor senators have been doing in Canberra. I ask: What have the Liberal senators been doing in Canberra? Why have they not taken up the issue?

Mr M.P. Whitely: Wait until I get there.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will wait for the member for Bassendean. I am sure he will take up the fight once he gets there. What have the Liberal senators been doing about this GST deal? Over this side we believe that there should be a floor of 80 per cent in our GST share. Again, I reiterate why WA Labor opposed the GST deal back in 1999–2000: we opposed it because it centralised financial power to the commonwealth. Whichever way we looked at it back then, it meant a transfer of revenue-raising power from the state to the commonwealth. We knew that in the longer term it would be bad news for WA, and that has come true. Again, WA Labor opposed the GST deal in 2000 and our position at the time has been shown to be correct.

I want to refer to some other comments made by the federal shadow Treasurer about toll roads. It is quite interesting that one of the key road projects currently before the federal government is Gateway WA, which is costing hundreds of millions of dollars. I understand that road is being funded through the metropolitan region improvement tax. The federal Liberal Party is keen and willing to scrap the MRIT, and therefore funding for the Gateway project. The question is: will the federal shadow Treasurer make it a toll road?

Mr P. Papalia: Odds on!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The federal shadow Treasurer is therefore saying that WA does not deserve more, it should not get more, and if it wants money for infrastructure, in particular for roads, it should make them toll roads. The Gateway project is one in particular that we should all be watching very closely. As I understand it, the project involves floating or expanding Orrong Road. I do not think floating Orrong Road will ever happen. However, the project is currently being funded by the federal Labor government, but the federal Liberal Party has not committed to it. Even worse, the federal opposition Treasurer is saying that WA should have toll roads. That is something that all Western Australians should be quite afraid of in an Abbott–Hockey government.

I want to also talk about the budget allocation for the stadium to which the member for Victoria Park referred. The former Treasurer—the member for Bateman—said that the budget for the stadium is \$700 million and that is it. He also said that the scope of the project would be downsized to ensure that the \$700 million budget price tag

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is adequate. That is very different from what the Premier outlined for the project. The Premier stated a number of times that he wants the stadium to have facilities such as a water playground, a footbridge turned into a busway, an outdoor cinema–theatre or perhaps an outdoor live venue—I cannot remember—business class seats, a facility for people to order food from seats and to be closer to the players in a corporate box. He wants all these new facilities, yet it has a \$700 million price tag. I believe that \$700 million price tag is not right and that it will cost far more.

I want to allude to a key fact about the site works. We heard this week that the government discounted by about \$30 million the price of land set aside for the new hotel in part of the Burswood Entertainment Complex. The reason for the discount is that the cost of remediation works is so high that it needs a discount of about \$30 million. If the government has to spend \$30 million to compensate the private sector to build a hotel on that land, what will be the cost of the massive amount of work needed to prepare the ground for the stadium nearby? I believe the \$700 million price tag is well underfunded, and that all these facilities proposed by the Premier—the footbridge–busway, the live theatre, the business class seats, a facility for ordering food from seats and the water playground—will not be delivered with that \$700 million price tag. As I said, I believe the cost of the site works themselves will be significant, given the discount being paid as part of the transaction for the new hotel at Burswood. The site works for the stadium, which will be next door, will require a lot of money spent on remediation when we know that the discount factor is about \$30 million for the land for the new Burswood Casino hotel.

Another thing I want to put on the record is the extraordinary accounting of funds in this budget. I am referring to funding, either of a recurrent nature or of an asset nature, that is allocated but not expensed. The member for Victoria Park outlined many of them and I will go through them again. The revenue for the road trauma trust fund is accounted for in the sense that the activity is allocated but the funding is not expensed. That means that the four-year figure for the RTTF is about \$200 million. Therefore, \$200 million of funding is allocated but not expensed in the totals.

Mr T.R. Buswell: This year's is.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This year's is \$100 million, but over the four years it drops away to about \$40 million, \$30 million and \$20 million. It therefore has a cumulative \$200 million impact.

As I said, that is quite extraordinary. I do not think I have seen that sort of budgeting to that degree in previous budgets. I sat through many Labor Party expenditure review committee meetings and I do not remember that we did that once. We might have but I do not recall it. Therefore \$200 million has been allocated but not expensed, so that it is actually not included in either the operating surplus figures or the net debt figures. The same is true for the new regional development fund, which is the fourth fund that has been created under the royalties for regions headline. As I recall off the top of my head, \$1 320 000 000 is allocated but not expensed. That means the government is booking the activity but not booking the expenditure. That therefore has the impact of artificially decreasing the net debt figure by about \$1 billion over four years, which is not an insignificant amount.

It is the same with the Oakajee project: money is being held in a special purpose account. Again, it is shown as an activity but it is not expensed in either the recurrent side or the capital side. It is therefore not shown as an asset investment and it is not shown as recurrent expenditure. There is therefore the RTTF, the Oakajee project, the regional development fund, and the Perth parking levy. But if the Treasurer wants to say that it is \$7 million, he can stand and say so.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Approximately.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is, not expensed or invested by the fourth year, and I think they are the main ones. There is another account too, but I cannot remember which it is, that has significant expenditure allocated but not expensed. It could be a project that has some commonwealth money that the Treasurer talked about that is shown as revenue and is not expensed under any particular project.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm trying to remember.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Which one is this?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We have gone through Oakajee, the RTTF, the regional development fund, the parking levy, but the Treasurer reckons it is \$7 million not \$40 million.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The TIDA; the taxi industry development account.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is that money allocated and not spent?

Mr T.R. Buswell: We have spent it but you plan on spending it on gold—painting the taxis gold!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How much is that?

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Mr T.R. Buswell: It's the lot.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What for, painting them gold?

Mr T.R. Buswell: There are two and a half thousand cabs. I think it was \$10 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is \$10 million allocated but not expensed.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, \$10 million you'd spend on painting them gold that we're not spending.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How much is in the fund?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I couldn't recall; maybe \$15 million to \$20 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So that is another \$15 million to \$20 million. As I recall, the commonwealth money would have been booked. The Treasurer was talking about one line in the budget for the commonwealth national partnerships.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The NB2.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. I think that has about \$800 million booked.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is \$940-something million, I think.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But the activity is not expensed or invested.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As the Treasurer just outlined, there is nearly \$2 billion worth of expenditure for which the activity is booked.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The revenue is booked, yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The funding is allocated but it is not expensed or invested. As I said, I do not recall that being a feature of our budget. I do not recall it being a feature of previous budgets. There might have been an associated account—for example, Fiona Stanley Hospital. However, the degree to which the activity is booked and an allocation made but not expensed in any way through the asset investment program is a significant change. Our questions will be: How is that going to be treated in the midyear review? Unless that money is all expensed in announcements before then, which it may be, how is that going to be treated? How will that be treated in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*? As I understand, the Under Treasurer would have to make a statement about how this expenditure is going to impact the books, because the government cannot have all this money without accounting for it.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The Under Treasurer of course signed off on the budget papers, which included all of those factors you've talked about. There was no comment whatsoever other than the Under Treasurer, independent of government, signing off on the budget.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, but this is in relation to the capacity over the forward estimates and the issues of cost. For example, the government is actually booking the allocation and the activity. The Treasurer stands up every day saying he is spending 100 per cent of the road trauma trust fund on safer roads, does he not?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I say we're spending it on road safety. I wish more would go into safer roads; I'm working on that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What I am saying is that the government is booking the activity, so when we make an election commitment that we will build something, why should we book the expense if the government is not booking the expense? There has to be a level playing field for the election costings. Why do we need to account, to book every expense item, if the Treasurer can stand and say the government is spending 100 per cent —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, but I'm not booking the expense.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But through the government's commitments and statements he is. Technically, frankly, the Under Treasurer and the Treasury has a role that when government makes an announcement and a commitment, they need to book the expenditure.

Mr T.R. Buswell: So when you submit your election costings to them, I'm sure they can bring that to account.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are quite prepared to submit our election costings to them.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Really?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I cannot speak on behalf of the shadow Treasurer, but —

Dr K.D. Hames: And don't forget the buying back of all the currently contracted-out hospitals.

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Mr T.R. Buswell: It's a matter for another day. Move on, I'm enjoying it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But what I am saying is that the government is booking and —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Where's your money for your Golden Bay train station?

Mr P. Papalia: Right where my police station money is.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What I am saying is: you cannot have it both ways, and that is what the government is doing. As I said, the Treasurer says 100 per cent of the RTTF is going to road safety. He has said that a hundred times in this place; he has made the commitment and obviously a cabinet decision would have been made to that effect too. Therefore, that expenditure should be shown in the aggregates; it is as simple as that. The government cannot hide the expenditure from the aggregates. If that is the case, we will play the same game; we will announce things and we will allocate but not book the expenditure until cabinet makes a decision. I understand the process the government is doing; it is booking the RTTF, it is allocating it, but it is expensing it only when it makes an individual decision about an individual project—when cabinet makes that decision. If that is the process, we will adopt the same process. We will book the activity, we will announce the activity, but we will expense it in our aggregates only when cabinet makes that decision. If that is the process the government wants to follow for the costing process, both sides will do it.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, I look forward to you having that debate with the public of WA at the time, because it won't be a debate we'll have to have.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If there is a matter of trust between this side and the Treasurer, I am happy to! If it is the member for Victoria Park and the member for Vasse on the issue of trust, we will do it. But the key issue is —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am not disputing that, but the reality is that's for the electorate to decide, not you and I.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is also for the Under Treasurer to tick off on both sides.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, I'm not trying to labour the point; I understand exactly the technical issue you're raising. It's a point of view and you're entitled to have it, but the Under Treasurer signed off on the budget papers. I'm hoping and I'm sure you would never do this, but I've never heard anybody in this place question the independence or integrity of the Under Treasurer.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course not.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I did it once when I was over there; the next day I got up and apologised.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course I am not questioning the independence of the Under Treasurer; what I am saying is that I believe he will ensure there is a level playing field. There has to be a level playing field. If the government is booking the activity, it has to book the expense. If the government follows a process whereby it books the expense only when cabinet ticks off the individual project, we will do the same. We will book the activity and we will show the expense when cabinet signs off on the individual project.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You have that discussion with the public and the financial media at the time. I'll stay out of it. It won't be something the government will have to be involved with.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But, as I said, it is a matter of trust between the member for Victoria Park and the Treasurer.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm not disputing that at all and that's for the wiser public of Western Australia to decide.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But obviously there is an issue that one cannot book the activity without booking the expense and if that —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, if there was an issue—I don't mean to labour the point—the independent Under Treasurer, who we all say has absolute integrity, would flag that with us in government —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not know whether he did.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I think Mr Marney does a fantastic job and I would like to think that across the Parliament everybody was of that view.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr T.R. Buswell: He didn't sign that. To my knowledge, there was no suggestion he would sign it. However, we move on.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, at this point, it is a matter of discussion. The crunch comes when it runs into a costings process and a pre-election process, and I think that is when the matter has to be cleared up because that is when people judge our expenditure versus the government's expenditure. As I said, if the process is that the government books expenditure only when cabinet signs off on individual projects, we will adopt the same policy. We will use —

Mr T.R. Buswell: You can have that discussion with the public.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will.

Moving on from the general financials, I will talk briefly about the Ellenbrook train line, because I cannot be on my feet if I do not talk about the Ellenbrook train line! While the Treasurer is in a talkative mood, I will ask him to clarify some issues about patronage numbers. This is a serious question; I am not trying to be flippant. Basically when Hon Alyssa Hayden stood in the upper house in June this year, she —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm afraid it's not a station I watch often.

Mr P. Papalia: We share something.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: She was only reiterating comments that the Treasurer has previously made, which is why I raise it. If I thought the Treasurer did not know anything about it, I would not raise it. Hon Alyssa Hayden quoted a 2009 feasibility study into an Ellenbrook rail line. In her comments in Parliament at that time—these are numbers that the Treasurer used previously as the Minister for Transport back in 2011 about why the government is not building an Ellenbrook rail line—Hon Alyssa Hayden said that there were two routes proposed in the feasibility study. I am afraid we have not seen a copy of the feasibility study, so if the Treasurer would commit to give us a copy that would be great because Hon Alyssa Hayden said that everyone should read this study. She said —

I believe the general public should be aware of this report, and ... the report's findings and facts behind the decision not to build a rail link to Ellenbrook ...

Hon Alyssa Hayden said that she believes everyone should have a copy of this report, so if the Treasurer could make that public that would be great.

Mr T.R. Buswell: We'll rely on her to transmit that more broadly!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Hon Alyssa Hayden said that two routes were looked at in the feasibility study of an Ellenbrook rail line: the eastern route, which would serve a population of 59 000—as proposed by the government's consultants; and the western route, which would serve a population of 90 000 by 2031. The report estimated that by 2031, only 1 400 people would use the eastern route and only 2 000 people would use the western route. The Treasurer previously used those figures. At the time, we thought those numbers were a bit low. We believe that the total catchment figures are wrong. I raised that with the Treasurer—I know he did not take it seriously—but they are definitely wrong.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Is that the catchment figures or the potential catchment figures for the train, which would be a subset of the total catchment figure?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The catchment for the train.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I mean, in any one area, there's a certain percentage of people who will never catch the train. For example, in Ellenbrook one of the things the study showed is a lot of people travel generally south west towards Malaga for employment or the other way down towards Midland —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, but depending on the route of the rail line —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm just answering, because I don't have your report —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Treasurer used the term "total catchment".

Mr T.R. Buswell: I do not know.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Was he using the total population forecast for those areas?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm not sure they are the figures you are referring to.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I understand that he was using total catchment figures of 59 000 for the eastern route and 90 000 for the western route. As I said previously, I believe those numbers are severely underdone. Even the 2031 estimates for Ellenbrook and surrounds are 47 000. Then there is the growth corridor, which I know the Treasurer is familiar with, of 33 000 in the next five to 10 years. Then there are the other areas such as Altone and Swan Valley plus, depending on the route, Ballajura, Bullsbrook and east Wanneroo, which come into the

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catchment. I do not ever believe those catchment figures. One of the key points is that the Treasurer said that one of the reasons his government did not build the Ellenbrook railway line was that the total number of people who would use it daily would be 1 400 on the eastern route and 2 000 on the western route. Then in his announcement of the new study on the bus rapid transit way —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Beautiful.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Beautiful. When will he do it?

Mr T.R. Buswell: The study is happening now.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes; I know, but when will he build it?

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr P. Papalia: The Tony Abbott commonwealth?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is that the toll road commonwealth or the other good commonwealth?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No; not the toll road.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is it the one that funds infrastructure or the one that wants to create toll roads?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No; the commonwealth.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In that media statement the Treasurer said that by 2031, the bus rapid transit way would service an estimated 6 500 daily users. That is very, very different from what he said about the Ellenbrook rail line. He said that at best, the Ellenbrook rail line would have 2 000 users a day by 2031. In the BRT media release—I have gone through to make sure I am comparing apples with apples —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Same routes?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Pretty much; it will go down Lord Street, down Reid Highway and then down to Bassendean.

Mr T.R. Buswell: What is?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The bus rapid transit.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No; it's not; that's wrong.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Which way is it going?

Mr T.R. Buswell: What is the street immediately to the north of Reid Highway?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Marshall Road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Correct.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, but it is the same catchment because it is still at Bennett Springs.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Different route.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is the same.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is the same. There is no-one north of Marshall Road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No; you said it was the same route. It's not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The catchment would be more if the line is along Reid Highway because it would be getting those who live south of Reid Highway, so the Treasurer has diminished the numbers because no-one is living north of Marshall Road.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The upper house Liberal knocked back the real estate.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They would have been.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The critical thing with Ellenbrook rail is: will the Labor Party fund it and build it?

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will make our announcements closer to the election.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I know it is in your 100-day plan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I want to contrast the Treasurer's commitment to Ellenbrook given he has said, "There's not enough people or there might be but we will use dodgy numbers" with what he is talking about at Busselton Airport.

Ms L.L. Baker: Good point.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Treasurer believes that project has to be considered regardless of whether there is an immediate demand from international carriers.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When it comes to Ellenbrook, he does everything but fund his commitment. Honestly, these figures are extraordinary because on one day he says there will be 2 000 daily users and the next day he says there will be 6 500.

Mr T.R. Buswell: According to you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is pretty clear. On a number of occasions the Treasurer has said fewer people will be boarding Ellenbrook in a week than there would be at Murdoch train station on one day.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When it comes to Busselton, he believes the project will be considered regardless of whether anyone would use it and that if we do not build it, people certainly will not fly there. I contrast that to his commitment to a rail line at Ellenbrook.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Is that a true statement?

Mr D.A. Templeman: The statement of a genius.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He says that as a government, we must have a broader perspective on this type of project. According to the front page of the local newspaper, the Treasurer has committed \$100 million to Busselton Airport. Thank goodness the member for Victoria Park holidays in Busselton, so we know exactly what has been committed to down there. It is \$100 million for the Busselton Airport on the basis of no studies: "Sure no planes will use it, but if we do not build it, they will not use it." That is the logic I expect. "If we do not build it, they certainly will not fly there and as a government we must have a broader perspective." Contrast that to his view on the Ellenbrook rail line. I think this is the sixth study into feasibility, non-feasibility, concept, design study. I do not know. This could be the sixth study on the public transport route to Ellenbrook. Today the Treasurer said that the route he is suggesting will reduce the catchment because it will go down Marshall Road and not Reid Highway. This is in your electorate, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.M. Britza). He said that my route is different; my route increases the catchment while the Minister for Transport's route does not. There has been study after study. During the estimates hearings in May he said that the latest concept study would take 12 to 18 months.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That's right.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Then he announced a study would be released in March 2013.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Beautiful.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: March 2013; how convenient! When we make our commitment I will be happy to go to the people in Ellenbrook and contrast. I will ask my constituents, "Do you trust the Liberal Party or the Labor Party on public transport?"

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A study that was meant to take 12 to 18 months one month ago will now be finished in March 2013.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Efficiency.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Regardless of that timetable I will be happy to contrast our commitments to Ellenbrook with the Liberal Party's commitments, because everyone comments on just how bad it was that this government broke its biggest election commitment to build an Ellenbrook train station. The member for Swan Hills said no-one raises it with him. I do not know who he has been talking to, but everyone raises it with me.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armada) [8.26 pm]: I rise to comment on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill. In my two years as a member of this house what has disappointed me the most is the lack

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of attention given by this government to the Armadale region, although I admit that the Treasurer in his role as Minister for Transport brought on the bus service from Armadale due west out to Murdoch. There was first going to be a three-month trial period to Cockburn, but I think the government thought that was all that would happen, but due to lobbying from the local community the Treasurer saw fit to —

Mr T.R. Buswell: You only have a trial if there is an expectation that it will carry on.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes. There was a view, however, that it was a measure to support the federal member for Canning because an election was imminent. Anyhow, the point is —

Mr T.R. Buswell: His vessel has been cut free from the mooring!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Treasurer, I just paid you a compliment; just take it.

I am very disappointed because the Treasurer agreed to meet me in Kelmscott to discuss the possibility of vacant land at the Kelmscott train station to be used for additional parking.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I told you I would come.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I know he has been promoted to the Treasurer's position and is a man under great pressure and demand, but I hope he will still honour his commitment to come out to Kelmscott.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will be there in April next year.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That will be too late. I hoped he would come in the next month or so. I had the kettle on for him but, unfortunately, he did not arrive.

The former Treasurer and former Attorney General have often stated in correspondence to me and repeated in the estimates hearings that the need to finance a new courthouse in the City of Armadale was a major priority of this government. But there has never been any commitment made or indication shown in the forward estimates that this will take place. I hope the Treasurer will visit the Armadale region with the new Attorney General and see for himself the need for a new courthouse in Armadale. The current courthouse is bursting at the seams. The solicitors are advising clients in hallways; there is no privacy; and there is a security problem. A trial was held there last year when a number of prisoners were witnesses and there were only two holding cells for about nine prisoners. There is a desperate need to build a new enhanced courthouse in Armadale, as it is the regional courthouse for the south east metropolitan area. The land is there, ready to accept the commitment of the state government. By way of correspondence from the former Attorney General and Treasurer, I am led to believe that a courthouse will be built in conjunction with a new police station. I hope the current Treasurer will make that commitment sooner rather than later.

I want to turn away from the specifics of this bill for a second and talk about a segment that was on *A Current Affair* last night. It is not a program that I normally watch.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Rubbish—I've seen you in there watching it nearly every night!

Dr A.D. BUTI: You may have, but it was not me!

A segment was brought to my attention last night by a couple of my constituents. The Mayor of Armadale sent me the online link this morning. The segment on *A Current Affair* was about the worst suburbs in Australia. It started off with Mt Druitt in Sydney, it went to Blacktown, and even talked about Coolangatta on the Gold Coast. It referred to a number of shootings in Blacktown and so forth in Sydney. Then it went to Melbourne, there was a fleeting mention of the worst suburb in Adelaide, and then on the screen there was a map of Western Australia with Balga and Armadale highlighted. Balga and Armadale were considered to be the worst suburbs in Western Australia. Straight after Armadale was mentioned, a block of disused flats with graffiti was flashed on the screen. Those flats are not in Armadale. If they are in Armadale, I have never seen them—and I have seen most flats in Armadale. That would have been a shot from the eastern states. There was no justification, no rational evidence given for why Armadale is jointly the worst suburb in Western Australia. I will let people from Balga talk about —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Perhaps it is a function of the local member.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Very funny, Treasurer. This is actually quite a serious issue to my constituents. They do not like to be referred to as the worst suburb. For a second, if it is possible, Treasurer—maybe even for a minute—be serious. Not everything is a joke in this house. It would be nice if the Treasurer gave some serious attention to this.

Mr T.R. Buswell: "My research is based on *A Current Affair*"!

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Dr A.D. BUTI: If the Treasurer listens, I will tell him that the program was ill-informed. Just listen for a minute. This is amazing. I am trying to be serious. I am not trying to point-score. I am just talking about a segment on *A Current Affair* that was very hurtful to my community, and the Treasurer wants to be smart about it.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Its relationship to this bill is what?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Wait and listen and you'll find out.

Mr T.R. Buswell: There is no relationship to the bill.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Treasurer will see. There will be a relationship in a minute.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I will give you two minutes before I call a point of order.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Treasurer can call a point of order and we will see how far he gets with it.

In respect to the labelling of Armadale, no information was provided on why it was the worst suburb. Presumably, people say that it has a high crime rate. Armadale has a high crime rate, but so do a lot of other areas. I did some research this morning to compare Armadale with Como in the member for South Perth's electorate. The member for South Perth is a good friend of the Treasurer. In the March 2012 statistics, which are the most up-to-date crime figures I could find, Armadale had a high number of assault and robbery offences but Como had more property burglaries and motor vehicle thefts. Como, a leafy suburb near the river, would never, ever be considered the worst suburb in Western Australia, but of course the longstanding prejudice against Armadale is considered by —

Dr K.D. Hames: Are you suggesting that Balga is worse?

Dr A.D. BUTI: No. It would be nice if members listened. People from Balga can speak for Balga; I can only speak for Armadale.

Another argument made for why Armadale is a bad place is the so-called crime and antisocial behaviour on the Armadale train line. Most of the crime that occurs on the Armadale train line does not occur in Armadale. It occurs further up the road towards Perth.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Oats Street.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Oats Street, Burswood and Beckenham stations are much more problematic than the Armadale train station, but they talk about the Armadale train line, so everybody automatically thinks Armadale is —

Mr T.R. Buswell: We are trying to rename it the south east train line.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I would prefer it was named the south east line, or the red line. Freo can be the purple line.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Freo would be the green line!

Dr A.D. BUTI: No—the purple line to equate with the Fremantle Docks.

The Armadale region has significant social problems—there is no doubt about it—but we are not Robinson Crusoe in that respect. Very few members in this house could say that there are no major social problems in their electorates. Of course, some electorates have more social problems than others. For a national show to refer to Armadale as the worst suburb in Perth is incredibly misleading and very hurtful.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is correct, minister. They are very appreciated, and hopefully they will continue.

The previous state government, under the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, also the former member for Armadale, established the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. During the time of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, Armadale was transformed. There was a revitalisation of the Armadale CBD, the establishment of the world-class Champion Lakes Regatta Centre and the progression of the Forrestdale business park. This government abolished the Armadale Redevelopment Authority and established the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. In due course that may be successful, but there is a major concern in the Armadale region that the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority will not give the emphasis to Armadale that the Armadale Redevelopment Authority did. There is some justification on economies of scale to try to bring the authorities together under one umbrella, but we are concerned that the current state government's focus on the Perth CBD will be to the detriment of the Armadale region. It remains to be seen whether our concerns are misplaced, but at the moment we do not really see much focus on the Armadale region by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: The centre is already established. I take the minister's point, but I am talking about new areas that the Armadale Redevelopment Authority was looking at. I am talking about the general history—Armadale has always been prioritised lower down the list.

Although there are some negatives in Armadale, I want to place on record the many positives. In many parts, it is a beautiful place. The Darling Range backdrop to Armadale provides a very beautiful setting for the town of Armadale. I am sure the member for Darling Range would agree with that—much of that is in his electorate. Armadale has produced people who have excelled in the professions and in the public service. It has had a rich bastion of sporting and creative talents; for instance, Rodney and Graham Marsh. Rodney Marsh is a former test cricket player and his brother Graham is a professional golfer. They are Armadale boys. Brothers Ashley, Toby and Corey McGrath all played AFL football. Ashley was a premiership player with the Brisbane Lions.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In the country—the minister is certainly right. Also the London Olympics BMX rider Khalen Young went to a local primary and high school in the Armadale region.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Gary Malarkey.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Gary Malarkey was also from Armadale. Ross Glendinning's father is from Armadale, and Ben Cousins' father, Bryan, is from Armadale.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Gus Glendinning?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not know his name.

Equally, Armadale has an impressive record in the creative arts. Armadale is the previous home of director Franco di Chiera, and cinematographer Denson Baker. Denson Baker and his wife, Claire McCarthy, are to make a film in the Armadale region next year. Denson has worked in Hollywood and has returned to live locally. This is part of the media being misleading about Armadale. This film is to be filmed entirely in Armadale next year. The headline in *The West Australian* was "Armadale on cue for 'war zone'". Of course, if someone did not read the rest of the article, they would think that Armadale "war zone" referred to crime et cetera. The article mentioned a war zone because the film is about a war correspondent. It is just a misleading title that reinforces the negative reputation of Armadale.

Last year Armadale had a film festival that attracted over 1 000 people for three days. I challenge members here to tell me whether they have a film festival in their electorate that attracts 1 000 people in three days.

Mr T.R. Buswell: We have the CinefestOZ starting next week, which would easily attract 1 000 people.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Where is that?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Busselton. It is the Western Australian–French film festival.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Can we get back to the bills?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! That's enough.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think the speaker is indicating that he would like to continue. There are a number of conversations occurring across the chamber.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Thank you, member for Mandurah. The member for Armadale to continue.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: I take the point made by the Treasurer. That is quite an outstanding film festival in Busselton. But, as I said, very few members could proudly stand here to say that they have a very successful film festival in their electorate.

I was asked how this is relevant to the bill. It is relevant, because I, as the local member for Armadale, the City of Armadale, the mayor of Armadale and this state government should be working together to try to alleviate this misconception about Armadale—and not only about Armadale, but also Balga. We should try to be as proud as we can about all our suburbs and all our electorates. There is good and bad in all our electorates. Even in the Premier's electorate of Cottesloe, there have been a number of murders in the Claremont region. People do not equate Claremont to a bad area, but some unsavoury incidents have occurred there. It would be terrible if those

unsavoury crimes that have occurred in Claremont resulted in Claremont being determined an unsafe or bad place. We as Western Australians have a duty to our constituents to do our best to ensure that the national media—*A Current Affair* is a national program—do not try to characterise any of our suburbs as being bad. There is good and bad in all our suburbs, but as a state government we need to ensure that the areas that may need more assistance receive greater assistance. My argument is that when the Treasurer is allocating what is important in the budget, he has to consider all areas of Western Australia, including the Armadale region. This is where the Treasurer's position becomes very important. There is an opportunity cost, because if he decides that he is going to spend money in one area, another suburb will miss out; I understand that. My argument is that the Armadale region has basically received very little assistance since the election of the Barnett government four years ago.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: The former Treasurer and Attorney General repeatedly stated that a new Armadale courthouse was a number one priority of the government, but he was unable to make the commitment to the funding of a new courthouse. Shortly, I will write to the new Attorney General to seek his commitment to the funding of a new courthouse in Armadale. It is relevant to the debate in the house on these appropriation bills, because we are talking about funding. My argument is that the need for increased service provision in Armadale is very important. Also, there is a greater need for me as local member and for the state government of Western Australia to ensure that Armadale and other suburbs are not tarnished in the national press or even in the press of Western Australia.

In the time that I have left, I want to raise a couple of other issues. It is disappointing; I had not realised that the Minister for Health had left the chamber. One of the issues I want to raise is the state of the Armadale–Kelmescott Memorial Hospital. I have raised it a number of times, so I will not repeat some of the issues I talked about previously. I will be writing to the Minister for Health to seek clarification on whether this is true. One of the problems in the Armadale region, where there are a number of people whose earning capacity puts them at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, is that a child who may have a disability needs to be assessed and examined to qualify for Schools Plus assistance at school. Parents of these children do not have the economic freedom to seek out private assessment. I think the member for Eyre talked about Schools Plus assessment last week. The problem is that many parents in my local area who have to rely on the public health system to have their children assessed to see whether they have learning difficulties or disabilities are waiting two or more years to the assessed at the Armadale Child Health Centre at the Armadale hospital. As a result, some of them are starting school without being able to receive the benefit of School Plus funding. Schools Plus funding often allows them to have assistance, which assists them and their teachers in their educational programs.

I have been told, and I will seek clarification from the Minister for Health—he may not even know whether this is true—that a number of parents have been told that they have greater chance of being assessed more quickly if they seek to have their child assessed at Bunbury regional hospital. Armadale is about 200 kilometres from Bunbury. They are being told that their child will be assessed more quickly if they take the child down to Bunbury. That is an appalling situation if that is the case. I would like to work with the Minister for Health to see whether we can find out whether that is true; and, if so, how we can seek to alleviate that issue.

The issue of assessment or examination of children who may have a disability raises the issue of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We had a very good debate on this issue last week, and the Premier made his position clear about where he stood on that issue. I must say that I was educated in many respects about what the Premier said. I mentioned Joseph Rendell in my contribution to the debate last week. Joseph is a 20-year-old person in the Armadale region who has Hurler syndrome. I actually paid Joseph and his mother a visit yesterday. I would challenge any member to pay Joseph and his mother a visit and not say —

Mr T.K. Waldron: What is Hurler syndrome?

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is basically an enzyme that affects the growth of the child, and as a result there are other issues. As explained to me by Barbara, his mother, there was a one in 100 000 chance that the two parents would carry the gene, marry and have children. If they both carried the genes, there is a one in four chance that they would have a child with Hurler syndrome. It is a tragic story. Mr and Mrs Rendell are English immigrants. They had two children in England who did not have this syndrome. While they were still in England, their 12-year-old boy got knocked over by a car and died, so they decided to come to Australia. Mrs Rendell fell pregnant and she had Joseph. When he was born, they had no idea that he had this syndrome, but at about 18 or 19 months of age they noticed that he seemed to not be growing properly. They had him assessed and he was diagnosed with Hurler syndrome, and he was told that he would not live beyond the age of five.

Mr T.K. Waldron: How old is he now?

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Dr A.D. BUTI: Joseph is now 20. I do not know all the technicalities about this. Maybe I can have a private discussion with the Minister for Health about the ins and outs of it. The family has relayed to me that Joseph has survived to the age of 20—he is three months away from his twenty-first birthday—because of the weekly enzyme injections he receives at Armadale hospital. When he was diagnosed with Hurler syndrome some 18 or 19 years ago, the enzyme medication was not on the national pharmaceutical list. It would have cost the family about \$380 000 a year for Joseph to have the treatment, which, of course, the family could not afford. Joseph was put on the compassionate benefit scheme, which meant that he was able to benefit from having weekly enzyme injections. However, his eyesight has deteriorated and he needs a cornea replacement. His mother was told by a doctor at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children that because he has an intellectual disability—it is unclear to what degree he has an intellectual disability—he would not be the recipient of a cornea implant because he would be of no future benefit to society. I am not blaming the government; I am just saying that this is what she was told. I think it is a shocking state of affairs that —

Dr K.D. Hames: Who told her that?

Dr A.D. BUTI: A doctor at PMH told the mother that Joseph would not be the recipient of a cornea implant because he has an intellectual disability and it would be better to give the cornea implant to someone who was able to contribute to society.

Dr K.D. Hames: You should get those details because that is not acceptable.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will. The mother has said that because of his intellectual disabilities he has been discriminated against. In my dealings with the disabilities industry, I have found that people with an intellectual disability have a harder time than people with a physical disability.

We have talked about the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I know that the Premier has his views on that, and I do not want to revisit last week's debate. However, Mrs Rendell, who does not know all the ins and outs of the NDIS, saw it as a possibility of giving her and Joseph greater control of the way they spend the funding. If they wanted to directly engage a carer, they felt that the NDIS would give them greater freedom to do that. Whether that is the case, I do not know, but that is their belief. I understand that the NDIS is proposed to be set up to provide individuals with a disability and/or carers with funding that they can utilise as they wish. I see that as being very beneficial for most people, although not all, because some will not want to take on that responsibility.

A lot of non-government organisations in the disability sector and other areas are always fighting for a pool of money so it becomes a competition between NGOs. It would be nice to circumvent that competition. Another thing Mrs Rendell said to me—I know this from personal experience—is that parents of a person with a disability who are seeking funding have to present the worst-case scenario to get that funding. Mrs Rendell was told that to obtain funding for a carer she had to basically say that if she did not get it, her marriage would break up or that she would have a nervous breakdown. She had to present the worst-case scenario. I know the father of an intellectually disabled adult who, in order to access funding for group accommodation for his daughter, basically had to say that if she was not to be the recipient of the funding, he would disown her and try to put her in an aged-care home. As Mrs Rendell said, they want to move away from begging. They want to provide dignity to their children and themselves.

I implore this house, the government and Parliament, that when looking at the budget, we should see what we can do for disabled people. There is no doubt, as the Premier stated, that there was a major injection of funding for the disability sector last year, and that is to be applauded. However, that is only the beginning; it is not the end. It is no good saying that because we gave a major injection of funding last year, we have done what we needed to do. We all have an obligation to marginalised people, and people with disabilities are, I think, the most marginalised section of our society and often do not have a voice. I am not an orphan just as the Minister for Health is not an orphan in the disability area, but my interaction with Mrs Rendell and Joseph yesterday was a real eye-opener. It is always a problem for parliamentarians and people who make decisions that people with a disability are invisible; we do not see them or hear their voices. We should be mindful of the need to hear their voices all the time. I implore all members to help not only Armadale, but also all suburbs by having a proper reflection about the profile of the disability sector. I also implore the Parliament to do what it can for people with a disability.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [8.56 pm]: I am very pleased to comment on the general debate on the appropriation bills before us. I congratulate you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.M. Britza), on your high elevation to your new role as Acting Speaker. I am sure you will find it interesting, just as I did when I became an Acting Speaker not long after becoming a member. When I was an Acting Speaker, the Speaker was not as generous

Extract from Hansard

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Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Mr David Templeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Kim Hames

with trips for Acting Speakers, as is the case in this term of government. I did not get to go on any trips, which I am disappointed about.

Dr K.D. Hames: I went on one with your Speaker.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Everyone else went on a trip with the former Speaker, but I did not. I am outraged by it! This is outrageous! The former Speaker should be condemned in this place for not allowing that!

Mr T.R. Buswell: What is his name?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He is now a constituent of mine, so I have to be careful!

I need to raise some important matters that are of particular importance to my electorate and indeed to my region. I will start with the proposed expansion of the Mandurah substation. Western Power has proposed to extend the Mandurah substation, which is in the middle of the town, right in the middle of a residential area at the bottom end of Cooper and Elizabeth Streets in Mandurah as they border Dower Street. Understandably, the residents, particularly those living next door to the substation, are very concerned about this, and I do not blame them. They now face the land next to them being acquired by Western Power to undertake a major expansion to double the size of the Mandurah substation. Understandably, the residents are extremely concerned about a whole range of issues, including the potential health implications of living next door to an expanded substation and the impact of electromagnetic fields, and the visual and amenity impact on them as residents. Some of them have been living there for 30 years. There is also the loss of land value to consider, which is a real issue for people. Sadly, current legislation does not allow for any compensation to be paid to people whose land has been devalued by an infrastructure project such as the expansion of a substation. This really is something that needs to be addressed by Parliament and by government. These people, quite understandably—many of them have lived there for a long time—now face the prospect that their investments will be devalued by \$50 000 or more simply because there is now a proposal to extend or expand the substation. I have written to the Minister for Energy, and I highlighted to him the concerns that were raised at the public forum held by Western Power, to which I went, along with a number of residents directly affected. I must commend the Western Power people who were there because it was a very well organised forum. However, although Western Power was able to answer a number of questions, it was disappointing that the City of Mandurah was not there, because it should have been, as this affects ratepayers. In fact, in terms of visual amenity, the City of Mandurah has a vested interest in proposals such as expanding a power station of this nature. I am hopeful that the Minister for Energy will look carefully at this proposal from Western Power. It is my firm view that with the growth of Mandurah, we should be investing in a substation in the southern part of the city, in the member for Dawesville's electorate. That is a very fast growing area, and, quite frankly, it should be an area considered by Western Power for a new substation. I am against the expansion of this substation. I believe alternative sites include a site on Pinjarra Road in Barragup, which is another part of my electorate, but an area that is not densely populated like the centre of our city. Western Power argues that an expanded substation is needed to cope with growth. I do not disagree with that. The City of Mandurah is growing very rapidly, including around the centre of the city, but it should not be to the detriment of the people who live in this area—that is, that they should shoulder the burden for the rest of the community and see their land value detrimentally affected. Other sites are available away from residential areas, and they should be the ones Western Power considers, and, indeed, invests in, rather than extending this substation. The proposal includes the potential purchase of up to four or five properties in the vicinity I have mentioned.

Meadow Springs Primary School was opened this year by the former Minister for Education. Again, I have written to the new Minister for Education about the already expanded number of students at the school. It opened with just under 480 students at the beginning of the year, and now 550 students already call Meadow Springs Primary School their school. Some demountables were supposed to be delivered there this term, but because of the tragic fire at Mount Lawley Primary School, they were understandably diverted there. However, Meadow Springs now faces the prospect of needing up to 12 demountables by next year, so I have written to the minister, simply saying that with the cost that will be required for demountables anyway, a stage 2 permanent build should now be urgently considered by government. I have written to him and said that he needs to assess Meadow Springs Primary School again and look at ensuring that a stage 2 permanent build becomes a priority. I pay my gratitude and congratulations to Ashley King, the principal of Meadow Springs Primary School, and Gwen Evans, the principal of the education support centre, which was relocated to Meadow Springs Primary School from North Mandurah, for the job they have done in establishing that school this year. What they have been able to do is tremendous.

I am very glad that the member for Dawesville is in this place because there are a few things I want to say about policing, which I hope he will support and I hope he might actually show an interest in them and join me on them. I congratulate the new Minister for Police on her elevation to the ministry. As she knows, I have been

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working very hard to have her elevated to the ministry; I was her number one champion. I am glad she is in this place today because I want to raise with her what has, in my view, been a failed experiment, against which I was the only local member railing over two years ago when it impacted upon our community. We previously had the Peel police district, which was an entity of policing in its own right. It had a superintendent and a fully resourced police station at Mandurah and in other parts of the region, including Pinjarra, Waroona, Boddington and Dwellingup. Just over two years ago this government allowed for us to be amalgamated with Rockingham and Kwinana. I argued against it publicly in the local press and wrote to every shire of local government saying to them that they needed to take responsibility and let the then police minister know that this was going to be a retrograde step. I have to tell members that it has failed dismally. I am sorry, but the Deputy Premier did not say a thing about this when it was raised and then imposed.

Dr K.D. Hames: I met those officers. I did not say anything publicly, nor do I.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Why not? The member for Dawesville does not say anything publicly when he should. He does not say anything about the proposed marina and channel to Point Grey when he should. When 350 people from his electorate go to a public meeting on Sunday afternoon to highlight their concerns about it, he does not take an interest in these things, and he did not do that with the police. This angers me, because in a minute I will read something from a young woman who is a proprietor from the CBD—she does not live in my electorate, but I think lives in the member for Dawesville's electorate—about the sorts of things she is seeing with regard to policing. This is directly as a result of the proposal to allow us to be amalgamated with Kwinana and Rockingham. I was the only member who railed against it, and I am really angry about this because I knew the current situation would happen. Minister for Police, as soon as this decision was made and we saw the amalgamation take place, almost overnight community policing officers who were based in Mandurah were relocated in Rockingham. These are community police officers who were based in Mandurah relocated to Rockingham. We also had police officers then being required to be drawn up to the north. Recently, I went to the police commissioner's forum—the one the police commissioner claimed was hijacked by members of Parliament. I went to the one in Rockingham. Why was it in Rockingham? It was because we were amalgamated with Rockingham–Kwinana. Had we still been in the Peel police district, the police commissioner would have had it in Mandurah, but, no, he puts it in Rockingham. I am not criticising the commissioner, because I actually have a lot of time for him, but this is an example of how this hub fascination by this government is failing. It is not just failing in our area; it is failing throughout WA.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is; it is failing. I will not take the member for Wagin's interjections, because I have a lot to get through.

Let me just tell members this: I have been to about five or six neighbourhoods in my electorate, including Greenfields, Meadow Springs and central Mandurah, in the last four months and I have spoken to people who have raised the issue of unsociable behaviour being experienced. I wish the Deputy Premier was not talking to the Minister for Police, because I want her to hear this. For example, I spoke to people in Meadow Springs who are having a real problem in one particular street with a particular tenant of a particular house. I went to one of the neighbour's houses one stormy night and we sat there for about an hour and a half talking. What did they say? They never criticised the police, and this is not a criticism of the police. The policemen and policewomen in Mandurah are brilliant. In fact, the officer in charge, Chris Hoath, is probably one of the best I have ever seen and have ever had as an officer in charge. However, they are simply lacking in resources. When this was raised with the member for Dawesville in the local paper about a year ago, his comment—I still have it—was that police resources were adequate. The member for Dawesville is so far out of it; they are not adequate in Mandurah and they are not adequate in the Peel region. As a local member, the member for Dawesville should be standing up with me and arguing for two things. The first is a return of the Peel police district, and one that is better and more strongly resourced to cope with the population growth and the crime that we have had. The member for Dawesville knows this as much as anyone. If he listens to the people in his area, and if he listens to his electorate office, he will know that we had a huge spike in burglaries earlier this year. Burglaries spiked hugely, and I know for a fact that the police had to bring in resources from Perth to clean up residual investigations of burglaries earlier this year because they had got so far behind through a lack of resources needed to deal with some of these burglaries. There are not enough resources.

The Commissioner of Police said that the Armadale and the Rockingham forums were hijacked by politicians. I do not know about the Armadale one, but I can tell members what happened at the Rockingham one because I was there. I asked one question. The member for Warnbro asked one question. Hon Phil Edman from the other place asked one question. The rest of the questions were all asked by local community members. About 200 community members were at the forum and at least seven of them talked about the north Mandurah part of this

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new district, including parts of my area such as Madora, Lakelands, Golden Bay, Singleton and Secret Harbour. At least five people, including a councillor, Chris Elliot, who I think lives in Singleton, said, “We believe we live in a police-free zone.” That is the reality. That is what people told the Commissioner of Police. It was not me, the member for Warnbro or even Hon Phil Edman who said that, but the people who were there. I do not know how the Commissioner of Police could say that forum was hijacked by politicians.

I wrote to the Commissioner of Police and the former Minister for Police to say that we had had a forum in Rockingham and I wanted us to have one in Mandurah. The people of Mandurah and the wider Peel district have a right for the government to come and explain how this regime and amalgamation, which has been operating for two years, is working for them. I can tell members now that it is not working. Ask the Commissioner of Police what he said when he was asked whether he would build a new police station and where he would build it. That was an interesting question. He said he would rebuild the Mandurah station, which I thought was very interesting and which I support. That is what he said.

I wrote a letter to the former Minister for Police. I do not know what happens and whether it will come over to the new Minister for Police. I am still waiting for a response. I ask the minister again tonight to talk to the police commissioner and have a commissioner’s community forum in Mandurah. I promise that I will ask only one question just like I did in Rockingham, because I know that the people of Mandurah and the wider Peel region would come to that forum and raise genuine issues about crime and the problems that are being experienced, particularly with antisocial behaviour.

I want to highlight a letter from a woman who is a proprietor of a store in Mandurah.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will not mention her name, but I will quickly read her letter —

Dear Hon David Alan Templeman,

I am a local small business owner writing to inform you of the dire situation regarding law and order in the Mandurah Central Business District.

I have been operating my business for the past seven years and have never experienced anything like what has been happening in the last 12 months. Over the course of the last 12 months in my retail store the following offences have occurred;

- 1) Burglary
- 2) Numerous instances of shoplifting
- 3) Intoxicated and aggressive customers
- 4) Street drinking by groups of abusive people
- 5) Skateboarders and BMX riders regularly riding in front of the store causing damage to walls
- 6) Men urinating in front of me
- 7) Graffiti in front of me
- 8) Drug taking in front of me
- 9) Three instances of defecation on the entry to our toilets in the last two weeks
- 10) Loitering and drinking by homeless persons
- 11) Unable to leave my store at times due to violence occurring outside
- 12) Just yesterday —

This letter is dated 9 August —

I was physically assaulted by intoxicated persons after a shoplifting offence occurred in my store.

My staff and I are working in constant fear, as offences are occurring on a near daily basis. We are in desperate need of daily police foot patrols in the Mandurah Central Business District and CCTV covering Sholl and Tuckey Streets would also go a long way to helping alleviate the problems that are occurring.

She also highlighted that one of our upper car parks in the central CBD is a known place for drug activity. The letter continues —

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I forwarded to hearing from you regarding this matter and would really appreciate any assistance or guidance you can provide.

I got that letter in the morning and I went and saw her an hour later. She explained exactly what is going on. When I talked to her and the people in Meadow Springs in the street that I will not name, and the other group of people who live in about five streets in Greenfields and who have been ringing the police constantly about an address that is causing problems, all of them say that when the police can get there—they do their very best to get there—they have told them that they often have only two cars on the road that night or they have only one car because a couple of cars are down at Dawesville. This is the problem; the geographic nature of our area means that if a car or cars are in the southern part of Dawesville, down Lake Clifton way or down at Parkridge, and something happens in the north of our city at Lakelands or Madora, the police are literally 20-plus minutes away. If those cars are already allocated to a priority job, there is quite often little, if any, police response possible for at least an hour or more. That is the reality. That is why I argued strongly against this amalgamation with Rockingham–Kwinana, which has its own problems. The police contingent there has its own concerns and issues with which it has to deal.

We are a growing region of Western Australia. We attract a huge number of people, families, older people and retirees. That is why the government must reassess its decision, which was made two and a half years ago, to allow this hub mentality to be established. I am telling members now that it is not working. I urge the Minister for Police to talk to the people in the streets in Greenfields, central Mandurah, the northern parts of Mandurah and the southern suburbs of Rockingham, who claim, in their own words, that they are living in a police-free zone. I urge members opposite to talk to Councillor Chris Elliot in Singleton, a member of the Rockingham shire. He will tell members what he said at that meeting with Commissioner of Police, Karl O’Callaghan. If we stamp on this quickly, we can deal with some of the issues, particularly in the CBD. I do not want to see my community labelled and people being too afraid to go shopping or go into town after five o’clock at night, especially when we just spent millions of dollars on revitalising the CBD. This is a real situation. It is happening not only in the CBD, but also the suburbs of Mandurah and other communities. Part of the reason is that the police resources are not in the neighbourhoods. The government has centralised them in these hubs.

I will give members another example. Des McLean runs a brilliant fishing program for young people. When we had the Peel police district, if there was a problem with any of the young ones, Des used to be able to immediately ring the community policing officer, who was based in Mandurah and who could immediately dispatch a car or drive himself to get the kids to the program each day. It does not happen anymore. Why? It is because the government has centralised everything to the Rockingham–Kwinana hub. The local and corporate knowledge and the understanding and knowledge of the families that police men and women build up over time when they are in a community have been lost.

I urge the minister to start looking at bringing the police back into the neighbourhoods, the communities and the suburbs, not centralising them and saying that we ultimately have more police because we are putting them all together. The job is not being done because the resources are spread too thinly, which has a hugely detrimental effect on the people in Mandurah and on policing in general. That is why I want to have a police commissioner’s forum in Mandurah. We do not want it to be hijacked by politicians. I do not want that to happen. I will ask one question—I promise! I want the Minister for Police to give the elderly people, the mums and dads and the business owners in my community who I have mentioned here tonight, the opportunity to raise directly with the commissioner their genuine concerns. They are genuine concerns because they feel unsafe. They have seen the number of burglaries skyrocket, particularly in the first six months of this year. The burglary rate, as the member for Dawesville must admit, was appalling in the first six months of this year and towards the last half of last year over the Christmas period. It was happening in not only my electorate, but the member for Dawesville’s. We want some action on this. I appeal to the new Minister for Police to take another look at this hub system, particularly as it affects places such as Mandurah. I appeal to her to recognise that because of our growth, the geographic nature of our locality and the logistical issues, not only do we not have enough police in the district and in the area generally, but also her government’s hub system has failed the people in my electorate. I am convinced of it; I have building evidence; I get evidence all the time on it. If the minister started bringing police back into the suburbs and neighbourhoods, we would see a turnaround because we would reinstate confidence in people that they can be safe. We would reinstate confidence that people would not have men urinating in front of them or taking drugs in front of them and they would not suffer street drinking and abuse by people. Those things happen outside my office where there is a bus stop. My electorate officer was nearly assaulted because she was so concerned about three children not long ago who were being abused by their mother. She popped out the door and said, “Can you keep it down a bit? And, listen, I don’t think you should be speaking that way.” She almost got clobbered. It was a police incident, quite frankly. But it is not just outside my office; it is everywhere. I would genuinely like to sit down with the Minister for Police, if she is willing to, and talk a bit more in detail about these matters.

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In my last six minutes I want to finish with a couple of other matters. The first is the Peel–Harvey estuary. The health and wellbeing of that estuary is directly linked to the health and wellbeing of the community in my electorate; I have said that time and time again. A proposal has now been approved by the Minister for Environment without him coming down there, despite being invited—and not just by me. The Mandurah Licensed Fishermen’s Association president, Damien Bell, invited him and said, “Come down, minister, and I’ll take you out on my boat and show you.” Damien knows better than I do what goes on in that estuary. Damien and the other fishermen in his association have decades, if not a couple of hundred years collectively, of experience of what has happened over time and continues to happen to that system. Bruce Tatham is another one who knows. What have we done to the system? We are continuing to put pressure on a system that we know is already fragile. We are adding to the complexities of water quality by continuing to allow many developments which may not necessarily be unsustainable but which are having a direct impact on water quality. We know that the Serpentine River is biologically dead, as described in a report released by the Peel–Harvey Catchment Council in late 2011. “Biologically dead” was the comment made by the scientists in that report. We know that the system’s key health and wellbeing indicators are all showing trends of likely deterioration. These are direct quotes from the report. I know them so well because I have read the report over and over again and I have mentioned it in this place over and over again.

We know about the new phenomenon of black ooze. Another comment from a person in Yunderup who has lived there for over 30 years was, “This black ooze is a major problem. I’ve lived here for 30 years and I know what’s going to happen. If you keep disturbing that, release all the nutrients and all the waste material that’s there, you’re going to cause ongoing problems.” What does the government want to do? It wants to create a major change to the estuary system. That is what this channel and marina proposal at Point Grey will be—a major and significant change to the estuarine system. Once it is approved, there will be no going back. What have we heard from Liberal members opposite who represent the area? They have been deafening in their silence. I am sorry, member for Dawesville, you have been one of the main culprits. The member for Dawesville has said nothing about this proposal, and it is actually in his electorate.

As I have said to many people, the Peel–Harvey system of waterways is everyone’s interest, no matter where the local government boundaries are drawn. No matter whether it is in the state or federal jurisdiction, it is everyone’s responsibility. We are the custodians of that system. We have major reports telling us that every indicator shows likely deterioration and we know that the Serpentine River is already biologically dead, yet the government will potentially go ahead with the Keralup proposal further to the north. When we know that the Murray River system itself is under great strain—not endorsed by me, I can tell members—and when we know that the system —

Mr D.T. Redman: The Keralup system has been endorsed by you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not have time.

We know that all these elements point to a catastrophic collapse of the system. If we do not recognise what is happening, that is the sort of legacy we will be leaving for the kids who will live there in the future and indeed for the families and businesses that will invest there in the future. The member for Dawesville and the member for Murray–Wellington have said nothing publicly about it. I have raised it in this place seven times. This is probably the eighth time I have raised it in this place in the last two years, because like many people I am very concerned. Like many people with businesses who live there, I have invested all of my future, my family’s future and my kids’ future in that area because I believe in it. However, this government, through a decision of the current environment minister, shows that it does not give a tinker’s cuss about the health and wellbeing of that system. What we must now do is rely on the federal minister—I hope he makes the right decision—to understand what we are on about. The current state environment minister did not even have the decency to come down when he was invited on a number of occasions.

Do not allow this proposal; it is wrong and it will have a lasting negative impact on the region into the future if it is allowed to continue. The member for Dawesville should stand up or at least answer questions and tell people exactly where he sits. We know where he sits. He has not said a word. He should have. He should be standing up for the people there, including most of the 350 people who were at the meeting some Sundays ago, most of whom were from his electorate. I know because they signed the petition and I have seen all the names, including some people who are strong supporters of the member for Dawesville. They have not been listened to by the member for Dawesville and he has made no public comment on where he stands. It is outrageous!

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [9.26 pm]: I rise in response to the second reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill 2011. In particular I want to talk about the work that the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians have been doing. We met at the beginning of the year and planned our

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annual focus for 2012–13. The focus we chose includes the issue of the sexualisation of children, and in particular the sexualisation of young people in advertising and the media. Part of what the CWP has planned to do in this term is make sure that each delegate in every Parliament across Australia speaks in their Parliament about this issue. Several of my colleagues in other states have already spoken. As members of the house would be aware, the CWP committee is a committee of mixed parties. A group of us have joined together because we are all committed to seeing improvements for women in politics and to increasing our understanding of the commonwealth. It is therefore particularly important for this group of women to pick up on key issues that community members are telling us they are concerned about. This issue is extremely important; I am sure members of the house will agree.

I would like to speak about issues of body image in the media and the way in which body image has been very highly sexualised, and to point to some of the risks it creates for children and young people in the community. There are a number of different categories and I will cover them very briefly. In no way am I an expert in this field; I am covering the research we have been able to do as a group of women parliamentarians across Australia. I will therefore skip over these issues and not do them as much justice as they deserve. I will start with the issues around the use of under-age models in advertising and the media. The use of very young, 12 and 13-year-old girls has come to be normal practice in many countries in many forms of media. I will talk a bit about ways that that has been tackled globally.

Digital enhancement is something with which members of Parliament are very familiar of course! I know it is very tempting when one knows that using digital enhancement one can be changed a little to improve one's looks in one's electorate or election campaign photos. Sometimes the idea of photoshopping is tempting! It has a very significant downside, and I would like to talk about the digital enhancement of pictures, particularly in the fashion industry.

I will also mention something that has been in the news over the past couple of days about age-inappropriate clothing for children. Those members who have young girls and young boys and who go to Target—the shop that is in question at the moment—to try to buy some modern clothes for the kids are suddenly confronted with an array of choices that might be a bit challenging for many parents.

Another issue worth mentioning is something that I find completely puzzling—beauty pageants for children—and the impact that has on the developing mind and physiology of a child.

There are a million different pieces of research that I can quote, but I will select a few. The children's hospital in the Sydney suburb of Westmead has reported a 270 per cent increase over the past decade in the number of children being admitted for eating disorders. Whilst we do not claim that every one of those eating disorder cases can be attributed to body image, it is very clear to researchers that children and young people feel increasing pressure that they are not as good as they should be from the images that we are bombarded with every time we open a newspaper or a magazine or go to buy clothes and see the advertising being used. Australian Medical Association president Dr Steve Hambleton said —

... having a good body image is a crucial building block for kids to be healthy and happy.

... children's ability to feel good about themselves is being undermined by the increasing sexualisation of our society ...

A person's value—a child's value—is starting to be defined by their physical appearance and has nothing to do with their ability, their personality or how they are as a human being. What starts to be important is how pretty they are compared with another child or someone else. That cannot be healthy. There is no way that that can be healthy for our children. The important point to make is that the impact on children is different from that on teenagers and adults. This is because a child's cognitive ability to objectively analyse what they see in those images is not as well developed as an adult's. Children see an image and think that that is what they should be like, and if they are not like that image, they do things to try to be like that image. Interestingly, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, an Australian psychologist, reported in his studies that one in four children are convinced of the need for cosmetic surgery, one in 10 boys will consider using steroids and one in eight girls will use diet pills or laxatives. His comment is that that is “about as close to child abuse as you can get”.

When we work on the best way of tackling this problem, we see that this is a complex industry. In Britain, a recently completed report into sexualisation called “Letting Children be Children” found that children are not only growing up against a backdrop of increasingly sexualised advertising, but are also exposed to clothing, services and products that force premature sexualising behaviour on those children. We have to only open a magazine, as I said. I have one picture that I am more than happy to hold up as I talk. Based on surveys, interviews and focus groups with more than 1 000 parents, the “Letting Children be Children” report found that many parents believe their children are almost constantly exposed to sexualised imagery through all forms of

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media. The report also found that the pressure on children to grow up too quickly takes two different but related forms: the pressure, firstly, to take part in a sexualised life before they are ready to do so, which is a hugely damaging construct in itself; and, secondly, the commercial pressure to consume goods and services that are available to children at a far more aggressive rate than would normally be expected. Although the UK report indicates this pressure falls on all children, my committee is especially concerned about how that pressure comes to play on very young girls and boys. We need only open a girls' magazine and look at the articles that tell young girls—they are targeted at 10-year-old girls—how to keep slim, tips on dating, how to look fabulous and how to put make-up on. These are 10-year-old girls; they should be out playing. This is not okay by any standard in our society.

I have a couple of stories. Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians holds a young women's forum at Parliament House in Canberra. We first held it last year and brought young women from every state of Australia to Canberra and worked with them for three days on informing them more about how Parliament works. Two of those girls sent comments into the August 2012 edition of *About the House*, which as members would know is our parliamentary magazine that they will have all read! A very good article in *About the House* is called "Overexposed", which I am quoting liberally from tonight and which covers this topic. Alexia Fuller's comments state —

If you are under 25, I am fairly certain you will have seen the television show *Toddlers and tiaras* or the YouTube clip with five-year-old child beauty queen Alana Thompson strutting around in next to nothing ...

This says a lot about where society has reached, that a program about tiny children acting four or five times their age can be so popular. The idea that sexualised images of young children are seemingly acceptable to our community is a worrying thought.

...

We all have days when we don't look our best. However, for some young people the issue runs deeper. Serious issues arise when young people avoid doing things, such as eating or exercise, because they are worried what people will think of how they look.

I am not saying overtly sexual images in the media are the sole demon causing hurt and pain to all. Nevertheless, it can't do you any favours when what is constantly publicised in the media are images of girls with pristine skin and svelte body shapes.

For me though the most serious thing is when children younger than 10 start to worry about the way they look.

I have a friend who watches a six-year-old girl until her parents come home. Recently the little girl stopped eating the peanut butter sandwiches my friend gives her because there were too many carbs in bread. Where does a six-year-old get that kind of information?

The other young woman who I will quote is Ash Qama, another participant in the w.comm forum at Parliament last year. Ash states —

Of course, the models in these ads were not the cause of my insecurity. I don't want to vilify beautiful women or men for their looks. My insecurity was amplified however by these kind of advertisements targeted at a youth demographic by marketers. Being a young person can be difficult enough trying to figure out your own identity without being bombarded with targeted ads in a variety of mediums telling you that if you buy a product, your life or appearance can be better.

At the end of her article, Ash states —

Some magazines such as *Seventeen* in the US have caved to pressure to publish photos of ethnically and physically diverse models with minimal airbrushing. I think this may be a better solution, though convincing the fashion and marketing industries to follow suit would be quite difficult.

Ash has hit on a really good solution with that. I will mention a couple of things that are happening in the advertising industry in response to consumer concerns.

I recently heard a story about Kate Winslet, the beautiful and very well known actress who was in the movie *Titanic*.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Was she in *Lord of the Rings*?

Ms L.L. BAKER: No; that was someone else. Keep up, Treasurer.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Who was the queen of the elves?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 14 August 2012]

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Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt; Acting Speaker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Mr David Templeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Kim Hames

Ms L.L. BAKER: Cate Blanchett. Let us move on and get Kate Winslet in our minds. I am referring to the beautiful Kate Winslet, who was the —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Was she in *Sleepless in Seattle*?

Ms L.L. BAKER: No; Kate Winslet's photograph was on the cover of *Vogue*, I think, last year. The first she saw of that photograph was when it was on the front cover of *Vogue*. She was horrified by what she saw, and she put out on Twitter and Facebook that she had no idea that the editors would photoshop her body to the extent they did. She said, "I'm quite proudly significantly bigger than what this shows. One of my legs is three times the size of one of those legs, and I'm not the slightest bit worried about it." Through the strength of young role models such as Kate Winslet, women are encouraged to challenge what is becoming an increasingly dangerous stereotype. Nineteen editors from *Vogue* magazines around the world have recently announced that they have made a pact to project only images of healthy models. They agreed to not knowingly work with models under the age of 16 who appear to have eating disorders, but I am not sure how they can tell that. Sara Ziff, an advocate for people working in the fashion industry, said —

The use of under-aged models is linked to financial exploitation, eating disorders, interrupted schooling and contributes to models' overall lack of empowerment in the workplace. ... We simply believe that 14 is too young to be working in this very grown-up industry.

We know many young women and some young men have basically starved themselves to death from anorexia while trying to achieve an unachievable body image. A new law was passed in Israel on 19 March 2012 that requires male and female models to have a body mass index of no less than 18.5—the standard used by the World Health Organization—or they need to have authorisation from their doctor saying they are not underweight before they can be hired as models. The legislation also bans the use of models who look underweight, and creators of ads must disclose whether they use Photoshop or graphics programs to manipulate images to make the models look slimmer. Norway's equality minister is pushing for advertisers to be required to use disclaimers such as, "This advertisement has been altered and presents an inaccurate image of how this model really looks." That sounds really strong, but so it should, because these images are ridiculous. One image, which I unfortunately cannot show members, was so severely photoshopped that her waist was significantly narrower than her head. That is not in any way acceptable.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: It is bizarre and gives children a false impression of what is natural and healthy.

I have mentioned the risks that were highlighted by the English study "Letting Children be Children". I will mention some of the fairly strident recommendations in that report. To the credit of industry and government, they have moved ahead to adopt some of them. The recommendations in the report include restricting outdoor advertising, especially around schools; limiting children's access to certain forms of media; and enforcing guidelines on age-appropriate clothing for retailers. In relation to the Target story today, a Port Macquarie mum and primary school teacher posted on Facebook that she was not prepared to shop at Target again because it is selling clothes that make young girls look like tramps. She said, "You have lost me as a customer when buying apparel for my daughter as I don't want her thinking shorts up her backside are the norm or fashionable." Other people shared comments following her post saying things such as —

... the issue here is what a 14-year old wears is NOT appropriate for a 7-year-old or 10-year-old for that matter."

Another comment states —

"I went looking for shorts for my 9-year-old daughter and could only find ones that looked like undies. So I had to go somewhere else, pls no tacky shorts this summer!

These are the kinds of comments that consumers make that we hope will drive change, but perhaps not fast enough. We have been relying on industry to self-regulate, exemplified by the pact made by the 19 *Vogue* editors. In reality, that is not having a huge impact. The use of explicit imagery in advertising is not a concern only when it comes to the sexualisation of young people. The widespread practice of digitally altering photographs of models and celebrities has been condemned for leading young people to develop impossible ideas of how they should look. In a speech to the Senate earlier this year, Senator Helen Polley said advertisers commonly alter photographs to enhance the appearance of models' bodies and such alterations contribute to unrealistic expectations of appropriate body image, especially among impressionable young adolescents. Another of my colleagues Christine Fyffe, deputy chair of the committee of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, a Liberal parliamentarian from Victoria, said in her address to Parliament —

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The media practice of presenting unrealistic images encourages our vulnerable young to strive for what is not natural.

I think we hope that as community awareness increases, that consumer push will drive changes in the industry. Self-regulation can sometimes need a bit of a push. I urge governments, the community, parents and young children not to accept that the images they see, such as this photograph and a multitude of others, are representative of what they should aspire to be, and to try to find a more realistic way of letting children be children in our community, rather than trying to get children the age of eight to look like highly sexualised adults.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [9.47 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2009–10 (Supplementary) Bill and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 (Supplementary) Bill. One of the main issues in my electorate is the St Andrew's Hostel in Katanning inquiry. The other day I asked the Premier about the Katanning inquiry, and I was happy with his answer, which was that it would be completed fairly soon. I have been approached by the three men who initially came to see me about their claims. They are concerned that the matter will be put aside. They have suffered for a long period. They do not trust the government system, and I can understand why. I know that these sorts of inquiries involve legal issues and some people might or will be charged. It is very, very important that this report be completed very quickly. I have kept an eye on the inquiry and believe that a lot of those people need counselling. They can get a certain amount of counselling each year through Medicare, but some of them have been hiding these things in the back of their mind for 20 or 30 years and it will not go away straightaway. Some people might have gotten closure from what has happened so far and only one or two might need counselling, but some of the people I have spoken to who have rung me or been to my office will need a lot more counselling. They do not need monetary compensation only, although that would be great and the government must look at that because it was a government institution and there were cover-ups by the local government in Katanning and the state government and by people right through the system. I think it is very, very important that we are seen to look after these people as a community. We cannot just say now that there has been an inquiry and that there is a report; we must follow-through on this with every fibre we have. Those innocent young boys went away from home to a government hostel and their lives were ruined. I have confidence in the Premier because when I asked him in Parliament to hold an inquiry, he did it straightaway, and I applaud him for that. We must go the extra yard to ensure that we follow-through to the end.

I was interested to read the report on Albany Regional Prison. It is disappointing that we have double-bunking in the prison system. I like the new units, which are very good.

Mr D.T. Redman: Did you go through them?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I went through them when the minister opened them. I am not a great admirer of double-bunks. I know that some people are and I think that people in the prison system are probably split 50–50 on the issue. I am concerned that we have a large number of prisoners in double-bunks and an empty unit. I know that the unit must be fixed. We must have a safe prison for not only the whole prison community, including the prison officers who work there, but also the residents of Albany. I think double-bunking is an issue and the sooner we get funding to do up the other units the better for not only the prisoners, but also the prison officers and the Albany community.

Another major issue in Albany is the funding for Anzac Day 2014. The leader of the Labor Party, Mark McGowan, has promised funding for it if Labor gets in at the next election. I think this should be a bipartisan proposal. I spoke to the previous Treasurer before the last budget and he said money would be put aside for it. For whatever reason, it has not been announced, but the City of Albany, the ANZAC Alliance and everyone involved in Anzac Day 2014 is very concerned about the lack of funding. We know there is funding coming, but, as we all know, the City of Albany has no money and will not start anything until it gets backup. The federal government has already given the council money but it is a huge issue in Albany. The Prime Minister said that Albany will be “the” place to experience the dawn service in 2014, but unless we get this funding, there will be no facilities for the service. We need money to upgrade Mt Clarence. We are looking for only \$6 million or \$8 million, but the flow-on effects for Albany and Western Australian tourism will be great. I have seen the plans for the Anzac interpretive centre, which will be fantastic. People from all over Australia and the world will be able to go to the interpretive centre on the morning of Anzac Day and put in the name of their grandfather or great-grandfather. The most moving part of the Anzac Day dawn service in Albany is standing up on top of Mt Clarence at the end of the service and looking out and seeing the last sight the Anzacs saw before they went to Gallipoli. There are flares either side for the dawn service, just as Padre White had for his first dawn service. It is very emotional. People who go there every year have tears in their eyes; people who go there for the first time are moved. It is an important part of the history of Albany, the history of Western Australia and the history

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of Australia. I call on the Premier. I know funding is coming, but until we get the funding, we cannot start anything in Albany. We do not want to say in 2014 that we could have had a really good show in Albany, but we could not because we did not have the funding in time.

My next issue is police. The district allowance is a huge issue in my electorate. A policeman who goes to Katanning or Gnowangerup gets \$1 500 and has to rent a house. A policeman who goes to Port Hedland gets \$32 000 and a house for nothing. Apparently, a job was offered in Port Hedland the other day and 27 officers applied for it. There is a job in Gnowangerup that has not been filled. This has a flow-on effect on the police station in Albany. If the job out there is not filled, the relief has to come from the Albany station. That means that Albany has to work short to fill the jobs in these other areas. I was told recently that there was only one car for the whole of Albany on a Saturday night. The area stretches from Albany to Wellstead, which is 100 kilometres away. If one car happens to go out there, there are no cars that can answer calls. It is a real issue. We have been talking about police in the city, but it is really scary when there is only one car for an area as big as Albany.

Another issue is drug laboratories. Two drug labs were found in Albany last week. There were two children in one of the houses. That is a huge issue in Albany. I spoke about this on the radio the other day. I know it is very hard for the minister, who is new to the job, but I think we need better education about drug labs and the signs to look for. One of the local policemen told me that some of the liquids and other ingredients they use for the drugs are odourless, so the next-door neighbours could feel sick from all these things floating around in the air and not realise what it is from. The drug lab with the children in it was found right in the middle of town. Serpentine Road was blocked. If one of these labs happened to blow up in the middle of town, it could do an enormous amount of damage. Many of the people who operate these drug labs have no idea what they are doing; all they know is that they can make some quick money. As the member for Willagee said today, a lot of the bikie gangs give these people the product and then buy it back from them after they have made it so that the bikie gangs do not get their hands on it. I know it is a big issue, minister, but I think we have to educate the community on what to look for and to dob people in. The Australian way of not dobbing people in is rubbish. If it saves our kids or prevents a house from being blown up in Albany, it is the only way to go.

I am glad that the Minister for Housing is in the chamber because there is an issue with housing in Albany. During budget estimates, the previous minister spoke about renting private properties. I know that is being done in Perth. A lot of people in Albany are living in cars or are bunking up in houses. There are a lot of empty houses in Albany that could be used for rentals. I know that the minister will have to look at private houses a little differently from the way he looks at government houses.

Mr D.T. Redman: You're saying that there are a lot of empty houses in the private sector.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, in the private sector. A little while ago—probably 12 months ago—people could not get a rental. A lot of people are leaving town to look for work. A lot of houses are being sold because the banks are repossessing them, which the banks do not like us to know. If we look at some of the prices of the houses around town, we can see that they are the ones that the banks have foreclosed on. The banks do not care what they get for them. There is a huge number of them; it is a real issue. I spoke to the Director General of the Department of Housing.

Mr D.T. Redman: Grahame Searle.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I spoke to him the other day and he said that the department was looking at Albany as a location for a pilot program. If the minister could look at that, that would be great. It would not only help the people in Albany who have rentals, but also help those people who are —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Affordable homes, because a lot of the houses that are empty are not the rich ones; a lot of them have been foreclosed. It is something the minister can look at. It would be a bonus for not only the housing commission, but also the people of Albany.

What can I say about the Minister for Local Government? I think everybody knows what has happened in Albany. We have had three CEOs of the City of Albany in three years. I have continually brought the house's attention to what is happening in Albany. I have been continually rejected by the Minister for Housing.

Dr K.D. Hames: You said the Minister for Housing. I think you meant the Minister for Local Government.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you, Leader of the House.

Dr K.D. Hames: Pleasure.

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Mr P.B. WATSON: It is a real issue. People do not have confidence in the City of Albany. I just want to elaborate: the councillors in the City of Albany are very good. We have a new group who are doing a tremendous job. I am not so confident about the mayor. I am just concerned—a lot of other people have approached me about it—that the mayor ran for the Liberal Party at the last election. I do not know whether he is getting special treatment from the Minister for Local Government or from the staff, but there are real concerns in Albany that nothing is being done. The minister has not even been to Albany since this latest fiasco. Our last CEO was asked to leave—no-one really knows why. One CEO left and sued the city. Councillors have sued the city. The last CEO received a huge payout, and I am told that one is going to sue the city. It is just not good enough. Albany is trying to go forward, and we are being anchored back by our local government. The minister has just sat around. Every time I have asked, he says, “There’s legal action” or, “No, I can’t do this.” I do not know what the Minister for Local Government’s job is. He keeps saying, “I can’t do this” and, “I can’t do that.” All I am asking is for the Minister for Local Government to come to Albany and have a look what is going on. He should do an inquiry. We just cannot keep having CEOs coming and going, costing the taxpayers money. The rates go up. No extra stuff is done around the place. It is a real issue. I am just calling on the minister to come down to Albany. I will drive him down if he does not like flying. I will take him to Albany. He can sit down with the local community and explain why he has not done anything the whole time this has been going on.

I am glad the Minister for Health is here. It is great to see the Albany hospital coming along. It is going to be a tremendous acquisition for Albany. It is something we really need, and I congratulate the minister and the government for doing it.

I want to raise the issue of Sensis. We had a real issue with our local phone books recently. The print is getting smaller and smaller. I wrote to Sensis on behalf of my community, along with a whole lot of seniors’ letters, and now Sensis has told us that the next regional survey is going to be conducted with larger print. Seniors are the ones who use the phone books. Most young people today use their phones or computers. The oldies like using the phone books. They hold the books out here like this, saying, “I’ve got to go and get my glasses.” In an emergency, they have to be able to look up phone numbers quickly. It is a real problem.

Great Southern Institute of Technology has cut its artistic and music programs. I think everybody knows that there is a great art and music community in Albany. I have been inundated with requests from artists and musicians who want to participate in a program. It has been a real problem. I call on the Minister for Education or the Minister for Training and Workforce Development to intervene in this because although I am a great sportsperson, I have seen from going to school assemblies and eisteddfods in Albany that there is tremendous talent there and I think they have to have a pathway.

I turn now to Book Week. The 2012 Book Week theme is “Champions Read”; it has been great. I have been going around to schools, and they have me wearing my old Olympic tracksuit; the tracksuit is 40 years old and my muscle tone has changed a bit, so they have to give me oxygen every time I read a book to the kids! It is pretty hard to hold your tummy in for about 15 —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Is it drawstring or elastic?

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is a zip, and it is bulging!

I would like to congratulate every Australian Olympian who went to the London Olympics. It really upsets me to hear the negative comments made in the local media. I was listening to the local ABC Radio, and one of the commentators—I have never even heard of him before—was talking about Mitchell Watt, who finished second in the long jump. The commentator was saying that it should have been his for the taking, because he did not do his best jump on the day. Neither did the winner, the third placed competitor or even the fourth placed competitor; it was windy and raining. We get these so-called experts talking about people who finish second in the world, and they do not realise that just to get to the Olympics is, in itself, a great effort; to compete against 367 other countries is a tremendous effort. This competitor finished second and won silver, and then people came out to say that he is a failure.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: Silver is second best in the world. We are placing enormous pressure on our young athletes. I remember going to the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand with Karen Moras, who was 14 at the time. She had broken world records in freestyle, yet everyone considered her a failure because she finished second in the finals. I saw her about 20 years later and she was a mess; she had suffered psychological issues all that time. People do not see that. Athletes get up in the morning. They train. They get injuries. They have people who are better than they, are and they have people who say they cannot get there, but they overcome all those

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obstacles and get there, only for people who have probably never got out of bed before eight o'clock in the morning, never trained hard and never dedicated themselves to have the audacity to rubbish them.

I have had my say on that. The last thing I want to talk about is the FV *Margiris*, which is the big trawler that is coming over to Tasmania. This trawler just sucks up everything in the ocean with a big net. It was in East Africa, and it has been banned from there because the local fish stocks were being diminished. I cannot understand why the Tasmanian state government and the commonwealth government let it in. If it does not get its quota there, it will be come across and hit either the South Australian or Western Australian coastlines. We have issues now with sharks coming in, and some of the old fisherman in Albany tell me that they have never seen so many white pointers as in the last couple of years. There used to be hammerheads, but now they have two or three of these big monsters. These big trawlers take everything. They do not take just the fish that they are supposed to; they suck everything up. I think everyone in Australia has to make a stand on this, because I like my fish and chips and I think everyone else does, but these sorts of things will mean getting fish from Taiwan, Vietnam and all these other countries in the near future, and that is not for me. I fully commend this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr K.D. Hames (Leader of the House)**.