

Mr John Hyde; Dr Janet Woollard; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Janine Freeman

METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BILL 2011

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 June.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [4.05 pm]: I thank the minister for his second reading speech and his departmental officers for the advice and information that they have offered to the opposition. In effect, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 provides for an amalgamation of the existing redevelopment authorities in the metropolitan area to create one single authority to take over the responsibilities of not only the current four redevelopment authorities, but also any new redevelopment areas that the Barnett government may have planned for us. With the government having made this bill a priority, one of the issues we would like to pursue during the debate on this bill is the government's intentions for future redevelopment areas. The most obvious area concerns the Perth Waterfront. I want to know whether the government intends to make that area a dedicated redevelopment authority area and project, or whether it would simply become a project within the new Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, with the former East Perth Redevelopment Authority extending its area, or as a satellite area. The issue has raised concerns in the community because, although we have four authorities, we have three different models of redevelopment authorities. Subiaco is really a mirror image of EPRA. The government needs to address the issue of the focus being on purely the CBD.

As the member for Perth, clearly I am delighted that EPRA is well funded, although it is perhaps not as transparently funded as we would like or certainly the community would like. One of the issues in this bill that we will be debating and looking at is the issue of transparency in the funding, asset retention and the operation of the redevelopment authorities. We would like to have confirmation regarding the existing assets of the various redevelopment authorities. Some authorities have the ability to take out loans; I want to know whether those liabilities become MRA liabilities to be shared by everybody or whether we will have some quarantining. In my electorate, asset sales have clearly made EPRA a more viable financial model. I want to know whether the proceeds of those assets will be quarantined for use within that existing redevelopment authority area. Similarly, we need to know about Midland and Armadale—perhaps more so with Midland. I want to know whether the proceeds of land sales underway in the Midland Redevelopment Authority area will be quarantined for use in that area or whether they will come into the general budget of the MRA to be used as the minister of the day and the MRA sees fit.

One of the issues we are cognisant of with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 is that the Armadale Redevelopment Act will expire on 31 December this year, and clearly the government has made this bill a priority. If the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority is not in operation by 1 January, there will be a need to extend the life of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. It is quite understandable that the Barnett government would make this bill a priority. I certainly seek confirmation from the minister on whether 1 January 2012 is a practical date for the operation of the new MRA. I think we need to explore during consideration in detail the issue of transparency. I applaud the minister for extending a number of areas of transparency in the operation of this authority, including the need for the minister to table decision-making documentation in Parliament, and I will go into that in greater depth later on. This legislation certainly provides a greater role for the Treasury. Although many in government know that the dead hand of Treasury looms over us all in a de facto manner, we need to explore its formalisation in legislation to see what role Treasury will play in not only the independence of independent authorities, but also the operations of the minister. Many of the functions outlined in this legislation will be undertaken by the minister, and we need to know whether the minister's actions, other than for business plans and other specified areas, will be curtailed or oversighted by the Treasury.

Clearly, one of the main purposes of having one Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill is to reduce the time spent by Parliament in that it will have to deal with only one piece of legislation rather than four, or, if we want to establish a new redevelopment area, another separate piece of legislation. The bill will also reduce the duplication of functions across multiple authorities. That is a fine aim of the government, but we need to know how the government will achieve that. When we talk about reducing duplication, we are inherently talking about real people with real jobs and real buildings and real offices in local communities, particularly in Armadale and Midland, that provide employment and opportunities for self-employed contractors. Again, wearing my hat as the member for Perth, one could obviously read the tea leaves and expect that the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, as it exists today, will have a pretty large role in the eventual operations of the MRA. The MRA may, in effect, just become a bigger EPRA. We need to ensure that the ethos and benefits of the successes of the smaller redevelopment authorities and their ability to be in touch with their local communities are preserved. We need to find out from the minister the nuts and bolts of how the duplication of functions across the multiple authorities will be eradicated and what that means on the ground.

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Under part 2 of the bill, there is a requirement for the minister and the Treasurer to approve certain business arrangements. I would like to hear from the minister the exact parameters of those business arrangements. I understand that the Barnett government is doing this with a couple of other authorities and that it is a new approach by government to formalise the role of the Treasurer in other portfolios. But it is really important that we determine the parameters of that oversight or partnership. Similarly, the delegation of the MRA's functions is one of the strengths of this bill, but one of the potential areas of concerns is the broad nature of the bill. A lot of discretion is being given to the minister, certainly through regulation, rather than the minister being constrained by a more prescriptive act. One area of delegation of the MRA's functions is to land redevelopment committees. My understanding from briefings about the delegation issue is that the only area that can be delegated is the planning functions of the MRA. However, there is some budget provision in part 3 of the bill, "Land Redevelopment Committees". There seems to be some budgetary decision-making responsibilities of the LRCs, yet part 2 of the bill indicates that only the planning responsibilities, not the financial responsibilities, of the MRA can be delegated. We will need to have those details explained by the minister.

Part 3 of the bill, "Land Redevelopment Committees", provides for the appointment of members. Under the legislation, five members will be appointed by the minister; one will be an MRA board member and one will have a local government background. As a former president of the Local Government Association, I know that one of the requirements that local governments jealously kept hold of in a number of pieces of Western Australian legislation was for the minister to take three nominations for local government appointments from the Western Australian Local Government Association. That requirement does not appear in this legislation; instead, the minister will be able to appoint somebody who has a local government background. That of course could be a councillor, somebody whom WALGA is keen on, a local government employee, somebody from various bodies, or somebody with a passing interest in local government. It is a rather broad interpretation. I think that WALGA needs to know what role the minister intends it to have. Will the minister consult with WALGA on every appointment? How will the minister and the Barnett government operate in the appointment of members to the land redevelopment committees?

Part 4 of the bill requires that redevelopment area regulations can be made only after the minister has considered certain matters and also consulted the WAPC and each affected local government. Again, when it comes to modern legislation, this is very broad, but I think we need to know the minister's interpretation of "consultation". In previous legislation Premiers were required to consult with the Leader of the Opposition on some appointments. It may have been a Labor Premier who went across the chamber and said, "I'm going to do this; what do you think about it? I'm doing it in five minutes." Technically, that does meet the legislative requirement for consultation but is it a 2011 interpretation of consultation?

Mr J.H.D. Day: It sounds like Brian Burke.

Mr J.N. HYDE: No names, no pack drill. I am sure that the Minister for Planning is fully committed to modern consultation. We would like to get it on the record so that when representatives of future local government, be they amalgamated or not, believe their consultation has not been sufficient or they were not consulted at all, we can refer to the minister's comments during this debate on what he envisages the real consultation will be.

It is important that we discover exactly how the Perth Waterfront project will fit into this bill, and whether it will be a separate redevelopment area. We should look at the operation of EPRA at the moment, which has representation from the City of Perth and the Town of Vincent. If the Perth Waterfront project, which is wholly within the City of Perth, merely became a subset of that local redevelopment committee function, we would need to know whether the representative of local government—be there one or two—would be a City of Perth person or a Town of Vincent person or whether a separate land redevelopment committee would be set up for each small project. I do not know whether the minister wants to tackle that matter by way of interjection now or address it later.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It would depend on the merits of each issue. If it is clearly a contiguous area between the City of Perth and the Town of Vincent, we would have the one committee. If they were separate, essentially unrelated areas, there may well be two separate committees. It does depend on each case.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The operation of the committees is important because we have economies of scale in having the one MRA. If we suddenly have 37 committees looking after little patches, I imagine that a lot of the efficiencies would be lost.

Mr J.H.D. Day: That is correct. I guess if the majority of a particular redevelopment area was within one local government area, it is more likely that a particular local government representative would be from the local government that covers the majority of the area. If it was mostly in the City of Perth, more likely it would be somebody with that particular background. I would assume that there could be a high level of cooperation

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between the Town of Vincent and the City of Perth. If the majority is in the Town of Vincent and the minority is in the City of Perth, it would be more likely that somebody with a Town of Vincent background would be appointed. The important point is to have someone with local government knowledge and experience as opposed to having people representing, necessarily, particular points of view. We want people with a good level of experience and ability, wherever they may come from.

Mr J.N. HYDE: One of the important advantages—often from the community’s point of view, the disadvantage—is that once we have a redevelopment scheme, it overrides the local and the regional planning schemes that are operating in that area. One of the criticisms of EPRA and sometimes the other redevelopment authorities is that we have a wide diversity of policies and operations. A developer undertaking a proposal in Armadale may be facing a number of developer’s payments and cash in lieu for various activities that somebody in a greenfields site in, say, Subiaco may not be facing. Again, by us achieving economies of scale and efficiencies under an MRA, we need to know whether the new body will adopt what could be argued to be a more interventionist approach than, say, an Armadale Redevelopment Authority model or a more or less fair model under EPRA. The body clearly needs to be able to give certainty to the planning community and to developers so that when they deal with a new authority, they know the exact nature of the beast that they are dealing with.

Part 6 of the bill relates to the development control in redevelopment areas. I applaud the government for tackling the issue of what occurs when the MRA is the developer or has a financial interest in the development. The government is addressing that huge problem. I see it as a massive conflict. I have received a number of complaints and issues through my office from people dealing with EPRA. They see a total conflict of interest when the developer gets them to buy land or a building and imposes certain conditions to make the sale and then becomes the planning authority that deals with approvals and various other matters. Clearly, in modern business practice and certainly under government and statutory authority actions, an organisation could be operated with appropriate firewalls. If I put my other hat on, it has been argued that an anti-corruption body may be able to take on an organised crime role as well as oversight corruption within a police force, the very people that it is working with. That has been the theory. In practice, it has not worked. The government is clearly addressing that conflict of interest.

Our issue is the government’s solution. While the government has addressed the problem, the solution is that the minister’s approval is required, instead of the approval of the planning authority. There is no limitation on where the minister can seek advice from. It would be very normal, say in the case of EPRA, for the minister to take advice from EPRA or the MRA on a planning development that it does not have decision-making capacity in. Again, there will be a need for firewalls or more transparency to see how this will play out. I would be interested to know if there were other alternatives to deal with this conflict of interest rather than the minister himself being the arbiter. Again, if we are looking at economies of scale, for the minister to perform this function as the decision maker, it might be argued that he may need to beef up his ministerial office with independent planning experts to give advice. I do not know whether the minister would rely on the Western Australian Planning Commission and I do not know what sort of policies would be put in place so that the land developer, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, which is trying to flog off government land and get the best price for the government, is not impacting on the proper planning for and the future amenity of the district, which would be its priority as the planning authority, clearly, if the minister is undertaking that role. The operation of what I think is a worthy improvement to the act is something that we would like to hear the minister’s views on.

Mr J.H.D. Day: As I understand it, I think what is in the bill is essentially what is in the current acts; namely, when an existing redevelopment authority is undertaking some form of development itself, it needs to get ministerial approval; it cannot give approval itself. The reality is, in my experience—I am sure it was exactly the same in the case of my predecessor, who was in the role for seven and a half or eight years, of course—that the authority does provide advice and suggest the conditions that should be imposed on itself. That is examined by my ministerial officer, and in my experience those officers are very thorough. But there is that control, so that at least some external approval has to be given outside the authority itself. Of course, there is nothing to stop a minister seeking further advice from the Planning Commission or the Department of Planning. In fact, I have done that in one case I can recall in relation to a development within the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority area, just to get some alternative advice or to confirm that what was being suggested was okay.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Certainly, the last global financial crisis—we will have to see what happens now—really put a spanner in the works regarding the conditions put on developers, particularly for beginning or completing construction and so on. I know that in my local electorate office I was writing many, many letters on behalf of constituents and others who had been affected through no fault of their own, but purely because of changes by the banks and others towards access to finance. As the minister and his government would know, we are losing

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skilled workers all the time to the north and to the mining sites, and we are not able to achieve the same efficiencies and tight time frames on buildings in the inner city as we would perhaps be able to achieve during a downturn or a period of greater unemployment.

The other issue we would like to explore is about the reviews by the State Administrative Tribunal and the way in which developers will be able to appeal to SAT when a decision by the MRA is not to the developer's liking or the developer wants to appeal. There is also the imposition of penalties for unauthorised development, as well as the other activities that a local government would normally undertake.

Under part 7, the MRA board is to be set up with seven members. I would be interested to know whether the minister's intention is that the WAPC's representative would be the executive director or whether it would be a board member. I would like to know the exact hands-on role and the linkage between the WAPC and the redevelopment authority, because we are creating a new authority that will have not only significant planning muscle, but also financial muscle, and will be a major competitor with the private sector planning and development industry as well.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It does say that the person needs to be a member of the board of the WAPC, so it can't be a staff member.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I would expect that the first consideration would probably be for the chairman of the WAPC board to be the member of the MRA board.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Okay. There is the requirement that only one of the seven members would have a local government background, and the others are required to have relevant qualifications, which I think is the terminology used. So later on or now we would like further information about what the minister believes to be the relevant qualifications of the other people, particularly as the legislation says that only one person has to come from local government, when, in effect, a redevelopment authority is just a more powerful local council. It has the same functions and abilities as a local council, and it could be argued that it also has the same responsibilities as a local council.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It also has responsibilities of the WA Planning Commission in relation to planning schemes within its area. The recommendation comes directly from the redevelopment authority to the Minister for Planning in relation to the planning scheme, whereas in relation to a local government planning scheme, it goes through the Planning Commission for recommendation to the minister. Therefore, as I said, this authority takes the role of the Planning Commission also in relation to planning arrangements within the area covered; in other words, it is more than just replacing a local government.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes. If it works effectively, it should make the process much more efficient. As long as the consultation that occurs with the local council and the local community is incorporated into the process in a transparent, timely way, we will have local community acceptance of this process.

In part 8, one area that I want to explore deals with the accountability and financial provisions. The MRA will no longer be automatically exempt from state taxes and rates. I thank the minister's office and the Department of Planning people for the analysis they gave me of the current situation. The Armadale, Midland and Subiaco Redevelopment Authorities are exempt under their acts from state and local government rates and taxes. The East Perth Redevelopment Authority does not have a general exemption in its act. My understanding is that, similarly, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority will not be automatically exempt from state taxes and rates under this legislation, but I think we need to know exactly what it will be exempt from and in what ways it will be operating on a level playing field with a private sector developer.

The issue of rates is very important, particularly to local government. When the Armadale, Midland and Subiaco authorities have been exempt from paying local rates, it has caused concern within local government. My understanding is that the rates equivalent should have been paid but that that has not occurred. I applaud the intent of the bill, which is to create a level playing field. A redevelopment authority that either develops or holds land should pay the same rates and taxes as a private developer. That will ensure that the real costs of development will be passed on and used transparently. In the past two budget years I have tried to get the East Perth Redevelopment Authority to appear before the estimates committee. Alas, there have been more pressing issues with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board or another authority that the government would prefer to appear before the estimates committee rather than EPRA. I would prefer EPRA to appear.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I would be quite happy about that. That would be fine by me.

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Mr J.N. HYDE: I shall pass that on to the Leader of the House and the manager of opposition business. Hopefully EPRA will not exist next year because we will have the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, and it is probably even more pressing for the MRA to turn up to the budget estimates.

We need to know the government's intention under the MRA. Will the MRA pay local government rates? I will use the Perth Waterfront project as an example. Planning changes will need to be made to the area to undertake the waterfront development. Usually the moment an area becomes available for redevelopment it is subject to rates. If a developer bought the land on spec, it would pay not only council rates, but also a series of land taxes. It will be an interesting exercise to consider what will occur with the Perth Waterfront project. I believe that the Minister for Planning has stated that it may be some years before the first cafe or business will make a profit or sell a product on that development.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I would expect—I am happy to check—that when the land is developed and sold to the private sector, the private owners will start paying rates to the City of Perth. I certainly do not expect the authority to pay rates prior to that stage.

Mr J.N. HYDE: We need to clarify that issue because the MRA's role is also that of a developer. As we have seen with EPRA as a developer, in order to maximise profits not all the land is released to the market at the same time, because that might make housing affordable! To maximise the profit, the land is released in stages. I am sure that next year the MRA will not sell and transfer all its land to the private sector. No developers will buy the land surrounding the Perth Waterfront project until either the plans for the development have been released or the Indigenous cultural centre has been built, which may be the main attraction, because the private sector developers who want to use the land for hospitality or entertainment want to know what will be established next door.

If a private sector developer who holds on to land for 10 years must pay council rates and state taxes on the land, surely it is valid also for the MRA to contribute to the community by paying rates to the City of Perth and the state government. That would act as an incentive for not only private developers, but also government authorities to not leave ugly building sites and land undeveloped. There is a requirement by the City of Perth—it may be only a policy—that if land is not developed within a year, it has to be landscaped. A number of prominent sites in the city have been landscaped within a year because they have not been developed and therefore have not become ugly dormant building sites or badly fenced vacant land that attracts graffiti. If the government, particularly through the MRA, is to be a major developer of a high-profile site in the city through the Perth Waterfront development, as well as the Northbridge Link project, it is only fair that we should put in place a level playing field and incentives that are the same for the government as those that apply to private developers to get on and do their job.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I am sure that in the case of the Perth Waterfront development, for example, there will not be any desire on the part of the government to hold on to the lots after they have been created. We expect that all the public works will be completed by the end of 2014. A sale process will be commencing well before then—probably next year in 2012. We want to see the whole site developed. Given the very high-profile nature of the site, we have no intention at all of holding onto the land that needs to be developed to improve the amenity of the whole area. I am not aware of EPRA, in all its history, developing land and holding on to it. Obviously I have been the responsible minister for only the past three years, but from my experience and observations, it undertakes development on a progressive basis, and as the funds become available, with the purpose of selling the land. Neither EPRA nor the MRA is primarily about making a profit; their primary purpose is to develop underutilised land or old industrial land and to revitalise places and encourage urban regeneration. If a surplus is made on some parts of the project, that is a good thing, but that is certainly not their primary purpose.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is it the minister's intention that the public works undertakings of the Perth Waterfront project will be undertaken by the MRA?

Mr J.H.D. Day: That's right.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Does the minister's commitment to have all the public works done by 2014 include the inlet?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: And the bridge over the new inlet?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: And the ferry terminal?

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Mr J.H.D. Day: Yes. I will have to check the detail, but I am pretty sure that it does include the ferry terminal. Certainly the MRA will undertake all the public space creation. There may be some detail to attend to in relation to the park areas that will be established, but it will certainly be the inlet and the boardwalks around there and the general public areas, yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Okay.

We talk about the four planning authorities in reference to Hope Valley–Wattleup and Perry Lakes and how their activities will be incorporated, if not totally wound up, under the MRA operation.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Which area?

Mr J.N. HYDE: The Perry Lakes responsibilities.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The Perry Lakes development is being undertaken by LandCorp; it is under a specific act of Parliament. The clear intention is for LandCorp to complete that development; it is underway at the moment, as the member knows. I think the second stage is currently being put out on the market, and LandCorp will be completing the project. LandCorp is also responsible for the development in the Hope Valley Wattleup area known as Latitude 32, with the Western Australian Planning Commission responsible for the planning arrangements in the area. I do not have any expectation that there will be a change from existing arrangements. Of course, one of LandCorp's original responsibilities was industrial land development, and the Latitude 32 area of Hope Valley Wattleup is a major area of industrial land development; it is entirely appropriate for LandCorp to undertake that.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Would it be the government's view that LandCorp's activities in this area will continue? We are devoting a lot of resources to creating this Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority; is the MRA actually a duplication of LandCorp, because they both do the same sort of activity? Would the minister expect the MRA to undertake more of that LandCorp role?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I am sure that there have been many discussions over quite a number of years about the respective roles of LandCorp and redevelopment authorities. LandCorp has a very important role to play on a statewide basis. The redevelopment authorities' responsibilities are generally more in areas of brownfield developments—urban regeneration—where, for example, a lot of remediation of soil or removal of contaminated soil on old industrial sites is needed, as was the case in East Perth and Midland, and I think Subiaco to some extent. There is a role for both organisations. Given the amount of growth we expect in Western Australia, there will be a continued role and plenty of work for both. We expect the proposed MRA to be able to take on expanded areas or to be put into effect, but we do not have any particular areas in mind at the moment. The work that it will undertake in relation to the Perth waterfront development, in addition to those areas we have already covered—Midland, Armadale, the Northbridge area, the Perth City Link project, the residual work in Subiaco and so on—means that it will certainly have its work cut out just in those areas.

Mr J.N. HYDE: One of the areas we need to drill down in, and which the opposition may look at amending, is the requirement for the minister to table a statement in Parliament setting out the reasons for declaring an area. Again, I applaud the step, if not the leap, towards transparency, by which, if the minister's decision about redevelopment area regulations is significantly different from a recommendation of the WAPC, further tabling and publication requirements will apply. That is a good step forward, but, again, the wording of the legislation states that the determination is by the minister himself and that he is the arbiter of whether it is a significant variation. I am sure that this issue took up some of the current minister's thinking, being the thorough person that he is, and I would be interested to explore this issue before we just storm in with an amendment about other possibilities to achieve that outcome. The issue is the threshold of when the variation from the WAPC advice becomes significantly different, and whether it is something we need to address in consideration in detail or whether it is something the minister has given some thought to.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Which part of the bill is this in?

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is part 4, "Redevelopment areas".

Mr J.H.D. Day: In relation to the member's question, we can discuss it further later, but I would expect a commonsense interpretation of the word "significant". If it is a minor change because of a minor technical issue or a variation of wording or something like that, obviously that would not be significant, but if a change to the areas is to be included in a redevelopment area that is anything more than a minor area of land, I would expect it to be tabled.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Although I am fully confident that while the current Minister for Planning is in his position or even if, I daresay, I become the Minister for Planning, commonsense might prevail. Nevertheless, as we say

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often in this place, we need to make legislation that is idiot proof. Although I am sure future Ministers for Planning may be wonderful people, the concern is the wording in clause 29(5), which states —

If the Minister recommends the making of regulations the content of which is, in the Minister's opinion, significantly different to any recommendation made by the WAPC ...

I know that it is the minister's opinion that that is legal wording, but I think we would all have examples, as we have seen over the years, regarding advice from the WAPC or certainly other bureaucracies, in which, although they may regard their advice to be significantly different, a minister or somebody in their office may not see it as being significant. Therefore, it is an area we need to explore. Again, I applaud the move towards transparency in that situation, which is what the community wants.

I briefly touch on the issue of staff moving from the four existing authorities into the new MRA. I am aware that the four authorities operate under different guises—be it public service, direct contracts or different operating systems. One of the great benefits of the MRA is that everyone would be under the same employment system; however, the issue will be the transfer arrangements. It would not be human if people in the existing authorities were not concerned about what will happen. As we know, we will go from three CEOs to one. There will be different reporting requirements and perhaps a different ethos to the way people work. Clause 150(3)(a), which deals with the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, states that an employee is to be taken to have been employed under the contract of service under section 109(2). We need some clarification. It is my understanding that the employees of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority are under contracts that will end on 30 June 2012, and the contract states that the contract is valid until the end of the existence of the ARA. If that authority ends on 31 December this year, what will be the real conditions of those workers who transfer over? Perhaps we need to look at amending clause 150(3) to take out the reference to “a contract of service with the statutory authority”, which would enable the automatic transfer to the MRA by ARA employees, as appears to be happening with the employees of the other redevelopment authorities. It is probably an issue we need to discuss in consideration in detail so that we have clarity regarding the employment conditions of all the people who will be moving over. Certainly from the minister's public statements and what we have discovered in the briefings, approximately 86 employees, or the real number of FTEs, will be absorbed and have positions within the new MRA.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Do you want me to advise in relation to the ARA staff?

Mr J.N. HYDE: It seems to be that in this clause it is the ARA employees who have the real variation. Could the minister explain the intent of clause 150(3)(a).

Mr J.H.D. Day: I am happy to give further advice. The background is that ARA staff are actually employed under the umbrella of LandCorp. It is different for the other authorities. I am advised that they will be transferred on their existing conditions. Their contracts will be extended for six months, as the member indicated, so that is until the end of June 2012. They can apply for positions in the new MRA.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I have a couple of final issues regarding the operation of the Percent for Art schemes and other requirements. One of the strengths of a number of good local governments is the Percent for Art requirement, and it works well. EPRA often does Percent for Art well. We have variations within the authorities and also within EPRA. This legislation does not really address those issues. One of the great benefits of good planning is in the imposition of this scheme. As I and other members have seen recently in places such as Portland, the redevelopments have created real, liveable communities. It is one of the great benefits of proper and good planning. I will be interested to hear in further debate how Percent for Art schemes and other requirements will operate under the new MRA system.

It is important that the Parliament gives this bill a lot of examination, because one of its strengths is that this bill will give the Parliament of Western Australia more control over, or more oversight of, planning than it currently has. The step towards transparency, particularly when there are variations between WAPC advice and the advice of the minister at the table, is a welcome step. As a Parliament we need to examine that this is the way our community wants us to operate. There is a need for more transparency, particularly in planning decisions in which the community has no third-party right of appeal. It is incumbent on the Parliament to get the legislation right at the beginning so that we can avoid problems in the future.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [5.05 pm]: I rise to speak on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. I will start by thanking the minister for allowing his staff to give me a briefing on this bill; I appreciated it. They were very good at explaining it to me. I have some concerns with the bill, which I am sure the minister's staff took back to him.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I thought they convinced you completely.

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Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: They did a very good job, but I have a few concerns, which I would like to bring to the attention of the minister and the opposition. The member for Perth said that he thinks it is good that as a Parliament we have the opportunity to examine this bill. I think this bill has such far-reaching consequences that we are not going to be able to examine it in this house. It really should go to the standing committee that looks after planning, the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. I say that because I think it is a great project, and we all want to see the Perth Waterfront project move forward, but I think what we should be debating in the house today is a bill for a Perth waterfront redevelopment authority. This bill could be used as a basis for the structure, role and functions of that authority, and then we could iron out any creases with this bill, rather than introduce a bill that covers the whole of the metropolitan area and allows an empire to be built to control planning development in any area.

The bill refers to costs, efficiencies and duplications. It is interesting. I am sure the minister's staff laughed when they told him this, because when I looked at the minister's second reading speech, it referred to costs. I thought, "What does this remind me of?" The thing that came to mind was the Office of Shared Services, because when the previous government introduced that, it said that, through a reform process, enormous savings could be achieved for the people of Western Australia so that money could be spent on service delivery. The minister said in his second reading speech, "the proposed bill will create greater efficiency and consistency for state government priority projects". In the whole of the minister's second reading speech, he talked about cost savings and efficiencies.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It is not about cost savings. It is about increasing capacity and better dealing with growth pressures in Perth and getting urban regeneration and revitalisation.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Then we have to look at population growth. When we look at population growth, we have to ask, "Minister, are you right?" I have to talk about this from a local perspective. Is the minister right in wanting to put in 20-storey developments, 10-storey developments and five-storey developments? People are not opposed to the five and the 10-storey developments, but they are very opposed to the 20-storey developments in Applecross and Mt Pleasant. That is the answer of one of the minister's departments to the growth in population. However, the federal population minister, Tony Burke, says that high-rise is not the answer to population growth and that we should be moving the infrastructure to the outer suburbs.

I am very concerned about this bill, because the key part of this bill is in the final paragraph of the second reading speech, which states —

Ultimately, it —

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Act —

will increase the potential of the redevelopment authority model to address our urban growth needs and challenges within a robust governance and accountability framework. It supports the key aim of Directions 2031 of ensuring that our metropolitan areas are able to respond in a sustainable way to longer term growth pressures.

The minister is saying that this bill will address our community's growth needs, but we already know that what the department is proposing for one area in Perth is not what the community wants. However, the minister claims in his second reading speech that there will be consultation.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The councils of both the City of Melville and the City of South Perth want it, and other people in the area want it. It is a question of how you define community.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: That is right, minister. I know of developers who want this; they want 20 storeys.

I like the fact that the redevelopment planning for the Armadale, East Perth, Subiaco and Midland areas occurred in consultation with the community. When I say with the community, I mean with the local community—with people at the grassroots. What has happened with the so-called vision for Canning Bridge? Council members from the City of South Perth and the City of Melville met with the government Department of Planning and came up with a vision. This was done with minimal consultation before the first document was released, and then the minister said in this house last year that there would be further consultation. The minister should ask my community what consultation has occurred with local community residents. The second document has now come out. There has been a complete lack of consultation. In his second reading speech, the minister stated —

Redevelopment schemes will have to be consistent with the objectives of the area, and can only be made following consultation with the WAPC, affected local governments, relevant stakeholders, and the public.

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The public missed out and the local community missed out on the Canning Bridge vision. A document has been put together by elected officers—it has not come from the local community—from the two councils without proper consultation with the local communities. The local communities do not want 20-storey developments at Canning Bridge at Mt Pleasant. I am sure the developers want that. I am sure the developers think that the vision statement is wonderful, given what they will make from it.

Mr J.H.D. Day: We do not respond only to what developers want. We respond to the need for sensible planning for growth and changing demographics in the Perth metropolitan area.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In relation to growth and changing demographic, the perceived population growth for the City of Melville is 30 000 over the next 30 or 40 years. Why will 20 per cent of that growth be catered for in two suburbs—Mt Pleasant and Applecross—that are each short of approximately 13 hectares of public open space? Those two suburbs already have a lack of public open space, yet nothing on the Planning Commission plans say that 13 hectares of land will be for the public open space missing in the suburbs. Instead, we have 20, 10 and five-storey buildings. People who live in the area have saved all their lives to retire in the area.

Mr J.H.D. Day: And any development in that precinct will need to include the provision of good public open space. A lot more detail has to be worked out and actual planning scheme amendments to be implemented. There will be further public consultation. The overall vision, the overall framework, is pretty well established, but planning is a pretty transparent process with a lot of public consultation. In the end, decisions have to be made. However, I know that there has been a lot of effort by both the City of South Perth and the City of Melville to engage with their local communities. That does not mean to say that everybody is happy. I understand that. I think both local government councils have made a very genuine effort to be forward thinking to ensure a high-quality outcome. There is a long way to go in relation to detail.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The minister has just said that there will be public open space. How much public open space will there be, minister? Prior to 1996, each new development area had to contain 10 per cent public open space. I believe Hon Richard Lewis, the then planning minister, removed that requirement from the act. When that requirement was removed, land was no longer set aside for public open space. That is why there are no local parklands in some of my suburbs for children to play in.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Generally speaking, 10 per cent of any new subdivision of any substantial size today needs to be developed as public open space for parks and children's play areas and so on. In an urban area in which there is only a small redevelopment, there needs to be an equivalent monetary contribution to local government in lieu of public open space being provided. Those funds can be used for the development of new or redevelopment of existing public areas, playgrounds, sports grounds and those sorts of things.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: But the local community wants public open space. Tell me, minister: in terms of public open space, how does one compensate for a 20-storey building?

Mr J.H.D. Day: The fact is that it is in very close proximity to the Swan River and all of the public open space around the river. I know that area reasonably well. When my children were at school, for example, I attended rowing regattas along that very pleasant area. There are a lot of public areas that people can access in the area. However, the detailed planning for any major urban development requires specific areas of public open space. Now they might be quite small local park areas. But if members were to visit places like Hong Kong or live in New York, which include development on a far greater scale than will ever be the case for the Canning Bridge area, they would see some quite small well-used, well-designed and well-built public open space, play areas and the like.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The City of Melville says that there should be public open space within 500 metres of all residences. That does not happen. That is not the case in Applecross. That is not the case in Mt Pleasant.

Mr J.H.D. Day: How long ago was that area developed?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Yes, the area is very old, but this is an opportunity. The minister has said that there will be a buyback of land, so why not give that land back to the community? Do not give it to the City of Melville, which wasted \$20 million on high investments. Make sure that the money goes to where the community wants it to go.

I will backtrack, minister, because we have gone off the bill a little bit.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Yes, we have.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In his second reading speech, the minister referred to undertaking “redevelopment projects in suitable areas within the Perth metropolitan area.” However, the minister and I both know that this

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bill can be applied to anywhere in the Perth metropolitan area. I am not sure why he has used the word “suitable”. The minister also stated that —

Traditionally, redevelopment authorities have been created by statute to coordinate and facilitate the redevelopment of areas where complex planning considerations apply and where there is significant state land ownership.

Whilst the minister is saying that there is duplication in services and greater efficiencies will be achieved, we know that the Armadale, East Perth, Subiaco and Midland Redevelopment Authorities intimately involved their communities in the planning for those areas. The minister continued —

By rationalising and restructuring the multiple statutory frameworks, the proposed bill will create greater efficiency and consistency for state government priority projects, and certainty for investors who are considering new ventures in important economic infrastructure, industrial development and urban land and housing.

I appreciate that we need a bill such as this for the Perth Waterfront and for other major planning developments within the metropolitan area. However, the reason we should have a bill that has this new structure for the Perth Waterfront area is to make sure that we get community consultation right.

I am concerned that the Canning Bridge vision was not the vision of my local community and yet this document is being pursued. Some of the concerns with this document that we did not discuss a few minutes ago are the traffic problems and the fact that this new authority will not be aware of the traffic problems in various areas. As I have told the minister before, traffic backs up from Canning Bridge to North Lake Road. The Mandurah–Perth railway is being used, but not by enough people. Unless someone is on the road at Mandurah by six o’clock in the morning, they will be in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Don’t you think it would make sense to have more people living closer to the rail line and existing railway stations such as the Canning Bridge railway station? Wouldn’t that be a good solution?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It is really interesting that the minister is suggesting that people live closer to the railway line. Has the minister ever walked across Canning Bridge to catch the bus at 12 o’clock with a bag containing a computer in one hand and a few books in the other hand? I have. I have used the buses and the trains and it is really hot and it is a long walk. Applecross and Mt Pleasant are not next to the railway station.

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The minister’s comment would be fair enough if those suburbs were next to train stations.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The other side of the bridge is within a few hundred metres.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I ask the minister to come and walk that few hundred metres with me in the middle of summer when it is 35 degrees. It is just not going to happen.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I’ll carry an umbrella for you.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: How can someone hold an umbrella when they have their computer in one hand and books in the other hand?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I said that I’ll carry the umbrella for you.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It would be lovely if the minister would escort me. Those suburbs are not next to the railway line. The railway line is the other side of the bridge.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Indeed, there will also be further development on the eastern side of the bridge in the electorate of South Perth.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Having to cross Canning Bridge makes it very difficult for elderly people to get to that train line and there is no parking on the Applecross–Mt Pleasant side. Already people sometimes park as far back as my office in Applecross Village because traffic is so congested at the station. With this new so-called vision, Canning Highway will have traffic problems like the ones in the western suburbs in Sydney. Where are the minister’s plans for a replacement? Perhaps we could get a new Canning Bridge or a tunnel going under the bridge. All that we have heard from that vision statement is that on the Applecross and Mt Pleasant side—this is the minister’s current planning vision—will be 2 000 residences. Those two suburbs are already short of 13 hectares of public open space. The minister is also hoping to have new retail businesses in the area and create 11 000 retail positions. It would be nice if people could travel via our public transport, but our public transport is

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hopeless in that area; it does not go through the suburbs. The minister is going to put 2 000 additional cars on the roads from the residences. Of those 11 000 people working in retail, how many will drive to work?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Maybe they will live nearby.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Some may live nearby, but not 11 000. Already my local residents say that when they want to drive out of their driveways, the driveways are blocked by cars and trucks. What will it be like when, according to this vision, the minister allows another 2 000 residences and another 11 000 people working in that area? It is too much. Why put all that pressure on that one area?

Again, I take members back to what the federal Minister for Population, Tony Burke, said. He said that high-rise is not the way to go. When I say “high-rise”, I am not objecting to six-storey, nine-storey and possibly even the odd 12-storey development, but 20 storeys is —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): I am struggling to see the relevance to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011, so can you bring it back to that, please?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I appreciate that the government needs to introduce a bill to assist with the delivery of the Perth Waterfront project; that is what the minister has said in his second reading speech. I go back to the fact that I do not know whether centralisation is the right way to go at this point. Again, I refer members to the Economic Regulation Authority report on shared services, which states —

Shared corporate services were introduced in Western Australia in 2003, with the objective of reducing the overall cost of providing corporate services in the public sector. This was to be achieved by realising economies of scale through the aggregation, standardisation and centralisation —

Et cetera. The Economic Regulation Authority review of shared services states —

The underlying assumption of shared services is that savings can be achieved by delivering selected government services through a centralised model. This can be achieved without compromising ... standards.

Decentralisation can result in variable standards and approaches, duplication of effort, higher costs and less transparency across agencies. However it could potentially allow for greater flexibility in tailoring agencies’ services to the needs of their customers.

I repeat, decentralisation —

... could potentially allow for greater flexibility in tailoring agencies’ services to the needs of their customers.

Coming back to this bill, why are we not looking at how the minister envisages the future redevelopment authority for the metropolitan area rather than a bill that may not be the right way to go and that may further alienate members of the community who want to be involved in planning decisions? When I looked at this, it at first made me think of shared services with a centralisation–decentralisation issue. Then I thought: why else is this bill on the table as it is now? Is it because the government has not been able to centralise the councils and that this is another way to skin a cat? When we get this authority, why will we need local councils? If this redevelopment authority takes over all planning functions, which it could do in the future, will we need a local council for garbage collection? Could it be done in the same way as it is done in Brisbane, which has one council, or in England, which has one council for the whole of London?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Do you think that would be a good idea?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It is a shame that I am looking at this issue from the perspective of a council that has not consulted with the community. I hope that other councils do a much better job than the City of Melville has done.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You have a real love affair with it, don’t you?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: We have some interesting conversations, minister. The City of Melville does some good things, and when it does those good things, I congratulate it. But the community disagreed with its decision to support the Canning Bridge vision. It is currently looking at selling scout halls and senior citizens centres. There are lots of things going on that the community is not happy with. But that is not what we are here to discuss today, so I will not discuss those issues.

Part 4 of the bill refers to the redevelopment areas. Again, the member for Perth asked what consultation there will be. I guess that is my concern. It could be an advantage in some ways. It might well be that there is some

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community consultation with this new structure. The minister might actually listen to the community. I like the bit of the second reading speech that states —

... if the minister's decision in relation to a redevelopment scheme is significantly different from a recommendation of the WAPC, further tabling and publication requirements will apply.

I am quite pleased about that because, again, it means that if the community disagrees with the development in the local area, it will still have an opportunity to lobby the minister personally about a planning decision that the community is very unhappy with.

Mr J.H.D. Day: When you talk about getting the agreement of the community, do you mean that I need to get the agreement of every single member of a particular community before I decide to do anything? Is that how it should work?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: No, minister. I am quite happy with a democracy and that the minister should put it out for consultation, and if the majority of the people agree, he should go with it. However, I assure the minister that, at this time, it is not the majority but the minority in Applecross and Mt Pleasant that support the development that the minister has proposed as part of the “Draft Canning Bridge Precinct Vision”.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I am sure that some of the residents of Applecross and Mt Pleasant also would have an appreciation of the bigger picture, the growth in Perth generally and the changing demand for residential accommodation. In fact, a lot of people in well-off areas in the western suburbs and in your part of the world are getting older and they want to stay in the same area but not have responsibility for the same area of land. They want apartment accommodation of a high-quality nature in the areas in which they have lived for a long time.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Maybe six or nine storeys or even 12 storeys high. They would support the minister if that is what he was putting forward, but they do not support 20 storeys. I went to England this year. The maximum height of the buildings in most areas in the middle of England is nine storeys, not 20 storeys. Twenty-storey buildings are in the central business district; they are not in a local suburban area. In fact, minister, there are some areas in England that have high-rise buildings and they were on the news this week. Tottenham is one of those areas. Did the minister see what is happening in Tottenham at the moment? We do not want that type of activity occurring at Canning Bridge. I appreciate that the minister needs to introduce legislation to see the Perth Waterfront redevelopment move ahead. I support that, minister. But my concern with this legislation is that the minister is doing too much, too soon. It is not clear how consultation will occur. It is not clear that the grassroots community will have a say in this redevelopment.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [5.35 pm]: I rise to speak on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. There are two main parts to my contribution: the first relates specifically to the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, and the second consists of some general comments on the provisions of the bill, which, of course, we will deal with in greater detail during the consideration in detail stage. I would like to split my contribution on the Armadale Redevelopment Authority into three phases—the history of the authority, the achievements of the authority and the future of the authority, which of course will be impacted on by this bill. As the minister and others in this house would know, this was an initiative of the previous Labor government. It was actually the initiative of my predecessor, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. It came into existence in 2002, and I was fortunate to be on the inaugural board. I served in that position until a couple of months prior to my entering this house last year. I am very proud to have been a member of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority board because I think it achieved much for the area.

I want to take some time to briefly honour the contribution made by the late Gerry Gauntlett, the inaugural chair of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, who, sadly, passed away a few years ago. Unfortunately, it was a bad year for the authority, because three months before Gerry passed away, Verity Allan, a great individual, who was also an inaugural board member, passed away. Both died of cancer. Their contributions to the authority and its achievements cannot be underestimated. The other inaugural members of the board include Hon Kay Hallahan, a former member of this house and the other house, who did an outstanding job; and two local councillors who remain on the board, Mayor Linton Reynolds and Councillor Henry Zelones, who have made significant contributions to the activities and achievements of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. Of course, we were concerned about the legal ramifications of having councillors on the board. Where were their duties? Did their duties lie with the authority or with the city council? Both Linton Reynolds and Henry Zelones acquitted their duties for the city and the authority with great aplomb, and they considered both organisations in their deliberations. They made outstanding contributions.

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The minister will recognise the booklet I am holding up, the “Armadaled Redevelopment Authority: A Decade of Achievement”, which I urge members of the house to read. In the introduction by the honourable minister, he states —

It gives me great pleasure to be able to celebrate ten years of achievement by the Armadale Redevelopment Authority.

He mentions that the authority is different in the sense that it does not own any land; it has limited resources in that respect. He concludes by saying —

The ARA can look back on its achievements with pride and satisfaction, and look forward with anticipation to seeing the results of its labours continue to unfold.

I could not agree more with the minister in that respect. Champion Lakes would be one of the most significant achievements that the authority can be proud of. People who drive past Champion Lakes as they travel north or south on Tonkin Highway will see an outstanding body of water that is now regarded as one of the premier rowing regatta courses in the world, and it continues to improve. Major championships will unfold at that venue for a number of years. Other achievements under the authority’s guidance include the rejuvenation of the Armadale CBD, the Forrestdale Business Park and the Wungong urban water project. The Wungong urban water project is an innovative project that has had to overcome many challenges, but those challenges have been overcome. We look forward to the developers taking up the opportunities that will arise with the Wungong urban water project.

The authority has been in a partnership arrangement in many projects. One of the major partners has obviously been the City of Armadale. In most cases the City of Armadale and the authority have worked well together. At times when different interests were at stake, there was some conflict. The Seville Grove precinct is part of a great partnership arrangement, as is LandCorp.

It is hoped that the Water Corporation will come on board with financial assistance for the third pipe in the Wungong urban water project, which will allow a non-drinkable water supply to be utilised by the residents in that area. I mentioned the inaugural board of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority and, specifically, the late Gerry Gauntlett and Verity Allan. I should also acknowledge that the board is now under the chairmanship of Charles Johnson, who is carrying on the outstanding work of the authority. John Ellis is the CEO of the authority. He has been since day one, and he has continued his outstanding service. I would like to compliment the staff for the outstanding duties and achievements they have chalked up against their names.

That leads me to the third part of what I want to say about the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, which was mentioned by the member for Perth. It relates to the future of the staff members of the authority. It would seem that under clause 150 of the bill, Armadale Redevelopment Authority employees will have security of tenure for only six months after the expiry date of the authority, which comes to an end on 31 December this year. The problem comes about because Midland Redevelopment Authority employees are considered to be public servants; they are employed as public servants. EPRA employees come under a different provision; I think they are employed under a statutory authority. The employees of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority are not employed under a statutory authority, and that is why their employment is very insecure. I would like to ask the minister a question. He does not have to answer it now; he can leave it until consideration in detail if he wishes. It was alluded to by the member for Perth. To whom will clause 150(3)(a) apply? I do not know of any employee of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority who is under a contract of service with a statutory authority. I just flag that. The minister may want to seek some advice on that.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Presumably, would that not be LandCorp?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I believe that LandCorp is not considered a statutory authority. I am not 100 per cent sure why that is the case. I am not saying that the minister meant for this to happen; it is the way that it has happened and the way the contracts were engaged through the various authorities. It means that the employees of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, the authority that is in my electorate and the one that I have a strong personal and professional connection to, seem to be hard done by under this legislation. I understand that the employees at Midland and East Perth will continue their employment; they will not have to reapply for their positions. But the employees of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, who received their appointments through a competitive process, will have to reapply. They understand that they were employed for the life of the authority. However, many of the projects that they are involved in are continuing beyond the life of the authority. There are certain provisions in the bill relating to agreements that were made under the current structure that will continue in the new structure. If that is the case with certain agreements, why is that not the case with employment agreements? It seems to be very harsh that these employees at the Armadale Redevelopment Authority have great uncertainty

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over their future employment, vis-à-vis East Perth and Midland. There is also a local factor here. As members may or may not realise, it is often difficult to generate local employment in Armadale. There is no doubt that the Armadale Redevelopment Authority has been an avenue for increasing local employment. I worry that with the expiry of the authority and the uncertainty about the future prospects of some of the employees, the local employment content of anything that replaces it will be reduced.

I am not sure whether the minister is aware but I believe that some employees of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority have written to either his office or the department seeking answers to a number of questions and they remain unanswered. Maybe the minister could quicken up that response.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I will seek further information and provide a response either to the second reading debate or in consideration in detail. A general comment is that most of the staff of the ARA have been employed under a fixed-term contract. That is obviously different from the staff at the other authority you referred to, but they should be treated fairly, obviously. I will get more information.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do understand. As the minister confirmed, the staff of the ARA are employed under a different arrangement from those staff in Midland and East Perth. There is a great body of expertise in corporate knowledge and it would be silly if that corporate knowledge were lost through a process that maybe does not need to be put in place. Unless those positions are being deleted or lost, it would be sensible to transfer them to the new process.

I have one final issue that specifically relates to Armadale. I worry about the demise of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. I am not saying that this would not have happened under our government. I know that the former member for Armadale and the previous minister had contemplated something similar. I worry now that Armadale will be lost vis-à-vis East Perth, for instance, or Melville or wherever. As I said in my inaugural speech, we have a fear in Armadale that once we get over the imaginary Mason-Dixon line, which means south of the Swan River, we are often poor cousins to people who are living close to the Swan River in the inner city areas. I am concerned about that. There is much to be commended with economies of scale and reducing duplication. I understand that. When we take away the local component that is the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, will we in Armadale still be serviced as we have been under the authority?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I will make a quick response. I accept your point. There is always that danger. A couple of safeguards are that a member of the overall board will be the chair of the land redevelopment committee for the Armadale area. It is also intended to maintain an office in Armadale.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think it is important for the confidence of the local business community that there be a physical structure there; otherwise, those little signals can often have a catalyst effect and decrease and hamper investment in the area.

I turn to some of the general provisions of the bill. As the member for Perth mentioned, some very sensible provisions and clauses are proposed to be enacted. It would seem, as the member for Alfred Cove mentioned, that this bill has great powers, particularly in allowing any particular area to become a redevelopment zone as such. I was interested in clause 9, which refers to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority being able to take on the functions of the Western Australian Planning Commission. The Armadale Redevelopment Authority has a very set mandate, which really is in the gazetted areas and the central business district of Armadale. It is interesting that these powers will be granted to the new authority and also can be delegated to the local redevelopment identities. It will be an interesting development to see how that operates.

I am interested in clauses 77 and 80, which deal with the composition of the board. It was mentioned that members of the board are to have experience in one of the following fields: urban planning, business management, property development, financial management, engineering, transport, housing or community affairs. One can then look at clause 80, which deals with land redevelopment committees. I am not trying to say that lawyers are needed, but I wonder why law has not been included there. I was the lawyer on the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, and I think it is important to at least include lawyers as a possibility. Of course, board members can go off and get legal advice, but often when people are at board and committee meetings, it is useful to have a lawyer present. Therefore, I urge that the possibility of including in those categories someone who has experience in the legal field be considered. Maybe there is another reason why they are not included, because we know that lawyers are not always the most popular people in the world.

Mr J.H.D. Day: They may not be popular, but they are certainly very important. They play a very valid role.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right. They are very, very important.

Mr J.H.D. Day: As has been the legal advice in the preparation of this bill.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes. From the time that I spent on the board, I can say that it was very rare that a board meeting did not have some legal issue to consider, so it may be a useful thing to have.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will not need the whole time.

I agree with the issue raised about local government contribution. I do not think that we necessarily need to have a councillor on these local redevelopment committees, but the legislation mentions someone who has experience as a local government councillor. I think that is sufficient. All I will say about the Armadale Redevelopment Authority is that the contribution of the local councillors was, and continues to be, fantastic. Therefore, one would have to ensure that there is that connection to the local council, particularly because this bill, as I said, seems to create wide powers, and, as was alluded to by the member for Alfred Cove, the planning duties and responsibilities of local councils in many respects could basically become irrelevant. If that is the case, I am sure that local councils may be a bit nervous about that prospect, although some local councils may like the idea that they will have no responsibility for planning matters. However, whether or not a person is a local councillor, local knowledge will be incredibly important. Of course, the central board will not be able to cater for the local component because it is a central board, but the local redevelopment committees, I believe, are a very sensible way of going forward. Therefore, I commend the minister on including that provision. It will be ultra important that the local component remain. I am a little fearful, however. At least one board member will become a member of the local redevelopment committee. Is there a maximum of two, or is there just one?

Mr J.H.D. Day: It is certainly at least one.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, at least one, and no more than two—maybe; I am not sure. That board member will, of course, go to that committee with a certain gravitas and status. I hope that their status and gravitas does not act as a detriment or an inhibitor to the local component having enough input into the process. I hope that that will not be the case. The minister cannot guarantee that, obviously. We just hope that it will not happen. That will depend on the make-up of the local committee.

Overall, this bill has many commendable aspects. However, as I said, I want to reiterate the concerns I have about the security of tenure of the current staff at the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, who have done, and continue to do, a great job. Also, hopefully, the Armadale area will not be lost in this process, because it has been forgotten in many other processes. I hope that will not be the case in this instance. The member for Alfred Cove may want to go on about Melville and so forth. She should come out to Armadale. If she thinks there is overcrowding in Melville and Alfred Cove, she should send those people to Armadale. We would love to have more people living in Armadale and creating greater employment in our region. I think it is all relative. Finally, once again, I reiterate the outstanding achievements of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.56 pm]: I realise that in fact I have only a few minutes, which is quite fortunate, because I am going to make only a very brief contribution.

Mr J.N. Hyde: You can take your time after the break, member.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Alternatively, I might change my mind during the break and make a significant contribution! The reason that I rise to speak on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You can say it on a full stomach.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Yes. I thank the member for that contribution.

Mr P.C. Tinley: You could be the dinner watchman.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thank the member. I thank members on my side for the helpful delaying tactics.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Even if you gave only a short speech, it would still be significant.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thank the member.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Don't forget what the MRA is going to do to animals.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): Members, can we just let the member get into her speech.

Ms L.L. BAKER: The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 will impact on many of our electorates, because many of us will find that we have employees of the agencies involved in these changes living in our electorates. Indeed, that is why I rise to speak on the bill. One of my constituents has contacted me to specifically ask me to raise the issues that my colleagues have raised. I will not go into great detail because they have been extensively presented by both my colleagues. Specifically, my constituent has written to me,

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saying that he is an employee on a fixed-term contract. He is a member of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority and finds that, if we follow the letter of what is drafted in this bill, he is likely to effectively be without a job as at 30 June 2012, I think. He thinks that his contract and the contracts of other people in the Armadale Redevelopment Authority will be made void or cancelled as at 30 June 2012. He understands that this may in fact be an unintentional consequence of the drafting of the bill. But this is very worthy of the minister's attention. I think I have heard the minister indicate that it is a problem that he is aware of now and is going to look into, but I look forward to getting more detail on what the minister will do about this issue. It is possible to do like-to-like transfers of public servants when this kind of amalgamation is done. I understand completely that we are talking about two different creatures—two different employment arrangements by two very different employing agencies. Nevertheless, there are ways to manage this so that no-one is discriminated against or treated unfairly. Given that we are very aware of the somewhat pressured existence that many of my constituents, anyway, are facing at the moment with cost-of-living increases, it would be very, very disturbing to think that through absolutely no fault of his own, all of a sudden this person is likely to have his contract shortened by—I do not know—maybe 18 months, if they are two-year fixed-term contracts. I look forward to the minister being able to outline in a bit more detail how he intends to help people such as this man who has written to me and who I am sure would appreciate some support on this matter. That is in relation to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011.

Mr J.N. Hyde: One of the issues I would like to take up—I did mean to mention it—is that the legislation refers only to the minister. We need some clarification that that is actually going to be only the planning minister.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [7.01 pm]: As some of my colleagues have outlined, we support the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 and will not oppose it; however, we have some concerns that we would like to raise. Overall, the idea of greater urban redevelopment, particularly in suburbs between five and 10 kilometres from the CBD, is very important. With population growth I believe two things need to happen: the creation of new suburbs and the redevelopment of existing suburbs closer to the CBD and existing transport nodes. I am very supportive of an authority that will have the power to undertake sensible redevelopment and urban regeneration closer to the CBD.

I often drive around and think that Perth is such a growing city that it is essential we be more proactive in creating higher density closer to the CBD. We cannot continue to grow forever and ever north and south along the coast. I support an authority with the power to do that. State government has the expertise to do it properly. Again, I think trying to reduce duplication and confusion between state and local governments is important. I support this legislation. I believe we need to grow the city with new suburbs, and also make sensible decisions in trying to get better density, in particular near our transport nodes. We cannot continue to grow at the current rate because basically we will be growing forever, and we need to get more people living closer to our transport infrastructure.

I am not a big advocate of 20-storey buildings, to reinforce the member for Alfred Cove's contribution, but I do believe there are sensible density options that are not 20-storey buildings. When the debate about redevelopment occurs, people automatically jump to the conclusion that high density means high rise. That is not the case. If we redevelop sensibly, it can add not only character but also a community feeling to the suburbs. When the debate about high density occurs, people talk about high rise, but that is not the case. I had the opportunity to go to Europe on a number of occasions before my parliamentary career. There are not a lot of high-rise buildings in some of the older towns, but there is high density. There are also people in the community, in piazzas and in public open spaces, enjoying a good lifestyle. We should not equate high density with high rise, because that is where the debate is lost straightaway. No-one wants to live next to a 20-storey tower in the suburbs—of course we do not—but there is a huge opportunity to improve our density. It adds to the character and, coupled with proper open space planning, whether it is parks or piazzas—whatever we like to call it—it can add to the atmosphere and sense of community in a suburb. I am broadly supportive of the bill. We need to do it more but we need to do it sensibly. We need to remove some of the roadblocks that occur and the confusion around responsibilities and powers that exist between state and local governments.

I now want to talk briefly about the Midland Redevelopment Authority. The member for Armadale, given his long relationship with the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, picked up some concerns about whether the creation of one redevelopment authority would result in a lessening of priority given to places such as Armadale and Midland. That is a real risk. I know the minister is trying to overcome that by the board appointments and things like that, but I do believe it is a real risk. There could be a diminishing focus on those areas, which I would not like to see. I believe both Armadale and Midland are very important regional centres. The momentum

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behind those redevelopments has to continue. Both centres are serviced very well by existing public transport. Of course there are issues about overcrowding on existing train lines, but they are serviced well by public transport. They are the gateways to both the south west and the east. We need to continue that focus to ensure that we do not leave the town centres of Armadale and Midland behind. There is still a lot to do in both centres, but there is particularly a lot to do in Midland to create a vibrant and active town centre. As I said, I would not want to see these areas left behind. I hope that particular priority is given, in the early years of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, to ensure that specific projects are undertaken so that some of the sexier and new things that might be occurring around the CBD will not result in Midland and Armadale being left behind.

Another point I would like to make relates to the board of the authority. I want to see the board full of professionals and people who can bring years of planning expertise to the place. I do not want to see it full of political appointments; I want to see it full of people with expertise. I believe something as important as this authority needs specific expertise and experience to ensure that what we do is done well.

I have some questions for the Minister for Planning to take note of and respond to in his second reading reply. These are some questions passed to me by the member for Perth, who did not have the opportunity to go through these. The first question is: how does this bill relate to the Western Australian Planning Commission in relation to subdivision? The notes I have in front of me, minister, state that this bill would result in the WAPC being overridden in its powers regarding subdivision of the redevelopment areas. Could the minister provide some clarification on that in his second reading response? The second question is: what is the definition of “minister” in this bill? As there is no definition in the bill, there could be some confusion about whether the minister referred to in this bill is a different minister from the Minister for Planning. We need an explanation for why there is no explanation or definition of “minister” in the bill.

There are some questions related to the priority to be given to Midland and Armadale, but overall the idea is to have a dedicated authority working to try to create better use of our land and smarter infill. As I said, I do not believe that infill should be 20-storey buildings but I also do not necessarily believe that we should just allow people to build at the back of their blocks. We need to be a bit smarter about how we go about urban infill. For example, in some older areas, if people are just allowed to subdivide, the additional open space and parklands that is needed is not provided. We need to be a bit smarter and look at whole areas to see how things can be done properly.

I will touch on more general planning issues throughout my electorate and in the City of Swan. The Midland Redevelopment Authority is not within my electorate, but I have touched upon that. I will talk about some of the structure plans and planning processes that I have seen firsthand over the past three years, particularly in relation to some of the new subdivisions and residential areas that are occurring around the Lord Street corridor. I think there are real problems with the relationship between the state government and local governments on some of these issues. With developer contribution plans, for example, there is a real problem in identifying exactly what is a state and what is a local government responsibility, how it is costed, and how people pay for it. I am talking specifically about public transport and road infrastructure. Further work needs to be done by the Department of Planning to ensure that we do not have some very unfair outcomes. Developer contributions were designed to ensure that councils have the cash flow to fund subdivisions so that they do not rely on existing ratepayers to do that. However, we need to be very careful about what is included in the DCP pool and how it is costed. There is an issue with the West Swan east structure plan and the DCP strategy behind that.

More needs to be done to create some certainty for state government infrastructure within subdivisions. What happens in a lot of these subdivisions is that residential developments are released and there are plans for schools, new roads, bus stops and bus routes, but no funding is set aside for those things. People buy into these areas on the expectation that a school will be built, but no funding is allocated for the construction of the school. I understand that funding is allocated for the purchase of land as part of the process, but not for the construction of the school. This occurs again and again. There are empty blocks of land throughout the suburbs that are owned by the Department of Education and were meant for schools. People buy properties in these areas on the expectation that schools will be built. I believe that there is an obligation on the state government to allocate funding for the components of the structure plans that are approved by the Western Australian Planning Commission. That would make the whole process far more rigorous and serious. That is when the state government could say whether a school will or will not be built. The Department of Education bought land in the new suburb of Bennett Springs for a school. People bought blocks and developed homes on the expectation that there would be a school in that area, but there is no school there, and there is unlikely to be under this government.

Mr M.P. Whitely: It is not far from the hypothetical train line as well.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have not mentioned that. I might get on to that. There is also the train line issue. A public transport corridor is identified in the structure planning for the new residential developments along Lord Street but, as we know, there is no funding for and no commitment to develop that corridor. Again, that is a significant problem. This situation will continue unless we address it through the planning process. If the state government approves a structure plan and agrees that this is where a school or a bus route will be, it should at that stage earmark some money to fulfil those obligations, whether that will be five or 10 years down the track. In a sense, the state is creating an obligation by approving those plans and saying what will be there. I have encountered this issue many times in my time as a local member, and it continues to be an issue.

Other general planning issues are not picked up by this bill. In particular, with housing developments that are put over existing properties, there is the question of the priority that should be given to existing landowners. As I have said in this place a number of times, I have seen people's homes planned to be demolished to create public open space when empty land, which could easily have been allocated as public open space, is down the road. I was shocked to find that no priority is given to homes under existing legislation. There needs to be some analysis of the impact of developments on existing landowners. Proponents of structure plans would then have to give a reason for demolishing someone's home rather than developing a park down the road. That has happened along the Lord Street corridor under some of the structure plans. As I said, public open space could easily have been developed further down the road but no consideration was given to existing landowners in the planning process. I am not saying that we have to stop development, but the developer or proponent of a structure plan needs to say, "This is my structure plan. These are the reasons I need to demolish people's homes and not go down the road." This sort of thing increases costs overall, but it also creates huge uncertainty and concern for landowners whose houses will be demolished. Over the past couple of years I have been shocked by how little consideration is given to existing landowners and homeowners. I am not talking about some of the issues that were raised by the member for Alfred Cove; I am talking about people's homes being demolished. We need to have some sort of hurdle or justification process for developers or proponents when they choose to knock over someone's home instead of developing public open space further down the road. That is a key issue, because if we do not give consideration to homeowners, I think these sorts of processes will fall down.

I have another issue within my electorate. I will quickly touch upon the review of the Swan Valley Planning Act. I was surprised about how this review is being conducted. As a local member, I would like to have been consulted. This is a major review that will affect my electorate and people throughout the West Swan area.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I requested a briefing from the Department of Planning on what is happening with the Swan Valley Planning Act and the review, but that was rejected. I find that quite shocking.

Mr J.H.D. Day: There is no secrecy at all. I do not think a full review is occurring at the moment. An economic study is being undertaken by the department and the City of Swan. I think you have met with Derrick Tomlinson, the chair of the committee, and you are very welcome to do that again. I am happy to tell you everything that is going on. There is no formal review going on.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I just could not understand why I could not receive a briefing from the department on such a big issue. I am questioned all the time in my electorate about this review or economic study. There is a lot of confusion about what is happening. No-one knows what is happening. I asked for a briefing from the department. I sought a meeting with the chair of the Swan Valley Planning Committee, but that was just a general chat; I did not receive a full briefing on the review of the Swan Valley Planning Act.

Mr J.H.D. Day: As I said, I do not think there is a full review at the moment. We need to make decisions about the future of the Swan Valley and what may occur within the area covered by the act. Obviously no change to that will occur without consultation, including with you, as one of the local members, but also with the wider public.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not see why I cannot have a discussion with one of the minister's departmental people.

Mr J.H.D. Day: If there is anything significant to pass on to you, I am happy to provide a briefing, but I do not think there is a lot more information to provide at the moment.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A briefing was organised but it was cancelled. The minister has now written a letter and said that I cannot have one at all.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Because there was very little to say in addition to what I have just told you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A lot of people are running around talking about the review but they have neither received a briefing nor been given any understanding of what is happening. As a local member, I believe it is outrageous,

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frankly, that the minister did not accept the request to provide a briefing. I will take up the minister's offer that his department will give me a briefing.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I will be updated myself again and if there is anything significant to inform you of, I will either do it myself or make sure that you are provided with the information.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the minister.

I will make some points about the CBD redevelopment. I think this authority will oversee some of the Perth Waterfront project and the Perth City Link project.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr J.H.D. Day: That is correct.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will make a couple of points about the redevelopments. We all like big projects, but one of the key things I would like to see us do is look at all these projects in tandem and at how they can work together. One of our failings as a city in the past has been that we have undertaken particular projects but have not looked overall at how the city would operate over the next 10 or 20 years. I spent last week in Melbourne. One thing that struck me about Melbourne was not how good Federation Square or any other particular project was, but how well everything was connected, both through public transport routes and particularly the grid pattern of the CBD, and how people could get from point A to point B. That is what creates a city like Melbourne. Sometimes we are very keen to pluck out things and say that it will look like Federation Square, Etihad Stadium or Southbank, but those things work only because of the way the whole city operates. We are spending a lot of money—over \$1 billion—on the Perth City Link development and the Perth Waterfront project. However, unless we create activity in the CBD and get people to want to go from point A to B, and unless we create vibrancy, I fear that we will create another belltower; that is, something that just sits there and does not contribute. I also thought about the Yarra River. Melbourne brought the buildings to the river; it did not bring the river to the buildings like we are doing. The cost of bringing the river to the buildings is incredible.

Mr J.H.D. Day: We are actually restoring the river more or less to where it used to be.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, we are not. We would have to take out Langley Park, the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre and all the development below Kings Park.

This is a key planning challenge. It is not about a particular project. Picking something and saying that it will be a new Southbank, Federation Square or Etihad Stadium will not work unless there is vibrancy throughout the CBD.

Mr A.P. Jacob: You can't create artificial vibrancy.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A number of factors are impacted. It is about people living in the city centre, having academic institutions in the CBD and people travelling to and from the CBD, and providing public transport links from the suburbs to the CBD.

Mr A.P. Jacob: I don't know about travelling to and from the CBD, but certainly living in the city helps.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: To a point.

Mr A.P. Jacob: An academic institution would help and student accommodation in the city would go a long way as well.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member is agreeing with my point!

Building a big canal or a mini-canal will not in itself create vibrancy. We heard today that we need a city square. Forrest Place is a city square. We already have a city square. The issue is to ask why it is not working better, rather than create another city square because the one we have does not work. There are immense planning challenges, particularly for the CBD. If we are to spend \$1 billion, we want to see a lot of outcomes because that is a lot of money that could have been put towards the provision of better public transportation in the suburbs. When talking about vibrancy in the city, people need to be able to get into the city and enjoy the new Southbank or Federation Square. That is another factor that is missing in the government's overall planning strategy.

The transport plan released by the Minister for Transport was a big disappointment. I am not saying that just because it is a political statement; I had much higher expectations about what the transport plan would deliver. I do not think it delivered much, and certainly it did not deliver much that was new. Extending the existing railway line north, possibly building a railway line to the airport and building a light rail transit system to Mirrabooka is

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not really the vision that we had anticipated. If we are talking about spending \$1 billion in the city, we need to ensure that people in the suburbs and in my electorate can access the city on weekends. There is no use having a waterfront if people in Ballajura cannot get there on the weekend. That is another key aspect that must be taken into consideration when looking at the issue of planning in our city and suburbs.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [7.26 pm]: I am keen to make a contribution to the debate on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. This is a very significant bill. What is proposed is very significant for planning the future of the metropolitan area. That is particularly the case for those areas that are looked upon as having a huge potential for increased densities and greater populations, economic development and, as the member for West Swan said, the creation of vibrant neighbourhoods and communities. The member for West Swan raised a couple of key questions. There are implications in this bill for various stakeholders. I will be interested to hear in the Minister for Planning's second reading reply about the implications, as he sees them, and the role of local governments and other key stakeholders, including, as the member for West Swan also mentioned, the significant landowners and the local community. What involvement will the local community have in this new authority? The questions that the member for West Swan asked in her eloquent contribution were very relevant and significant, particularly those that related to the role of the Western Australian Planning Commission regarding subdivisions. The definition of "minister" is a pertinent question to raise because we do not believe that it is defined appropriately in the bill. Those matters must be addressed in the minister's response, which I am looking forward to hearing.

I accept that this bill relates to the metropolitan area, which is defined by the relevant act. However, I want to highlight some of my concerns regarding the seat of Mandurah. Some members will be aware that, at the stroke of a pen, the Electoral Commissioner has proposed that half the City of Mandurah be included in the metropolitan area and the other half—the seat of Dawesville—remain in the South West Region. I know that that is in relation to the Electoral Act. That determination has not been finalised, and indeed the City of Mandurah opposes, as I do, that proposal to slice the City of Mandurah in half and to have half of it in the metropolitan area, as per the Electoral Act, and the other half in the South West Region. When that determination is taken to its fruition, if it is, and I hope that the Electoral Commissioner will reconsider it very seriously, it will have huge implications for the seat of Mandurah because, according to the act determining the metropolitan region, the City of Mandurah will remain outside of the metropolitan area. However, according to the Electoral Act, if the commissioner determines that the seat of Mandurah will be sanctioned into the metropolitan area, we will be determined as metropolitan, or half the city will. That may seem trivial to most members in this place, particularly to those on my side who continually attack me for arguing about our regional status, but the fact is that it creates an even greater uncertainty about the status and identity of the major regional city in Western Australia. At this point in time, the largest regional city in Western Australia is the City of Mandurah. Can anyone in this Parliament tell me that I am wrong? There is silence. It is a fact: the City of Mandurah is the largest regional city in Western Australia. And yet —

Mr J.H.D. Day: What's your point?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The point is the implication of this bill, that Mandurah is not covered by what is being proposed in it.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Would you like to be?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will put an argument to the minister about what happens when issues relating to potential redevelopment in the largest regional city in Western Australia are not encompassed in this bill because of the definition of a metropolitan region. However, another bill before this Parliament will potentially determine that half of my city actually is in the metropolitan region. I think that we are very quickly coming to a time when this Parliament has to make a determination.

Mr M.J. Cowper: There is a buffer zone between the two.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No there is not a buffer zone; what buffer zone is the member talking about?

Mr M.J. Cowper: The one that runs along the Madora Bay road—the north side of it—it's near Singleton.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is not a buffer zone.

Mr M.J. Cowper: It's a road; there is a section of land between the two —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, that is in the Peel region scheme; it is a piece of land that has been designated not for development. I do not think that it can be determined as a buffer zone. The member should support me in this

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argument because this bill is another example of government not accepting and acknowledging where it sees the City of Mandurah.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Maybe the logical solution to the problem you identify is to change the definitions of the metropolitan region.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is something that a government—the minister’s or a future one—could consider. What is the minister’s view on that? Where does he see the City of Mandurah?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I see the City of Mandurah exactly where it is and there are currently no plans to change the boundary of the metropolitan region. I do not see that happening in the foreseeable future, but as you say it could well occur.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Therefore, definitions become critical to this matter. One of the great fights I have had ever since I have been member for Mandurah has been this argument of where the City of Mandurah sits within the thinking of bureaucrats—both planning and government bureaucrats. We no longer have any government departmental boundary—we have lost them all—that fits within the Peel Region, for example, except the Peel Development Commission region boundary. No other boundary—police, education, the government’s own planning department, health, water supply—none of those fit within or are reliant on the boundaries of the Peel Development Commission.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Why do you think that is?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Again, the problem is that there are various levels of government and bureaucrats have different opinions about where Mandurah sits; many of them consider us simply as a southern suburb. The Premier, who has just walked into the chamber, has mentioned that in this place. Many people simply see us as the southernmost suburb of Perth. My argument has always been that until that is defined, and defined within the relevant act, I will always argue that we are not a suburb and I will always argue that we are the largest regional city outside the metropolitan area and we should be resourced as such. Currently we are not. The last bastion of government department boundaries that were aligned within the Peel Development Commission boundary was the police department. That was abolished last year when we were taken into the super subregion of the south metropolitan hub. I will argue in this place—I know a bill is coming up later or a notice of motion tomorrow—that I have not seen the successes of that decision. I have always argued that that decision would be detrimental to the city. The point I try to make is that Mandurah is not covered in this bill because of the current grey area of where Mandurah is defined, and yet, as a large regional centre that does and will require, and has huge potential for, redevelopment covered by an authority such as the one being created under this legislation, we are counted out of that process at this stage. I would like to know from the minister, apart from the answers to the questions that have been highlighted by the member for West Swan, what happens to communities such as mine, which are fast growing but are not captured in this bill. What other opportunities do we have? We have had a couple of examples, and the minister would know them very well: the development of the Mandurah Ocean Marina, which was a LandCorp project, is one; LandCorp was the development authority over that piece of land. LandCorp also has an area of land around the railway station in Mandurah known as the Mandurah Junction. I would be interested to know the minister’s views on the implications of this bill for any LandCorp-owned land within the metropolitan region; I need some clarification about what this bill might do or what implications it might have for LandCorp holdings in the metropolitan area.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The short answer is nothing, unless there was a decision by a government to transfer such land from LandCorp to its authority; I have no expectation of that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister has answered that question. That then leads me to the question of the member for West Swan’s point, which was how we can be certain that for all of these pockets or areas that do not come under the jurisdiction of this particular bill—the minister just mentioned that areas under LandCorp holdings would not—we have a clear, seamless planning approach, so that, as the member for West Swan said, we actually plan for good-quality, high-density residential development, well serviced by public transport, road hierarchies et cetera. I am very keen for the minister to clarify that in his response. As the bill highlights, there are two other acts, the Perry Lakes Redevelopment Act, which deals only with Perry Lakes, and there is one other one; I cannot remember now —

Mr J.H.D. Day: Hope Valley.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Hope Valley redevelopment, which is designated by a particular act of Parliament. Again, what is the interface between this bill and those acts? The minister has indicated that those authorities, if you like, are responsible for their bit. The minister needs to convince us, though, that all the bits of

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the jigsaw are interconnected and not working against each other or indeed not taking advantage of the potential to develop some high-quality developments.

Mr J.H.D. Day: That is why we have the WA Planning Commission as the overarching planning authority for the state, including the metropolitan area. Local governments obviously have a very important role to play in most cases. The establishment of this authority, which brings together the four existing authorities, will establish one agency to undertake development in some specific areas, but there are many other options available, including of course the role of the private sector to undertake urban developments, whether they be greenfield sites or higher density developments close to CBD areas. This is only one option that is available between both government and the private sector. The member also mentioned LandCorp. Local governments are playing their role, and the private sector is as well.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: During the minister's response on the second reading, I would be particularly interested in hearing his focus on local government and the implications of this bill vis-à-vis roles and responsibilities of local government, because I think that is really something that needs to be considered. The member for West Swan mentioned the issue of higher density and what it actually means to people, and I think she is right. A lot of people, when they see high density, immediately think high-rise. In my electorate, and indeed in the City of Mandurah, debate continues about the appropriateness of high-rise developments, particularly, in my view, overlooking the estuarine system.

The City of Mandurah has for some period had a skyline policy that has given some direction on the heights of some of the buildings that could potentially be developed. My opposition to high-rise buildings is focused on buildings in close proximity to the estuarine system, because I have a very personal view that a significant proportion of the population of Mandurah sees development right on the water's edge as being inappropriate for high-rise. That does not mean that we should not allow higher density, but I think we will find that fights will continue and community concerns will be raised in and around the foreshore areas of the estuary system, where people will continue to oppose high-rise developments. Those concerns include not only the impact on existing residents, or indeed loss of amenity for existing residents, but also the impact on native fauna, particularly those birds that are attracted to the Ramsar-listed areas of the Peel-Harvey estuary. I think we have to be very careful about what developments we allow, particularly if they encroach on the foreshores of the estuarine system.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will give a very quick example. In Erskine—not in my electorate; in the member for Dawesville's electorate—the Aqua development has a five-storey maximum height, which is actually the height of the highest trees. If someone approached that development from the water, they would think that development blended beautifully with the landscape, with the existing trees, many of which are a few hundred years old. The residents in that area really do not have a great problem with that development, because it is sensitive to the natural environment. It is of higher density, so it is more people in a smaller area. It is sensitive to the foreshore interface. It is not a big block of 20 storeys piercing its way through the canopy of trees and heading skyward. That kind of inappropriate high-rise development will continue to raise the ire not only of residents who live on or near the estuary but of residents who actually live in Mandurah, because people like to protect that estuary.

As I say, I am very interested in the minister's response, particularly on the roles of local government. The minister has already given me an assurance that he does not propose to expand the metropolitan region scheme to include the City of Mandurah.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Would you like it to be included?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think we need to have a debate within our community. I believe absolutely that that debate must happen before the minister or anyone else at the stroke of a pen makes the determination, and that is what the electoral commissioners potentially have done. Without consultation of the local community, they have decided that it is easier to put half of the City of Mandurah into the metropolitan region and leave the other half in the South West Region. I think they have made an incorrect assertion, and I think that decision has huge implications for the future of the city.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You would have to agree, though, that the growth in Mandurah is essentially contiguous with a lot of the growth in the southern metropolitan area now?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely; no-one could deny that. But until we have services across government that are delivering to the level that my community deserves, whether it is in policing, health, education, or environmental protection, I will not be convinced, because we will just become a dormitory suburb of Perth, and that is what we do not want to happen. We do not want the City of Mandurah to simply become a dormitory suburb of Perth. The rail link has no doubt been a tremendous advantage to the city, but it is not the silver bullet.

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There are a range of implications, and the minister would be well aware of the economic issues that impact on our community. When there is an economic downturn, it is in the Peel region, and I am sure the minister knows the statistics. The Peel region is one of those areas where we feel it first, because of the vulnerability of our economy.

All I am saying is that, before the bureaucrats in the minister's department or anyone else comes up with the idea to introduce, at a stroke of a pen, an act that includes the City of Mandurah in the metropolitan region, please consult. Please make sure that our community has an opportunity to debate it, because I deal with everyone all the time. I ask my constituents. I say, "Okay, where do you see yourselves? Are you country or regional or are you metropolitan?" What do they tell me? I will be honest: some say, "Oh well, we feel we're probably just part of the city, the metropolitan area." Some say that, but the majority—I would say 70–30—would say they still see us as this big country town. Do not get me wrong; it is not an easy argument to win when we have got a rail link and we have got a major highway, which actually bypasses us. As I have said before in this place, I use the analogy of some of our regional centres outside of capital cities in Australia.

I use examples such as Geelong. We would not tell a person who lived in Geelong that they lived in Melbourne; we would not. Even though they are 80 kilometres from Melbourne, they have a rail link and they have a major freeway system linking them to the city of Melbourne, we would not tell someone who lived in Geelong that they lived in Melbourne. It is the same with someone from the Gold Coast, vis-à-vis Brisbane. I think 400 000 people live on the Gold Coast. A person on the Gold Coast would never identify themselves as being someone who lived in Brisbane. It has a clearly designated identity, and yet it is still linked by rail and by a major road system; from memory, a six-lane highway goes all the way from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. All I am saying is, in these planning applications the Perth–Peel 2031 document designates Perth–Peel. Great! The minister knows that Peel will in the future be called upon to carry a greater burden in terms of the growing populations in Perth, the outer metropolitan region, the regional city of Mandurah and in the member for Murray–Wellington's electorate—that growing area in the Shire of Murray, which is one of the fastest growing shires in Western Australia. It has huge implications for the people who live in the Shire of Murray and the growth that is occurring in Austin Cove and Ravenswood. All I am saying is that we need to have a debate in our community. We need to be asked where we see ourselves. We need to listen to the local government authority, vis-a-vis the City of Mandurah, and, if this bill does not include us, we need to be given a clear indication where government places us in the picture. I have to say that at the moment, the picture is very blurred. I think that we are coming to the stage now where it is crunch time and if it is the intention that the City of Mandurah is better placed to be included in the metropolitan region, I will listen to the argument. I am not convinced at the moment. I am not convinced at all. However, that is the debate that we have to have and the government has to give the local community an opportunity to be involved in that debate.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [7.51 pm]: I rise to speak to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. I could not let the opportunity pass; in fact, I am compelled to contribute to the debate tonight to make sure that the local government authorities in my little part of the world are heard. I hope I understand their needs for, and concerns about, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill. I do not look at any of these bills in isolation, as I am sure the minister and his department do not, but rather where this particular policy initiative is nested in a strategy continuum for all or many other related areas. For example, where does this bill dovetail into the transport plan and other plans? My contribution is not intended to be a commentary about the worth, or not, of any of those plans. We can and will, I am sure, over time make points, both negative and positive, about all those initiatives. Indeed, the MRA bill is, I suspect—I hope—informed by Directions 2031 and is in fact potentially the basis for which that would be carried forward. The way I read the bill—I welcome interjection, or commentary from the minister later, about the context Directions 2031 sets in relation to this bill and how it will act inside the 2031 strategy.

I found Directions 2031 particularly interesting, in so far as what it states about where we are going. For the benefit of members and without going through the report, a key point of the strategy is its reference to a metropolitan population of 2.2 million by 2031 and the some 328 000 houses needed to accommodate that growth—and the 350 000 jobs required. I would hope that the jobs come first with the population to follow. However, that is another public policy area in terms of jobs growth and economic stimulus. As a means of setting the context for hopefully this and many other strategies or policy groupings, I find Directions 2031 to be quite linear, in so much as it states, "We are here and this is what we are projecting." Now, I am not suggesting that the model is not in any way sophisticated enough to draw those conclusions. I am sure it is. However, things such as the urban area in 1925 being 66 square kilometres and in 2008 being 830 square kilometres is, in itself, a linear projection from past to present. Where it goes in the future is really important in the context of planning. Do we continue to grow the city on the fringes or is the MRA going to dovetail into and nest inside this and other

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policies to ensure that we have a cogent plan for how big we want this city to become? Do we want the city to spread from—how far north do members want to go?—Lancelin as the most northern suburb through to somewhere south as the southernmost suburb, with a direct linear flow completely —

A member interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Beyond Dawesville and south even further! So we completely occupy the Swan coastal plain from north to south, with a sprawling density, paying no attention to the idea of how we want to influence settlement patterns or the processes that we want in place to influence those patterns. Directions 2031 is an interesting document. The key point is that by 2056 we will have a population of 3.5 million. Again, we can argue about the models and how we will get there, but that is not really important. It is a fair and safe bet that there is going to be a whole bunch more of us than there is currently. Interestingly, to set the context for my commentary, Directions 2031 provides some targets, which is gratifying, because without having some flag in the sand that says these are the things that we think we are going to have to hit, it is a worthless collection of facts. The target for 2031 is to increase to 40 per cent the current infill development of 30 to 35 per cent of the new dwellings target; that is, 154 000 of the 328 000 dwellings required. Therefore, 154 000 of the projected 328 000 dwellings required are going to have to fit as infill target, which, when we consider it, is easily doable with a straight division of land inside the metro area. Obviously, the infrastructure that supports it defines the amount of land available, restricting it to a much narrower band of densities that will support that sort of infill.

Another interesting target is the increase to current average residential density from 10 dwellings per hectare to 15 dwellings per hectare. That might sound modest, but it is a 50 per cent increase on current figures. However, when we play out the scenario at ground level to begin to determine where we put these homes and where we increase density levels, in the time frame that we are talking about—that is, 2031—we will have a markedly different urban landscape. We will also have a markedly different social construct operating inside that built form. We cannot talk about an increase in density and we cannot talk about an increase in population without due consideration in any of these development plans for housing affordability. We know, right now, as we sit here, that a household on an income of \$50 000, which many of my constituents in the seat of Willagee have, can afford only \$190 000 for a home. On an income of \$73 000, which is the average my constituents earn—that is anecdotal commentary; I am sure the statistics are in my office somewhere—they can afford a dwelling of \$275 000. Of course, if we go to \$88 000, a relatively modest increase in income, they can afford a \$340 000 dwelling. Those figures are in current dollars. My point is that the MRA provides a unique opportunity to also address housing affordability. Therefore, I would like to hear from the minister, when he has the opportunity, about how much latitude he or the government of the day will have under the terms of reference of any particular MRA established to give overriding instruction about things such as housing affordability and housing affordability targets. I will come back to that in a moment.

As I have said in this place, the seat of Willagee has an interesting position because it sits on the corner of three different local authorities—that is, the Cities of Fremantle, Cockburn and Melville. I get great opportunities—from citizenship ceremonies through to community consultation, through to rangers, through to residential design criteria—to compare and contrast all three of those local authorities. I have drawn some fairly basic conclusions about those councils and their sizes. I raise the issue of local authorities because they will have to interact with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority on a fairly consistent basis should the MRA place those areas within its control. I found that the capacity of a local authority to engage any and all stakeholders and influence outcomes is relative to its scale and size. Melville and Cockburn councils are particularly large; they are not as large as the City of Stirling, but I think that they would be about third or fourth largest if we were to rank the magnitude of metro councils. Fremantle would probably be half, or less than half, the size of those other two councils. Each of those councils has unique areas. The City of Cockburn has the freeway and all the undeveloped land in that area, the Cockburn coast right through, and the heavy industrial area. Cockburn spans a fairly interesting range of land use. We forever hear from the member for Alfred Cove that Melville city council equates to an evil empire that wants to bring undone anything about Canning Bridge that was ever good and turn the area into something akin to Dubai, with monolithic sort of obelisk-like structures paying homage to some Pagan god! Unfortunately, there is sometimes a great separation between the facts and the member's rhetoric and what is real and what is probable.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: In fact, that may be consistent with the member for Alfred Cove's ambitions for her little area.

The City of Melville has a particularly unique set of circumstances; I suppose every council is unique in its land use. Melville goes from the river and then all the way down the freeway. It occupies education areas, such as

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Murdoch University and the Murdoch precinct, and the Fiona Stanley Hospital, Jandakot and on it goes. Melville also has some opportunities to, hopefully, infill and use its land wisely. The City of Fremantle—at times the poorer cousin of these other two fairly large councils—has responsibility for what I consider one of the unique pieces of the state’s tourism infrastructure. Fremantle is one of Western Australia’s oldest towns. It is a mercantile town by origin and has some of the oldest built heritage in the state and certainly in the metro area. Fremantle’s challenges are unique. Keeping the city relevant to the people who want to use it, both in the commercial sense and a tourism sense, is a challenge. Fremantle is also a working port, which from time to time causes some great tension about the best utility of state infrastructure and how it can be best leveraged for both the people of Western Australia and the local residents. Fremantle’s position is particularly difficult because it is required to have stewardship, if not direct control over, a significant piece of state tourism infrastructure that is for the benefit of every Western Australian and international visitor who may go there. In my personal view, Fremantle is distinctly disadvantaged by its lack of scale and its economic inability to influence other than through dint of its own energy and the energy of a very activist group of residents down there. Right or wrong, I would sooner have an activist group of residents than an inactive group of residents. These three local authorities are of particular interest to me as the representative in the middle of that, as I pick up constituents from all three government authorities.

I would like to see how the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority might work on a highly developed area such as Fremantle and what opportunities there would be for an MRA to not work against or in opposition to what the local authority is doing. Nothing that I have read or heard from the briefings suggests that the MRA would necessarily run counter to the wishes of the local authority, although again I seek some clarification from the minister. I would like to see us look for the opportunities in using the MRA over some of those areas such as Fremantle, one of our oldest towns, to make sure we get the best growth in our infrastructure and our tourism infrastructure. From time to time, Fremantle is particularly hamstrung because, in my opinion, in recent times—not in the past—there has been an overemphasis on built form heritage. I give due credit to groups such as The Fremantle Society, which in the 1980s by its own efforts literally saved many of the heritage buildings in Fremantle. In my view, the white knight was the University of Notre Dame coming in and doing a fantastic job of restoring a large part of the west end of Fremantle. What had been lost in Fremantle, and what is slowly being picked up by the current council, is moving attention away from the built form heritage and looking at the living heritage of Fremantle.

As I said, Fremantle is a mercantile town. It was built for commerce and these days it continues to conduct commerce in different sectors, including tourism and the very good fashion, art and culture areas. Fremantle fosters that eclectic lifestyle that is unique to only Fremantle and our state. That living heritage needs to be the attention of the authorities in Fremantle. It is important to preserve that living heritage and make it match the preservation that the authority has achieved through protecting the built form heritage. That is not an easy challenge. I look in places such as the MRA for opportunities.

Fremantle would benefit greatly from local government reform. Local government reform needs to pay attention to Fremantle’s economic size, or lack of economic size, and its scale and capacity to undertake what it needs to do. This government has wasted \$7.2 million over three years on achieving very little change—in fact, no change, from what I can determine. I do not believe that when we talk about local government reform, we are talking solely about amalgamations. We on this side have always promoted the idea of voluntary amalgamations that are seen as a base. When something as large as an MRA is applied over Fremantle, the fundamental problem for Fremantle is to have the economic base from which to act and participate. The rate base for Fremantle alone is too low. The Fremantle Port Authority and the University of Notre Dame are not rateable. A lot of the public buildings that are in use in Fremantle have high maintenance costs and are also on peppercorn leases if they are owned or managed by the council. The economic strength of that particular council is particularly debilitated, I believe, particularly given what it should be doing to reinforce its own sustainable economic growth.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Not everybody should look to government to solve their problems. We often say that about individuals who come to our offices and say, “I have a problem; why isn’t the government fixing it for me?” I do not subscribe to that particular tenet and neither should local authorities wait around for the government to fix their problems. Fremantle has not been slack in recent times by any stretch of the imagination, under the stewardship of Mayor Brad Pettitt, with the program started by Peter Tagliaferri, the former mayor; they, and a very good activist council, have worked hard to develop the Fremantle economic development strategy, which would see them adopting planning scheme amendments to with some very clear targets. The council regards itself as a primary centre that should serve a catchment population of about a quarter of a million people in the southern corridor, house major institutions, and provide much higher levels of employment and economic

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activity than its counterparts in lower tiers of the hierarchy. The council's particular targets are therefore an increase of 20 000 square metres of retail space, 70 000 square metres of office space and a potential additional 1 500 dwellings. That probably equates to around 3 000 new residents in the CBD of Fremantle. I wholeheartedly support these targets, and I look to agencies such as the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority to accelerate and assist the City of Fremantle to achieve those targets. Take, for example, the area in the CBD to the west of the town hall, which includes Fremantle railway station and the Fremantle Port Authority. In my estimation the MRA ought to be one of those agencies that can cut through silos when applied and placed over a particular area and give us joined-up government—an often-clichéd statement. In the case of Fremantle, which I am talking about, those agencies are the Fremantle Port Authority, the TAFE organisation that occupies many buildings, various community interest groups, the Public Transport Authority around the train line and local government et cetera. They should be regarded as a single opportunity from which we can meet some of the targets that are needed to service the constituents of Willagee who identify with the City of Fremantle.

The City of Melville is similarly looking for interagency connection. This particular bill may well assist Melville—I hope it will. Melville has its own unique growth pains, which reside mostly at the moment around the Murdoch precinct. That precinct includes Murdoch University, Murdoch private hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, the freeway and land to the east. There is a great opportunity there; it is estimated that 35 000 jobs will occupy that one small area. On its own it will be the size of Fremantle. It will have approximately 7 000 additional residents in a higher density development right at the transport-centric node of Murdoch station. However, in this particular case—this directly relates to the Minister for Planning—there is Fiona Stanley Hospital and there are areas available for development around Fiona Stanley Hospital that support it but there is no unifying plan. I urge the minister—if he has not already done so, although I am sure he has—to get into it. I think the Murdoch precinct is a monte for application under the MRA. It would assist in joined-up government. It would bring together Main Roads, the education sector, the health sector, the City of Melville and of course developers, and would ensure maximised revenue and return and the social amenity that needs to be derived from the potential additional 7 000 people, who would be living in a much smaller area than anywhere else in Melville. That is, of course, unless we got 40 storeys built at Canning Bridge where we could perhaps house 7 000 in one building!

I therefore urge the minister to look at this matter. Melville councillors and the people of Melville are particularly concerned that some holistic attention be given to that precinct. It is a fantastic opportunity to showcase what the MRA can do. Given the infrastructure that all those other agencies already have on the ground, it is very clearly a brownfield development. A brownfield development would need some strong leadership to ensure that the silos that are there now are not present when we try to achieve the objectives of the development.

I want to make another point about the involvement of the MRA in places such as Melville. I would really appreciate the minister's commentary when he gets the opportunity to talk about the fiscal objectives of the MRA. It appears that East Perth Redevelopment Authority and other development authorities often had as a core requirement that the development had to be an income generator. They seemed to have a profit-motivated remit.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The priority has been urban redevelopment and urban renewal. Certainly in the case of Midland there has not been any positive financial return. There has been a big planning, social, urban development return, but there is still quite a lot of debt held by the Midland Redevelopment Authority, because of the large costs of removing contaminated soil to a large extent. In the case of EPRA, substantial costs were also incurred in rehabilitating the old industrial areas. Whether there has been a positive financial return compared with the overall investment, I am not sure. I doubt that that has been the case. In Subiaco there has been a positive return, but that is because of the higher real estate values in that area. But the primary role is not about profit-making. Obviously there should be an adequate return to the public, if that can be achieved, but the primary goal is actually about urban regeneration, high quality urban developments and urban renewal.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I thank the minister for that. I take some comfort that the principal objective of those authorities, or the MRA once it is applied to a particular locality, is not to generate profit. However, I do note that cost-neutral would be a great outcome, although unlikely given the challenges in the various sites that the MRA would have to take on.

On that note, having carried the flag for the unique challenges of two local councils, I go back to my opening point: where does this plan, the MRA, sit in a continuum of strategy for the growth of Western Australia in both the social and economic contexts? I think it has great potential to do that. From my reading of the bill, it will certainly simplify and create an efficiency around what is possible; hopefully that will be an efficiency in both time savings and costs through reduced bureaucracy. There is no great nervousness from the councils that I have been able to engage with. They are particularly keen to see it work as an opportunity for them, as opposed to

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something that will be just an impost on them. But there is a significant challenge to ensure that the stakeholders, which are obviously wider than just local government authorities, are completely engaged. I am talking about those other authorities that operate significant parts of the state infrastructure that have long-entrenched views about their role in development. I think there will be a greater challenge to ensure that those resident traditional players of infrastructure that are already in location creating that brownfield development opportunity are completely engaged in the objectives that we are trying to achieve with the MRA.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [8.17 pm]: I do not think anyone should be in any doubt about how significant the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill is and the significant changes it makes. I note that in his second reading speech the minister refers to the key elements of the bill, and he lists three points. The first is repealing the acts that constitute Armadale, East Perth, Midland and Subiaco Redevelopment Authorities; the second is facilitating the transfer of assets, rights and liabilities of each of the existing authorities to the MRA, meaning the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority; and, finally, streamlining the legislative requirements applicable to redevelopment areas.

I will get to the third point in later remarks in my speech; it is an interesting piece of sophistry and certainly an understatement. However, the first and second points are about repealing those current redevelopment acts. That causes me to think back to the establishment of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority more than 20 years ago now. It is one of two authorities in which I have had significant interest. In fact, I well remember the debates that surrounded the establishment of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority both in this house and in the media, and indeed at the City of Perth at the time I was a councillor. Later, I also served on the East Perth Redevelopment Authority Board as a council delegate, and obviously as the member for Midland I have had a close involvement with the Midland Redevelopment Authority. I think it is interesting to note how far the community and this Parliament have come in more than 20 years in their attitude to redevelopment authorities, and, essentially, the taking away of planning powers from local government authorities and the Planning Commission. Although I do not necessarily say that with any particular prejudice, I think it is undeniable that just as those redevelopment authorities took away planning powers from local governments, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 will take even greater planning powers away from the local government authorities, but where it, I think, goes that one step further is in the diminishing of the powers of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

At the time of the commencement of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, there was considerable debate and a lot of reticence. After a lot of debate and a quite close vote in this house, the authority was established. Numerous spokespersons in the community were quite opposed to the establishment of EPRA, as it became known. Chief among those were some planners and people on Perth City Council, which was quite opposed—certainly in the early discussions—to the establishment of EPRA. It was seen very much as a challenge to the planning authority of Perth City Council at the time.

One of the significant factors with EPRA was how much of the land within that area was owned by the state government. When Kay Hallahan was Minister for Planning, I worked for her and had some involvement in government in an employee sense in those years. When we coloured in a map of what ultimately became the EPRA area, including all the government-owned land, and the road and verges and everything else that the government was responsible for, a significant portion of the area was in public ownership. I think it was more than 70 per cent, although it is hard to recall given that those events were more than 20 years ago. I think we managed to colour in about 70 per cent of the map and to indicate, in one way or another, that it was largely in state government ownership. The amount of private property holding was quite low. One of the reasons that the East Perth area was so run-down was the few private landowners there. Government had used it very much as the service yard for the City of Perth, yet at the same time it was a riverside suburb, ripe for redevelopment, and similar places had been redeveloped elsewhere in Australia and in other places around the world. It was determined that, given that this area was significantly in government ownership, taking this kind of planning control over the area was warranted to achieve the end. There is absolutely no question that what has been achieved in East Perth could not have been achieved without EPRA, and it needed that impetus, control and focus, and EPRA needed to be given those planning powers to make what ultimately happened happen. I happily served as a member of that board for at least two years, and I think it was effective.

It was a long time before the Midland Redevelopment Authority was set up, and in fact I was rather cautious about suggesting a redevelopment authority for Midland when I became member for Midland because I remembered the angry debates when EPRA was established and I recalled the City of Perth's reluctance to embrace EPRA. I believed there could be similar resistance from the City of Swan, which was the Shire of Swan at the time. It was when we had the first of the charrettes, when I think Graham Kierath was the planning minister, that I first raised it. We had a large meeting in the Swan Italian Sporting Club hall, and I suggested that

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maybe one way forward in dealing with Midland's issues at the time—particularly dealing with the workshops site—would be to have a redevelopment authority. I then raised the prospect and grieved to various ministers and attempted to grieve to the Premier—I think Hendy Cowan actually took my grievance on one occasion—and I called for the establishment of the Midland Redevelopment Authority and garnered some community support for it.

I pushed for that because, again, the site was largely in state government ownership. When I looked at the area of the Midland railway workshops, which had been closed in the previous couple of years by the Court government, I saw an area of land similar in size to the core part of the Midland central business district. I saw its potential. I also looked at the significant history of the railway workshop site, and I was concerned that without the workshop activities occurring there, a piece-by-piece sell-off of the workshops could have occurred. At that stage, in about 1996, 1997 and 1998, Hon Eric Charlton was the Minister for Transport, and the workshops came under Westrail's control and were his responsibility. I was very concerned that the workshops were the responsibility of a line minister whose principal focus was transport. My focus as the local member was on the history of the site and on the town of Midland, which, at that point in time, had a lot of vacant shops and planning and other issues. From my point of view, I wanted to see the integrity of those workshops preserved, and that area of land used to the advantage of the general community in Midland; I had a twin focus.

Various proposals were being suggested to me. People came in to see me, and they would also go and see various ministers or other people in government, because we were in opposition at that time, with a proposition to set up a brewery there. At one stage, one group wanted to set up some kind of racecourse to race cars there, and there were various other private interests. There were people who wanted to do storage there. I could see that government may have been attracted to accepting one or more of these offers in the longer term and it would carve off a piece of the workshops here and an area of land there, and another bit for various purposes, and there would have been a hotchpotch of things occurring across the other side of the railway from the town hall and the other core buildings in Midland. In other words, there would have not been any coordinated effort. From my point of view, and from my experience with the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, I certainly saw the potential for a proper focus and for government to take responsibility for that site and plan the site holistically into the future. I was elected to Parliament by the time the Midland Redevelopment Authority was established, and having called in this place and asked questions and raised grievances over a period of a year or more, the then Premier Richard Court, just prior to the December 1996 election, announced that the redevelopment authority that I had called for on numerous occasions in this house would be set up.

The word of caution I sounded there was that the key thing to be taken into account was the actual heritage of the site being dealt with. That had to be first and foremost. That has been a very important part of it. One of the things that I certainly want to put on record tonight as member for Midland is that, as I expect with other areas, I have some very real concerns that Midland gets the focus and attention it needs as part of the bigger Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. I say that on behalf of the community of Midland and the people living around the Midland region, just as I am sure the people in Armadale, Subiaco and other places will be concerned about appropriate development and appropriate focus for their areas. I believe, though, that Midland is even more so a special case. It is a special case because of the site's history. I have said many times in this place that Midland and Guildford were two areas first settled in this state. They have a unique heritage. The Midland Workshops themselves were in operation for over 90 years. At their peak there were over 3 000 people at any one time working there. They were, for the majority of the history of this state, a major place of employment, a major place of industry, and where a lot of people learnt their trade, be it welders, boilermakers, carpenters and craftsmen of various descriptions, right through to engineers and others who worked there. It was a place of significant employment and significant history. One thing that makes Midland very special is that it is one of the most intact sites in the world when it comes to railway workshops because they were in operation up until 1993 or 1994. I think the closure was announced in 1993 and they were actually closed in 1994 by the Court Liberal government.

In recent times I have had the opportunity to visit the Workshops Rail Museum at Ipswich in Queensland. That is very similar in many respects to the Midland railway workshops. Just a few weeks ago Christine Clark from Queensland Rail spent considerable time showing me not just through the Workshops Rail Museum but also parts of the site that are not accessible to the general public, where there is a lot of rail heritage preserved. In looking at that I can see that is one of the opportunities at least partly lost at Midland. Members may be aware that the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, opened an interpretive centre at the Midland Workshops where the labour history group and other people could commence tours and show people around the workshop site. Although it certainly fell a long way short of any kind of proper museum, at least it was recognition and provided some accessibility for people who wanted to see the rail heritage of the site.

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I understand that has been closed for the past couple of years. I am told that in the first instance it was a temporary thing. Could the minister advise me if that interpretive centre will reopen any time soon? Certainly, some conflicting information has come to me about whether the City of Swan will take that over or not. The City of Swan certainly appears to be unaware of any commitment or suggestion that it take over that role. It is very important that at the very least, and in the first instance, the interpretive centre be reopened so people can look at the material there. There are some audiovisual presentations and other material from which people can learn a little about the workshops and how it used to operate, and potentially people can be taken on tours.

I say that Midland is special because apart from the community interest, which is very significant, there is that broader labour history and heritage aspect to it.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: When I talk about labour history, I am talking about working people's history—the working lives of thousands of people in this state that were spent there. We have a very proud heritage at the Midland railway workshops. If members go to places on the site, like the pattern shop, most of the patterns are still there and are an important part of our history. If members go to the powerhouse, they will see the history of that there too. I acknowledge that the workshop site is on the heritage register, it is also on the register of the National Trust, but what I would note is this: movable heritage is not covered on the heritage register, but that is a debate for another time. Many trains have been removed from that site. I understand a lot of them are now located at Bassendean and potentially elsewhere. That is a loss to the site. What makes the site special is its link with the past and its rail history. What makes Midland special is its history. It is not a greenfield suburb; it is not somewhere that has just been established in the past 20 years. It has been a significant place certainly since the early days of this colony and indeed prior to that for Aboriginal communities.

I believe that consideration needs to be given to a rail museum. The rail museum in Ipswich is part of the Queensland government's Queensland Museum. It is not some tokenistic little thing; it is not just an interpretive centre, a room or somewhere where volunteers can take some tours. It is a proper museum. This state has a maritime museum. I know there are significant priorities for government spending on projects and the like, but it really does worry me that successive governments have taken what is a fairly blasé attitude towards our rail history. There are many rail heritage groups throughout Western Australia that get practically no funding. They get the odd grant here or there but they are reliant on volunteers. In my experience those volunteers are getting older. There are not so many younger volunteers following in their footsteps. I am concerned that if we do not seize the day and make a proper commitment to this area of history and heritage in our state it will be too late. I think the Queensland government and the Queensland people can be very proud of what they have in Ipswich, where they have preserved so much of their rail heritage. We have a magnificent site at Midland; it has everything going for it. There is so much there that is original and it must be preserved. Whoever the people are who make up the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority in the future, whoever the people are who go on the land redevelopment committee, and the current minister and whoever any future ministers are, have a significant responsibility to preserve the history of our state, particularly the working history and heritage of our state, when they take on the area of Midland; the area that is currently part of the Midland Redevelopment Authority. The site is very significant because it contains significant buildings and moveable heritage. The uses of the site have to be appropriate. Principal among my concerns is that the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, with responsibilities much broader than just Midland, may not have the focus that it needs on a significant part of our state's history and heritage. That is my principal concern, and I want to put that on the record loud and clear.

I also want to encourage the government and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, if and when it is established, to put some effort into looking at setting up a proper museum on the site. As I have said, first and foremost, the interpretive centre needs to be reopened. However, that is only a baby step. That is the absolute minimum that the government needs to do. More broadly—it is interesting that the Minister for Planning is also the Minister for Culture and the Arts and has responsibility for the museum—the government must provide some focus on how to preserve the state's rail heritage. I have seen the trains that are sitting out in the open in Bassendean and believe that is a disgrace. I wish that when we were in government we had done more to assist those groups. Whenever I have visited the railway enthusiasts at Midland and Bassendean or the many country railway centres—I have been to a few of those—I noted that they seem to be getting older. I do not believe we have much time in that regard. The same applies to the former workers from the Midland railway workshops. Many of those people are now in their 70s or older. That heritage will be lost if we do not make a commitment now. I strongly urge the government to consider establishing a rail museum and properly preserve and cater for the rail heritage of our state. I put it to all members that there is absolutely no more appropriate place to have a rail museum in Western Australia than in Midland. It does not need to take up the whole site. A vast amount of the site can be used for other purposes. In fact, a vast amount of the site is already being used for other purposes.

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Three significant policing facilities are located on the former railway workers site: traffic and operations, the forensic centre and the communications centre. We also have given over a large section of the site to the bulk goods stores such as The Good Guys and others. As the Minister for Planning knows, the former government gave a significant area around Coal Dam over to residential development.

The state has invested a significant amount of money in the Midland redevelopment site by allowing the Midland Redevelopment Authority to borrow money. This government, just as we did, has committed to and replaced the roofs of the three major workshops and expended other money directly out of the state budget in addition to the money the Midland Redevelopment Authority has been able to borrow. The Midland Redevelopment Authority and the government have also received moneys from the properties they have sold. There is no doubt that at the end of the process the City of Swan will have a significant rate base from not only the residences, but also the commercial uses on the site.

Given the time limit and the amount of time I have focused on the issues relating to Midland, I am unlikely to do justice to the comments I wanted to make about the planning aspects of the bill. I hope to raise some of my points in the consideration in detail stage. This bill gives the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority considerable powers and, more importantly, it ultimately gives the minister and the government of the day significantly more planning powers. As I read it, the bill takes the responsibility for subdivisions away from local governments and the Western Australian Planning Commission and gives it to the minister. I refer in particular to part 5 of the bill. Although there is a long consultation process and a few other steps to go through, ultimately it is the minister's decision. He gets a recommendation from the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and the WAPC before he makes a decision. One of the clauses I will focus on in the consideration in detail stage is clause 47(4), which states —

If the Minister approves a draft redevelopment scheme the content of which is, in the Minister's opinion, significantly different to any recommendation given by the WAPC under section 46, the Minister must cause notice of the difference to be laid before each House of Parliament or dealt with under section 131, within 14 days after the scheme start day.

The words I will highlight are “in the minister's opinion, significantly different”. It does not state “empirically significantly different”; it is just in the minister's opinion. I believe that provision is far too loose.

Today if someone wanted to set up a redevelopment authority, like we did, in Midland or Armadale, legislation would need to be brought before the house. This legislation circumvents that and the government of the day will be able to set up a redevelopment authority wherever it likes. Currently it is relatively easy to extend the boundaries of the redevelopment authorities but if a new one were to be set up, it would have to be brought before the house. Some might argue that that is cumbersome, but it provides this house with more power. This bill gives a lot more power to the government and the minister of the day, and far less power to local government and the Western Australian Planning Commission.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [8.47 pm]: I support the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. I urge the minister to use it as the vehicle for the development of Stirling city centre and to give a commitment that that project will go ahead. Before I deal with those matters, I declare my support for the member for Midland asking the Minister for Planning to ensure that the heritage of the Midland Workshops is preserved under the new development model that will apply when the Midland Redevelopment Authority is replaced with the new model proposed in this legislation. My connection to that workshop is that more than one member of my family has worked there. When my father returned from the islands at the end of the Second World War and was demobbed, he worked for a short time in public transport on trams and buses. He then worked at the Midland Workshops until his retirement in the 1970s. Against every health and safety rule, on the last day before the workshops shut down, he took me there and showed me around where he worked. He even hid me in a carriage as one of the foremen walked passed. I am sure that thousands of people have similar memories of members of their family who have worked there. The interest in and tradition of rail needs to be preserved, and this is an ideal site for it. I certainly support the member for Midland's exhortations to the government to ensure that that happens.

The current redevelopment authorities have achieved a great deal. I worked for Terry Burke back in 1983 when Verity Allan was responsible under him for setting up the East Perth Redevelopment Authority. I have seen that area from the time I played school football on Haig Park, where the old brickworks and gasworks were with all the pollution problems. That area has now been cleaned up to what we see now is a wonderful urban development.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Did you say Terry Burke?

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Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Yes, Terry Burke was the one who had carriage, because he was the member for Perth.

Mr J.H.D. Day: He wasn't minister, was he?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: No, he was parliamentary secretary to cabinet and I was his research officer.

Mr J.H.D. Day: So he was given responsibility —

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Under the Burke government he took a leading responsibility for actioning the planning. As an architect, Verity Allan gave great service to government; unfortunately, she is no longer with us. She was the particular officer working with the government agencies who brought that model forward. There were certainly a lot of problems with the costs involved. In those days we were fortunate that a federal Labor government in power and the federal Building Better Cities Program money helped get us over some of the hurdles in getting these things established in East Perth, Subiaco and also Marlston Hill in Bunbury, which did not have a redevelopment authority, but followed a similar model, I think, with LandCorp doing the work there. The planning and land acquisition was not as complicated there and therefore it did not require a development authority.

We then move to briefly touch on Subiaco, which, again, was an area that was ripe for redevelopment. The particular challenge there, of course, was the railway line and getting the development away from the obstacle that the railway line created. That led to the sinking of that railway line, which cost towards \$100 million, even though the original estimates were way below that. Finally, it cost something approaching \$100 million to sink the railway through Subiaco to allow that development to take place. Again, we can see what a great success that has been. Similarly, the Midland and Armadale redevelopments, which followed afterwards, through their redevelopment authorities, have produced real advantages to those areas and for the whole of Western Australia in allowing the use of underutilised land, usually with a fairly large amount of government land. In most cases there were derelict buildings and in a number of those cases there were pollution issues. A private developer having to put in so much money up-front to deal with those issues, perhaps simply could not have got those projects off the ground. A government agency could bring the resources, have the planning and development powers, and be able to engage the private sector in finally building to meet with a code or a development standard that would give the wonderful urban environments that we now have in those areas. All those things have come to fruition through the use of a development authority, and this legislation will provide a new model that has the strength of those development authorities, but greater flexibility. As I have said, I hope that the minister will give his strongest support possible to the Stirling city centre development, but if we had to put a special piece of legislation through just for that development area and for other areas that could also use this model, the passage of the legislation through the Parliament, the setting up of a separate office and the gathering of necessary resources and skills would make it a much longer process than if we had legislation such as this by which the minister can designate an area, use an existing administrative structure to establish a special development objective over a particular piece of land and use the authority through a local committee to progress these projects. The model is good; I regret that the Labor Party did not get it done in its time in government. We talked about it, but I congratulate the minister for finally now bringing forward legislation that would give that flexibility and enable more of these areas to be covered by developed authorities without having to go through the establishment of specific legislation for each case.

I think that we are all well aware that the real need for this legislation is driven by the economic boom and the growth of our population here in Western Australia. We have nudged three per cent growth in population on the odd year or two in the last few years. It is generally 2.5 per cent or something around that; it changes from year to year depending on a whole range of economic factors. That sort of growth puts real stresses and strains on our urban environment. The use of development authorities to create higher density nodes is part of the answer; it is not going to solve everything, but it is part of the answer of providing places in which people can live and work. The Premier made a very silly statement in this house, which he does on quite a regular basis, when he said that the overcrowding on the metropolitan rail lines had nothing to do with population growth; it was all because he was such a nice fellow that we had people crowded onto trains! The facts are there. In response to that silly statement by the Premier I went through the Australian Bureau of Statistics data to see what high growth we have had. For about the last six or seven years, we have been the fastest growing state in Australia. The population is coming here; we have to ensure that we plan and develop to be able to cope with that. All the predictions state that the economic boom will continue; there is clearly global uncertainty about economies, but assuming nothing absolutely disastrous happens, we will continue to have very high rates of economic growth. Given the situation in many other parts of the world and even other parts of Australia, that economic growth will draw more people to want to live and work in Perth.

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Mr J.H.D. Day: This is just an observation. You mentioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I do not know whether I will get to respond tonight or whether it will be tomorrow, but if not, it is probably worth observing that tonight is census night and we are having a debate on planning issues.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Returning to how we will cope with this population growth, most people would accept that the urban sprawl cannot continue. There will always continue to be growth on the urban fringes, but if we try to push everyone, just about, out to those areas, the cost of delivering the infrastructure and transport becomes unsustainable. If fuel prices continue to rise, how will people who move to cheaper houses on the fringe afford to get to work and into the city? We really need to try to find more places for people to live and work within the existing urban infrastructure. That can be partly infill, but also, as this government continues with the policy of the former government, we need look to nodes of higher density development. We do not need a lot of them, but we need a few areas where we can create very attractive urban environments in which people can live in higher density units and where we can provide the public transport and all the other infrastructure needed for that type of housing. Because we have seen examples where this has worked in East Perth and Subiaco, it is now a lot easier to sell this concept. Before we did East Perth and Subiaco, those talking about people living in apartments in Perth would have had no chance at all.

Back in the early 1990s, when Carmen Lawrence kicked off as Premier, I was involved in getting people to come back and live in units in the city. I regularly attended functions with developers, the Perth City Council and people who could see the advantage of living in the city. When the Court government split the City of Perth, the figure I heard was that there were only 3 000 resident ratepayers in the whole City of Perth as the boundaries are now drawn. Of course, with the urban infill and high-rise development that figure has changed drastically. We now see supermarkets coming to the city; we see more restaurants. The city is alive for a lot more of the time. Not everyone wants to live that way, but we provide that choice for those who do. Based on the examples of East Perth and Subiaco, we can see that we will be able to get developers working with government to provide that alternative higher density type of accommodation that some people will be most interested in taking up.

As I have already indicated, through this legislation we will be able to initiate those particular development proposals much more quickly; we will not need specific legislation for each case. I also think that the great strength of this legislation in having one authority is that the expertise and experience that has been developed in particular development authorities can be shared with the other areas. The minister has perhaps been trying to sell this legislation as providing greater cost efficiencies. I think there may be some there, but it would not surprise me if there were not any cost efficiencies for reductions in back-of-house requirements and all the rest. The real gain will be having the expertise and experience, because it is not always easy for government to buy that experience and to do these high-quality developments.

There is often a shortage of people with that experience and expertise. However, when there is a development authority of considerable size and clout, which this bill will create, it will attract very competent and skilled people to come and work in that agency because of the excitement of being involved in high-quality urban developments. By bringing it together we will have a greater chance of retaining and developing the expertise and experience that we need. I see that as a great strength coming out of this legislation.

I will touch briefly on the model, because it has been outlined by the minister and many other people have spoken to it. I briefly want to go through some of the ways in which it is going to be structured. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 will repeal the Armadale, East Perth, Subiaco and Midland redevelopment acts and in their place establish the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. Like those other authorities, it will have planning powers, development control and works functions. There are a whole lot of checks and balances and processes that I will not enter into, but it will basically be able to do those things that the current development authorities can do. It will have a seven-member board appointed by the minister. One member of that board will have a local government background.

I see this as something of a weakness, because the minister really has tried to give minimal input to local government. I can understand the board keeping that local government background, because the board will overlook several different project areas for the authority. But when we come to the land redevelopment committees, I think the minister should consider giving more direct input from local government in the legislation. I will return to that in a moment.

Under the bill the minister will establish these land redevelopment committees that will exercise the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority's functions in specific redevelopment areas. It will facilitate the transfer of the assets, rights and liabilities and the staff from the existing development authorities to the MRA. The bill will allow the development authorities to get up and operating, hopefully fairly seamlessly. I do have one question, minister. I appreciate his interjections and the fact that he is listening to the people making

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contributions. Clause 119 will establish the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority account. Under clause 120 there is a fairly standard clause on the authority's funds. Clause 120(2) states—

Where any money has been accepted by the Authority upon trust or lawful condition, the Authority must apply the money in accordance with the trust or condition.

I am not a lawyer and I have not read every word of the bill front to back, but I cannot find whether “trust” and “condition” are defined or taken in a general sense. Is that correct? They are just taken as the general sense; they are not defined in any specific way in the legislation.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I would expect so, and I would expect, if legal advice was available, there would be some general understanding of what those words mean in a legal sense.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I accept that, minister. My personal view—it may not be the shadow minister's—is that when those assets are transferred out of the existing development authorities into the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, I would be more comfortable if the legislation required sub-accounts to be kept for each of those authorities. As I understand the bill—I am quite open to being corrected or directed to where the relevant clauses are—it seems that all that money gets piled into one account. I am sure there will be sub-accounts for bookkeeping, but currently I read the legislation as saying there is no prescription for the authority to actually have quite separate accounts for the different redevelopment areas.

Some of the redevelopment authorities, such as Subiaco, are flush with funds; others have large borrowings. It will be clearly open to the minister of the day to direct the perhaps surplus funds in one area to help a redevelopment in another area. I am not against that, but I think if that is done, it needs to be very transparent. My concern is that, although the minister might give undertakings of transparency and say, “Oh, we'll keep separate books”, it is not, as I read it, required by the statute.

As a personal point of view, there should be something in the bill that makes it clear that the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority will maintain separate sets of accounts for each redevelopment area. Money can only be transferred in or out of those accounts in a way that the minister agrees to and will be reflected in a transparent way. If the minister believes that Subiaco is about to wind up and has \$20 million sitting there and he wants to use that for another redevelopment area, the minister can make a policy decision. It might not be totally agreed with, but the minister can make that call, and it is all transparent. I do not have a problem with that as a principle, but I do not think the act as currently constituted requires any minister now or any minister in the future to have to be totally transparent about those transfers.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I am advised that separate cost centres will be maintained by the authority for each redevelopment area. The board of course is appointed by the government. It is responsible to the minister. Certainly my experience in my time as a minister has been that there is a cooperative working relationship with boards. I would expect to be informed about what they are doing in relation to funds if funds are being transferred or applied to an area other than from where the funds have been gained. So I do not see that as a problem in practice.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Minister, that misses the point that I really want to make; that is, these redevelopment areas will only work if the minister has the confidence of the public, and people locally are in general support. As we have seen in Subiaco—I know the minister has borne the brunt of it—people will dissent from time to time, but if the minister does not actually give people confidence that they have some say in the area, then he is setting himself up to fail. That is why I go to the point of having very good transparency when money is transferred in or out of a specific area, because that will help build that confidence. I am not saying that authorities, under Treasury's instructions, will not keep proper accounts, but there is no requirement to do that in a totally open and transparent way. I see that as a potential downside.

The other area in here, which again is a potential downside but which I strongly support, is the role the minister has mandated to the Treasurer to tick off on the funding. Because these projects can be quite large and involve large expenditure or the incurring of a considerable amount of debt, it is appropriate that Treasury has a role. I do not take issue with the way the legislation has been crafted to bring that in, but I know that from time to time there can be a stand-off between ministers and the Treasurer about what the priorities are. There is going to be sort of a natural tension there. Hopefully that will work its way through and we will get good outcomes. I am supporting what the minister is doing there, but I just see that as a potential area of tension which might create some problems.

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Mr J.H.D. Day: Yes, it is different from what is in the current East Perth Redevelopment Authority Act. I know the member would maintain the status quo, understandably, but we do need to have a whole-of-government approach, and where, as the member has said, some significant debt is being incurred, which has an impact on state's overall debt levels, it is only realistic that the Treasurer would be involved in those sorts of issues.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the minister. I am running out of time, so I do need to move on.

Mr J.H.D. Day: And, if necessary, a cabinet decision.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The next set of provisions I want to relate to is these land redevelopment committees. The land redevelopment committees are to be formed by the MRA and have responsibility for one or more of these redevelopment areas. The minister has to define the area and the objectives of why this area has been established. I am assuming that is disallowable in the Parliament because—this is fundamental—if the government is going to set up bodies which affect people in a given area and which will potentially expend a fairly large amount of money, and we are not setting up a special act, there has to be the potential for a Parliament that disagrees with the government to seek to disallow. I think that is an appropriate mechanism and is how, I understand, this mechanism will work.

The land redevelopment committees are really only set up by the redevelopment authority board, again with the minister's involvement, and the issue that I have with that is, as I see it, there is very little in the bill to lay out the provisions around that. I do not make a big issue of that because one of the strengths of this legislation is its flexibility. In one area we might want a slightly different model from that in another area because we are trying to do something different. If we were too prescriptive in the legislation about the role of the land redevelopment authorities and how they are to be constituted, that could impact on flexibility. I think there will have to be a fair bit of trust between the MRA and the land redevelopment committees. I believe that trust would be enhanced if the five members appointed by the minister to form the land redevelopment committee had a representative of the local government authority, who is effective. That is not required by this legislation; this legislation requires only a person with a local government background, whereas at least two of the five people on a number of current redevelopment authorities are from the local council. I think that is correct. I think there are two from the City of Perth and two from Subiaco on the authority, whereas this legislation does not even require one representative from the local government authority. I think that the minister needs to be careful. All ministers are aware of the blockage from nimby groups and from councils that want to go a different way. If the minister tries to take too much power for himself, he will find that he does not build trust and confidence in the community and will set himself up for failure. I urge the minister to include the need for at least one representative from the local government authority. Local government representatives should not make up the majority; they do not under the current redevelopment authorities and should not do so under this legislation. However, under this legislation the minister of the day can simply appoint someone seen to have special expertise in local government or who is a mate from local government. If this legislation does not require the authority to discuss with local government who its representative will be and take someone from the local council, I think the government is setting itself up to fail from the start and will run into problems.

To return to where I started: I strongly support the Stirling city centre. It falls partly in my electorate but more of it falls however in the member for Scarborough's electorate—in Innaloo. The area is ripe for development and needs the continuing support of government. This government has put in money to help with the planning and consultation processes and I commend it for that. Obviously, as the minister knows, a lot more money will be required to make it work. Having been involved and consulted with the alliance in the development of the Stirling city plan, I have often said to people that doing nothing is not an option. It is on the edge of my electorate. I live near it and I drive through the area all the time. It is an absolute traffic nightmare because the existing road structure does not allow people to use a number of roads to get through the area from Karrinyup Road, down Cedric Street, Ellen Stirling Boulevard, Scarborough Beach Road and Hutton Street. To drive around that area is five, six or seven kilometres and there is no road through it so the traffic is channelled into the same area. It is a major traffic problem even before development pressure. Westfield wants to spend hundreds of millions of dollars developing its shopping centre. The Ikea store makes it absolutely impossible to navigate the area on a Saturday morning. As development increases, the area will not function. We already have high-rise developments in Herdsman Parade, and the City of Stirling has put a limit on the development because the roads in the area cannot handle the quantity of traffic. Something has to be done. The planning that has been put in place really provides the opportunity for a high-density development with residential, retail and commercial space which can work if the area has sufficient public transport. It cannot work without adequate public transport.

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The draft of the Stirling city centre structure plan has just been released. To give members some idea of what is being contemplated, the current population of the area encompassed by the Stirling city centre is about 3 800 residents. If this scheme goes ahead, the future population will be 25 000 in the same area. Currently, there are 1 625 dwellings and the proposal is to take that number to something like 13 900. The current density is six dwellings per hectare and the draft document suggests it will be 45 dwellings per hectare. The consultation largely has people on side, but the proposal cannot work if the government does not put in the necessary transport structure. I was certainly very disappointed when the Minister for Transport released the “Public transport for Perth in 2031” plan. There is nothing wrong with that plan, except that it is largely a motherhood statement. We have to have a commitment by the government. There is no mention in the minister’s press release of the Stirling city centre. There is in the document, but not in the press release. That indicates to me that plan is on the never–never. If we want the opportunity to provide more residences, more commercial space and more retail space, which a growing city needs, and we want to put it in a node that we know will work—that is at the Stirling city centre mainly around Innaloo and a bit of Stirling—there has to be sufficient public transport to make it all work. I am talking about light rail from Stirling station through to Glendalough station. To build, it will cost in the order of \$400 million. It will not happen without strong government support. I know the hope is to get federal government support; however, I am hoping that the minister can see the value in proceeding with this development, that it is not something on the never–never that we start doing something about in 2031. If we approach the project in that way, it will not happen. For this development to go ahead we need a major investment in infrastructure—particularly public transport—because populations of that size cannot function if the current ratio of car usage is maintained. We have to reduce the use of the car and quite substantially increase the use of public transport. The planning is in place, but we need a commitment from the government. I again urge the minister to use this legislation to set up a redevelopment authority in the area so that this project can proceed. Hopefully, with the minister’s strong support we can find the funding to put in place the infrastructure to allow for a very high quality development that will take pressure off other areas.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [9.17 pm]: I would like to contribute to the discussion on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. The point I make at the start is that the MRA will replace the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, the Midland Redevelopment Authority and the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. The Labor government set up EPRA in the early 1990s and federal Labor government funding through the Building Better Cities program kicked off that project. EPRA has of course expanded its operations further and further from East Perth. However, it was in fact started by the Labor government in the early 1990s with funding from the federal Labor government to make better use of underdeveloped land. In the takeover of these three organisations by the MRA, it is important to keep in mind that if surplus value is recovered from these projects, we must apply that value to the community.

Earlier, the minister commented that the MRA’s aim is not to create a surplus for the government but rather to redevelop older suburbs. When redevelopments take place and surplus value is created, the use of that surplus value is quite important, particularly when it takes place in the eastern suburbs. We do not want the surplus value of the land over the 30 or 40–year life of a project taken away. I particularly point out the developer contributions in Armadale. There needs to be a proper assurance that those developer contributions are paid into the future. I understand from the briefing that the minister’s department gave the Labor Party on Monday that there will be a scheme to ensure that happens. It is important that those contributions for the authority do not get diverted from benefiting those communities.

I just want to turn to a technical issue that is also raised in clause 47(4). If it is in the minister’s opinion that there is a difference between the advice he receives and his decision, clause 47(4) requires the minister to table notice of that difference. This is not contemporary best practice for accountability of government. Contemporary best practice is that all information is given publicly. I highlight the “sunshine law” in Florida. That law requires information that is available to government to be made public. For example, the minister could apply that in his operation every time he has a meeting with a developer by making available the names of the developer and the people representing that developer who attend the meeting and a copy of the topics that are covered in the meeting—not necessarily the detailed minutes. That would be best practice for accountability. The more information that is placed before the community—rather than hiding behind commercial-in-confidence—the better off the community is. Let us face it; there are no commercial-in-confidence issues with the government’s negotiations with property developers because we are talking about either the act of discretion of the government or the assets of the state and their interaction with a commercial organisation. If the commercial organisation is asking for relief from a regulation or the application of a regulation in a particular way, it cannot be in confidence because it needs the assistance. It can only be in confidence if they are simply acting within the ordinary course of the laws that apply in the state. Likewise, if a developer asks for land swaps or that sort of thing, the only way that that can be properly done is for there to be full accountability. That cannot be

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commercial-in-confidence because the developer is asking for a benefit from the state's taxpayers, who have the right to know whether their land is being properly used. Likewise in this provision, giving the minister the power to decide whether there is a conflict does not seem best practice. Also, under clause 47(5) of the proposed act the minister is required only to give "so much of the text of the draft and of the recommendation as is sufficient to identify the area of difference". If the public of Western Australia is unable to see the rest of the information, how does it know that that is all that is in conflict? I can imagine the commentary from the Liberal Party if it were a Labor minister making a decision and refusing to provide information to the public. Why is it that we are proposing a provision that is not world best practice?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Can I just interject to say that the redevelopment scheme as a whole would be made public in any case because a draft is put out for consultation. I think that this is just to avoid clogging up the whole system with things which are repetitive and which duplicate other actions.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You are the minister, you get paid the big bucks, and you are entitled to make decisions different from the recommendations. I am not criticising the minister. Simply because a bureaucrat recommends something does not mean a minister should implement it. Please do not take me as saying that.

Mr J.H.D. Day: But generally their recommendations are fully followed.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of course, and that is rightly so. Every minister should have the right to say, "I am in charge; I will make the decision." All I am saying is that for proper accountability, why would we not then put all the information to the public? For crying out loud, in this modern day when we can simply put everything on the internet, where is the problem? It is like reforming freedom of information laws. If we genuinely wanted to reform FOI laws, we would put every document we received, and that could be released under FOI, on a website somewhere. Then we would not even have to worry about FOI; we would be completely transparent. This is the same thing. Let us reverse the position. If this was the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Alannah MacTiernan making a decision, what would be said by the member for Vasse? That is really the test. I am saying that, in my view, this is not best practice. The best practice would be to simply have the information available and let people make their own decisions. A minister disagreeing with the recommendations of bureaucracy is not of itself anything to be alarmed at. That is why ministers have their jobs. The difference between us and the bureaucrats is that we are elected and we are accountable to the people; sometimes we make decisions for a range of reasons that are quite legitimate. Equally, the more information we put in front of the public, the less a minister can be accused of making a decision for the wrong reason; if all the information is public, people can see why he did it.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I agree that there should be a full explanation of why a decision is made that is different from a recommendation. That is a fairly rare event, but it happens.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely. There is something wrong with the bureaucracy if a minister is regularly overturning its decisions. We are talking about only a very small number of occasions, so why not be fully transparent?

Mr J.H.D. Day: The Planning Commission is not only bureaucrats—in other words, public servants; the Planning Commission has on it other community representatives, including from local government.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Sure, but the bureaucracy is the unelected part of the government machinery. The minister is the elected bit and they are the unelected bit. When the member for Victoria Park was reading out the letter from Ron Davies this morning, we heard that Ron Davies said he did not like using the term "bureaucracy". I am not using the word in the pejorative sense. I mean the administrative part of government as opposed to the political part of government. As I said, there is no reason why a minister must accept recommendations. All I am saying is: let us be transparent.

I would like to turn to some questions about the development potential in the Cannington district. We are 10 kilometres from the general post office. When we read through the Directions 2031 planning document, it is pretty clear that an area such as Cannington is ideal for some activation. The local council is to be commended on its plans for the Queens Park train station precinct and for its Cannington city centre plan. I make the point that Westfield Carousel shopping centre, which is the dominant economic activity in the district of Cannington, is the second busiest shopping centre in the Perth metropolitan region. I know that there is some argument about Westfield Whitford City, but as I understand it, Carousel is still the second busiest shopping centre. Annually, the centre has 9.8 million visitations—people coming in and out—and about half a billion dollars of trade. Carousel is a massive facility. In the area around Carousel shopping centre is a lot of vacant land. Some of it is in government ownership, some of it is in council ownership and most of it is in private ownership. That includes the land owned by the Cannington Agricultural, Horticulture and Recreation Society—Cannington

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Showgrounds. It also includes a large block of government-owned land at the corner of Sevenoaks Street and Cecil Avenue. I understand one block is owned by the Department of Housing, one by the Department of Health and there is a lot of private land on the north-eastern side of the railway line into east Cannington. I think the City of Canning is capable of working with the interested parties to do the development without the assistance of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, but the council may decide that a better way of doing it would be to have MRPA involvement. But one way or another, what I would say —

Ms J.M. Freeman: There are a number of authorities like Water Corp and places like that to do.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: To get people to pay attention, I will take as an example the Department of Housing's block of land on the corner there along with the Department of Health's block of land. It is a wonderful opportunity for a mixed-use development. As it is 10 kilometres from the GPO, it would be a great thing if the government took a bit of effort and focused on the region. There would be a lot of cooperation from the council, which is determined to have some transport-oriented developments, if it finally got Cannington and Queens Park train stations upgraded. We have some great schools. I would say that the Premier is justifiably proud of Sevenoaks Senior College, which was set up when he was the Minister for Education. It is a great school. Many of the students travel by train. There is a large office building that houses state government departments and about 400 or 500 workers, so there is plenty of opportunity. There are also lots of opportunities for intensification of the residential population in that node. I understand, from talking to council officers, that 34 people—including my daughter's boyfriend—live in the city centre because there is basically one block of flats. There is so much more opportunity and it would be great to get a bit of focus from the state government such as the focus on that centre from the good leadership of the Mayor of Canning, Joe Delle Donne, and his chief executive officer, Mark Dacombe. The government should look at the transport options to connect Carousel and Cannington through to Curtin University, as then there would be access to Curtin University from the east. I see a lot of discussion in the media about the so-called Knowledge Arc Light Rail tram system—I am supportive of this—which was suggested to connect the University of Western Australia to Curtin, but that is really about access to Curtin University for people in the western suburbs. There really needs to be some discussion about access for people in the eastern suburbs such as Cannington and further out to Armadale and those other areas so that they can get to Curtin University. If the Knowledge Arc Light Rail system was built, a person from Cannington or Armadale would have to catch a train into the city and then catch light rail from the city back to Curtin, unless they used a bus. There is nothing wrong with buses, but the fact is that around the world people do not catch buses. They do catch light rail and they do catch trains—the minister knows this himself—and there is land available for light rail along Manning Road, which would be a very sensible contribution to the area. None of those measures would be cheap, but I have made the point.

I will go on to discuss the Perth Waterfront project, which envisages \$400 million of public investment in a dog of a project. The Minister for Planning would be better off spending that \$400 million on the eastern suburbs to get some good, quality infrastructure to support the development of the eastern suburbs, rather than the dog of a project that is proposed. In respect of the waterfront project, I asked the following question of the minister in March —

...

- (a) when is it expected that the first cafe will be open and trading to the public in the Perth Waterfront Project; ...

The minister answered —

- (a) ... Cafes could trade as early as 2016.

Therefore, at best it will be five years before there is anything there.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It does take time to build substantial projects.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know that. That is right, but if the minister remains quiet, I will explain how he could do it quicker and better and at a lower cost.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Can you just tell me whether it's the general opposition view that it's a dog of a project?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have no idea. The minister would have to ask the shadow minister.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The Leader of the Opposition is here!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will tell the minister one thing: cutting off Riverside Drive is stupid. That is the access road to UWA for people in the eastern suburbs.

[Member's time extended.]

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Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The minister will cut off the easy and simple access to the University of Western Australia for people in the eastern suburbs. They will have two options when that happens: they can go through South Perth or they can go through the tunnel. Anybody who lives in the eastern suburbs can point out to the minister that the tunnel does not work in the morning; and in any case there is no freeway because it ends at a set of traffic lights at Orrong Road.

Mr J.H.D. Day: So the idea put out by Alan Carpenter and Alannah MacTiernan prior to the last election was stupid, was it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: They were not intending to cut off Riverside Drive.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Oh yes? What were they going to do then?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That was not their plan; that is your plan, minister.

Mr J.H.D. Day: No. They put out these stories. Where was the line going?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What about the Premier going along to a meeting and saying that he was going to put in a bridge, and he said he could do the bridge within the \$300 million budget? What a joke! It is not going to happen in that way. However, I want to go on a bit further about this.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The same would have happened under Labor if you ever built it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is intended to use 150 000 square metres of office space. Depending on market conditions, it is estimated that the building construction would be completed by 2022—that is, 11 years of cement trucks turning up to dusty sites before the project is finished.

Mr J.H.D. Day: And you would do nothing! We wouldn't have built the Mitchell Freeway under your plan.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I have said in this place before, the problem is that the minister is dumping 150 000 square metres—or whatever it is; maybe 130 000 square metres—of office space in the Northbridge Link and 30 000 or 40 000 square metres in East Perth at the same time as there is the under-utilisation of privately owned land in the west end. The minister is creating a massive overhang of land that will depress the opportunity for the private sector to build on its own land in the west end of Perth. There is no shortage at all of land to build office buildings in the CBD. If the minister wants to go ahead with the Northbridge Link, that is fine; but let that work before he goes on and builds another set of vacant blocks because it is not a waterfront project.

It is interesting to note that I went to Turkey earlier this year with the Intercultural Harmony Society. I went to an industrial town called Izmir. It is no picture postcard place, but it has three kilometres of waterfront. Guess what? It is full, because the town allowed the current infrastructure to be used before it started new development. What the minister is doing is creating an overhang. If the minister thinks the Perth Waterfront project will be finished in 2022, he has to be joking! I asked the minister in my question to him, which he would not answer, what the expected return on the land would be. He said that the price per square metre would be determined through a competitive market process.

Mr J.H.D. Day: What else?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: How can the minister then do the budget for the project if he does not know what the land will return? I will tell the minister why he cannot tell us what it will earn. It is because the land in the CBD is not expensive. The minister should go around and have a look at all the empty blocks. Why can developers not get the projects to go? That is the real issue.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Have you seen the number of cranes on the Perth skyline?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, okay, but what about Bishop See? What about the Emu brewery site? What about the site next to number 8, I think it is, St Georges Terrace? They are all vacant sites, and that does not start when we go into the west end of Perth where there are all those two-storey buildings that could be tastefully redeveloped into office space with a tower in the middle, a facade and such like. There is no shortage of vacant space in Perth for office towers. If the minister wants to do a waterfront project, he should do a waterfront project. Do not create 156 000 square metres of empty office space, because that is not going to work.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It's actually desirable, if you want a successful outcome, to have people around it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is right. Have people around it. Have something for them to do.

Mr J.H.D. Day: With people working there and people living there.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: How about an Aboriginal people's museum? How about a moving sci-tech project at the waterfront? These are ways to get people to go to the waterfront. Having vacant blocks on which at some time in the future an office tower may or may not be built is not a way to get people to go to the waterfront. Even if the

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minister's project did work the way he thinks it will—and it will not—it would be 11 years before the project is finished. The Liberal Party would have to be re-elected in 2013, 2017 and 2021 before the project would be finished. It is ridiculous. It is not sensible.

Mr J.H.D. Day: No wonder nothing happened under Labor, given that you were State Secretary of the Labor Party! No wonder the record was so dismal!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will just make another point. The great thing about the Midland Redevelopment Authority is the work it has done in restoring the railway workshops. Out there is the Midland Atelier and FORM, which wants to build a digital hub, for which about \$15 million is needed. I will tell the government what: rather than spending \$400 million on the waterfront skate park, how about giving FORM \$15 million for the digital hub? That will have an immediate and actual effect; it will improve the life of every citizen in Western Australia. It will give an opportunity for creativity, it will give an opportunity for people to come to Midland, and it will give an opportunity for the creative forces that FORM is marshalling in Midland to have an effect in the digital space for only \$15 million. It is interesting that the government is happy to spend \$2 billion on projects in the central business district, but cannot spend \$15 million on a project like the digital hub at Midland. Government is about choices, and what the government is choosing to do is overload the CBD with empty office space, but not fund the Midland project.

The Treasurer likes to point to us and say, "What would you do? What would you do?" Well, this is what could be done to make a difference to what is happening out at Midland. The work that FORM is doing is worth supporting and it is worth \$15 million. The government has \$400 million for the Perth Waterfront project; it should have \$15 million for the digital hub at the Midland Atelier. I do not intend to go any further on this matter, but it is an important issue.

If the government thinks it is a good idea to have 11 years of construction on the waterfront before people will actually be able to get there, that is okay, but it is not really a sensible approach. Instead of spending \$400 million on an inlet, if the government was to spend it on the Museum, and if it moved Scitech there, people would go there, but building some vacant blocks to put a couple of office towers on does not provide excitement.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [9.42 pm]: I rise to offer my support for the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. I note that it is a mechanism by which we will be able to augment the speed and quality of urban renewal, especially where that applies to brownfield sites. That, of course, is something we need to do, because the alternative is that we will continue to sprawl our city. We need to redevelop areas that have been allowed to go into a state of decline. They are often characterised by old, underused and unused buildings, and we need to ensure that those areas are rejuvenated in a way that optimises their location, because they are often locations of real significance and real value because of their proximity to the city centre.

I think it is worth looking at some of the existing impediments to that kind of redevelopment. Broadly speaking, I think they are in one of perhaps three or four categories. There is the government policy impediment and market demand impediment, and the other that I think is very serious when it comes to redevelopment is a lack of entrepreneurial flair that sometimes exists in the private sector with some private landholders. I believe that if this legislation is in place, it needs to accompany a spirit and a desire by the Minister for Planning and the WA Planning Commission to encourage and push landholders to develop sites, and the redevelopment authority model seems to be a very effective way of doing that. We have had some very good examples of redevelopment in the Perth metropolitan area, such as the Armadale, East Perth, Midland and Subiaco redevelopments; excellent work has been done, and we need more of it.

I would like to talk about my electorate of Gosnells and the area around the train station where we desperately need redevelopment. This is prime land that is 17 kilometres from the city centre and immediately adjacent to the Gosnells train station that is presently characterised by decaying buildings and an ugliness that tarnishes the good name of the whole of the City of Gosnells. It is really unfortunate that at the moment we have a couple of landholders who just do not have the entrepreneurial flair to develop that land for which there is market demand. I have mentioned before that sometimes a lack of market demand can be an impediment to urban renewal, but in this case there would be demand. I would have loved to have had my office in the Gosnells CBD area, but the office space was not available. I know of other businesses that would like to have office space in the Gosnells CBD, but there is just not the floor space. There is market demand for development.

There is not a problem when it comes to government policy, which can sometimes be an impediment to urban renewal. In this case, the zonings would allow for it and planning decisions have been made to ensure that we have a well-harmonised Gosnells CBD, but, unfortunately, we are suffering because of a lack of entrepreneurial flair. That is where I believe that something like a redevelopment authority model would enable us to eventually acquire this land and redevelop it. I have raised this matter before with the Minister for Planning, and I know he

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will recall comments he made in May last year when we debated the development assessment panels in the Approvals and Related Reforms (No. 4) (Planning) Bill 2009. I just want to remind the minister of his comments. The minister kindly acknowledged that —

The member for Gosnells said one property owner is very reluctant for his land to be developed. He was making the case that the City of Gosnells should be empowered by the state to effectively compulsorily acquire that land. That is an interesting suggestion. It would be a very big step to take, but if a strong case were made, it would be something that I would be prepared to at least consider. I draw attention to sections 189 and 191 of the Planning and Development Act, which already allow limited powers of acquisition for the purposes of furthering the objectives of a local or regional planning scheme. We can perhaps discuss that issue further.

To the minister's credit, he did take up the matter with the City of Gosnells to some extent, but I think that things have since fallen away and there has been no further progress. We are stuck with a situation whereby we have this, potentially, very valuable land just doing nothing; it is idle at the moment. The area is characterised by ugliness with smashed glass and smashed building walls, and it is almost at the point of the standing buildings, as they are, posing a threat to anyone who passes by because there is a risk that roof material could fall off. I think that the walls could fall down and that some of the temporary panelling—the boarding-up that has gone on there—poses a threat to passers-by. There may be grounds for the City of Gosnells to act when it does become a serious health hazard, but so far it has not been able to reassure itself that the present situation poses an immediate health risk. I am hopeful that by pursuing this metropolitan redevelopment authority, we will be in a stronger position to move on these private landholders who are failing to develop valuable land.

Other members have spoken about the need for such redevelopment approaches to be accompanied by community support. I know there is a mechanism here that triggers the defining of an area that will be within a redevelopment area. Through regulation and consultation with the local government and the WA Planning Commission, we will come to a position of deciding that an area will be a redevelopment area. I take, though, points made earlier that community support is essential; it is not enough simply for a local government and the Planning Commission, along with the redevelopment authority, to decide to redevelop an area. It has to be accompanied by strong community support. That community support exists in the City of Gosnells when it comes to this area in Lissiman Street I have been talking about. People are crying out for that kind of development. That supports the case that this can, and should, happen.

I should mention a little bit about transport issues when it comes to redevelopment and the need for there to be a strong integration with transport planning and this kind of urban renewal. It is absolutely vital. Nearby in the City of Gosnells, in my electorate, we have some undeveloped land that is potentially suitable for 14 000 dwellings that are located on the north western side of Tonkin Highway across from Champion Lakes. I know the member for Armadale talked about the successful development of Champion Lakes thanks to the good work of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. In time, that land, which is locally known as the Della-Vedova land, will be developed. That will put incredible strain on transport infrastructure.

I turned to the transport minister's document released a few weeks ago entitled "Public Transport for Perth in 2031: Mapping Out the Future for Perth's Public Transport Network" looking for some instruction as to how the government was integrating the work of redevelopment authorities, other planning mechanisms and other planning processes such as those of the City of Gosnells, looking to see how that would all be integrated. Unfortunately there is no such indication in the document. Although we have been waiting for this document since 2009, there is no indication of a clear way of solving the potential transport problems that people will face in the south east of Perth. There are 14 000 dwellings. That will create a lot of transport need. Unfortunately, I think that people moving in there over the next five to 10 years will be faced with the prospect that the only way of getting about will be through the road network principally; that is, roads that are already heavily congested such as Nicholson Road, Garden Street, Spencer Road and Albany Highway. That will be a real nightmare for people to deal with.

I was especially disappointed when I looked at the 2031 document to see that Gosnells did not even rate a mention. The Gosnells train station was not even mentioned. I feel that the minister's vision for Perth's south east is seriously lacking. I hope that mechanisms the Minister for Planning may be able to put in train will lead to much more integrated development. I hope the Minister for Planning will be able to respond to my concerns about the failure to do something about decrepit vacant land in the City of Gosnells—privately owned but vacant land. That is not a contradiction; it is unused land but privately owned. If the mechanism to be used is this redevelopment authority, then, again, I support this legislation.

Mr John Hyde; Dr Janet Woollard; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Janine Freeman

I will conclude my remarks because I am aware that other members are keen to speak tonight. I know there are other issues around transparency. I want to finish on the issue of transparency of the budgeting arrangements that will be available to the public and to members of Parliament when it comes to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. We are all aware of situations during the budget process—when we get our budget papers and go through the budget estimates process—of sometimes finding some agencies very light on when it comes to the presentation of their financial statements. I hope that that will not be the case with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. I hope we will see a very clear indication of all the funding arrangements that surround the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, including the ongoing arrangements for those bodies that the authority will take on, including the funding arrangements from the Armadale, East Perth, Midland and Subiaco Redevelopment Authorities. It is absolutely essential that we have that transparency because, after all, redevelopment authorities have control over very large amounts of money, and we need to ensure a high degree of transparency. I will conclude my remarks there. I support this legislation.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [9.54 pm]: I also rise to speak briefly on the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011. I thank the minister for the briefing provided by his advisers, and I also commend the member for Midland's comments today about the Midland Workshops. I am a proud member of the labour history society and have been involved in the very important project at the workshops.

I really want to rise and speak on the following matters. After reading the minister's second reading speech, I am interested to know what triggers an area to be designated a redevelopment area? I have read and understood clauses 30 and 37 but I still cannot understand what triggers that designation. Does a council come to the minister? Does the community come to the minister? Does the community come to the Western Australian Planning Commission? When we think of redevelopment, we think of improvement. I have stood here before and talked to the minister about the Koondoola shopping precinct, and the \$1 million given by the previous Labor government and was committed to be continued by this government. For me, that is a perfect example of the type of situation the member for Gosnells talked about. However, in this case, an operating shopping precinct has caused behaviour problems. For me, a redevelopment is an improvement that goes to the regeneration of an area, as referred to in clause 29 of the bill; that is, the minister has to have regard to the regeneration of the redevelopment area.

Mr J.H.D. Day: In relation to Koondoola, can the member tell me the roadworks —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I apologise, minister; I have five minutes.

The minister's second reading speech appears to be very narrow in its criteria for redevelopment areas. The second reading speech refers to —

... redevelopment of areas where complex planning considerations apply and where there is significant state land ownership.

In the next paragraph the minister talks about the bill being —

... for state government priority projects, and certainty for investors who are considering new ventures in important economic infrastructure, industrial development and urban land and housing.

I need an assurance from the minister in the house, in relation to his second reading speech, that the bill will not just relate to those restrictive large development areas—the green lot developments or brown lot developments the member for Gosnells spoke about. Infrastructure is an absolute requirement and assists in the regeneration of areas. The minister is certainly aware of the history of the Koondoola shopping centre. I liked the way the member for Gosnells put it so eloquently in stating that those developers are a bit lazy. In the shopping centre case, I think I could be much more blunt and just say that we had a group of owners who could not agree on an opportunity because their self-interest was beyond the interest of the community as a whole to deliver something that was beneficial to the community. Something is needed by which local government and the community can, through powers to be put in place by this bill, say, “Actually, you're doing such a disservice in what you are providing to this community that it undermines the social fabric and wellbeing of the community.” I stand here to get confirmation from the minister that the powers in this bill under clause 22 to compulsorily acquire land will be used to put right what is wrong in some of our communities. I refer to when people who own businesses but do not necessarily run the businesses are not doing what is to the benefit of the whole community; in fact, they are undermining the community's welfare. I thank the minister.

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

House adjourned at 9.59 pm

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 9 August 2011]

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