

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2014–15 BILL 2014
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2014–15 BILL 2014

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by **Dr M.D. Nahan (Treasurer)**, resolved —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 be considered urgent bills.

Cognate Debate

In accordance with standing order 169, leave granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 to be the principal bill.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 8 May.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [3.22 pm]: For the record, I am not the lead speaker on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014; the lead speaker is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Why isn't he speaking?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Like every other year for the last six years, Premier, this is how it has happened. Perhaps the Premier should wake up and listen.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Member, could you direct your comments through the Chair.

Mr B.S. WYATT: What a gormless, friendless, shameless budget. The only thing I have seen more gormless than this budget was the government's performance in question time just a few minutes ago. I do not think I could sum up a budget better than the front page of *The West Australian* did: "Pain, No Gain". It is the budget to nowhere. What is the narrative of this government? What is it doing? It is taxing —

Mr J.H.D. Day: Building things—building everything.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members on both sides, I am trying to listen to the member for Victoria Park in silence.

Mr B.S. WYATT: "Pain, No Gain" is probably the best way we could describe this budget. It is a budget that is nothing but tax rises. It does not do much about the spending side of things. It looks exactly at tax rises. That performance in question time was one of the most surreal experiences I think I have had. The Treasurer does not know when debt is peaking. I would have thought that in the first question time after the budget he might be prepared for that question, but the Minister for Police got up and talked about hoon legislation, despite the awkward stares across her right shoulder, and demanded to know whether the opposition was going to support her hoon legislation. The only thing the opposition was thinking was, "Can we make it retrospective?" That is the only thing the opposition was thinking about—a gormless budget, a budget to nowhere that leaves Western Australians no better off and with no clarity around where we are going with the control of debt. We still do not know. The Treasurer was hapless in his response to my question today. It is literally the budget to nowhere.

I know that this is not the budget that the former director of the Institute of Public Affairs would have given. I know he said in his budget speech, "I don't listen to that Mike Nahan anymore. I'm a new Mike Nahan."

Dr M.D. Nahan: You were listening.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I follow Twitter. What I find interesting is that prior to becoming Treasurer Mike Nahan, we had the taxation herbivore who was always nibbling gently at the economy in respect of tax, but he has now become the taxation carnivore rampaging through Western Australia, finding every inefficient tax he can get his hands on and ratcheting them up. I do not recognise this man. I have read so much of what he has said that I just do not recognise him, and I still do not understand the economic narrative of the government; I still do not

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understand the financial strategy of the government. We asked the Premier today to just tell us what his objective around net debt is. He does not know; the Treasurer does not know. If they do not know, this is the problem we have. When every single budget focuses on one year, and one year only, ignoring the forward estimates, this is the problem we end up having.

It was a friendless budget. This is the first time when I have gone down to speak to the media after the budget that I have had to get at the back of a line to pass critical comment on the budget. That has never happened to me before. I want to quickly quote a few comments, because there were some crackers out there. The Premier's former chief of staff, Deidre Willmott, now heads the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. What did she say? She stated —

“CCI is disappointed the government hasn't been able to reduce debt levels in the forward estimates, with net debt climbing from \$22 billion to almost \$30 billion—an increase of 33 per cent since ratings agency Standard and Poor's reduced WA's AAA credit rating,” ...

She states again —

It is disappointing that the Government has chosen to focus on revenue rather than spending, with the introduction of \$1.1 billion worth of tax increases over the next four years.

We now know that the government's little appetiser last year around land tax was just a piggy in the blanket. The main course was delivered by the former IPA boss, the member for Riverton—the taxation carnivore. There is not a tax he does not love now. What an extraordinary turnaround for the member for Riverton.

I now go to the Property Council of Australia. I was surprised last year when the Property Council did not utter a word about the land tax increases from the Barnett government. This time, though, the council did not miss the Treasurer, did it? Joe Lenzo said in his media statement —

The Barnett Government has taken the lazy way to fix its Budget problem by slugging WA property owners for the second year in a row ...

He went on to say —

“It is a bookkeeper's budget for the short term that masks the structural faults in the State tax system and the government's inability to reign in public expenditure. ... lack of vision to keep WA growing after the mining boom.

This time the Property Council did not miss.

The Western Australian Council of Social Service put out a critical media statement about the budget again ignoring the people who are struggling the most with the cost-of-living rises. Even the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia said that last year it got a kick in the shins; this year the government has moved the boot up a little. REIWA made very clear what it thought. Even the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, member for Cannington, put out a scathing media statement. It has clearly come to the view that the government has no intention of reversing out of the nearly \$700 million from the royalty review, which is still taking place. When we are looking at surplus projections of \$5 million, I think even AMEC has woken up to the fact that—guess what—that revenue is staying there. Even the Western Australian Local Government Association awoke from its great slumber today. In today's *The West Australian* it has an advertisement headed “More Budget Pain From Hike in Costs to Councils”, which makes the point that local government and ratepayers will pay for the miserable failure of local government reform policy that the government has taken around to metropolitan Perth.

I saw only one interest group applauding the government—the National Party! It was a stunning performance when the Treasurer got up to eviscerate the signature policy of the National Party. I am looking at members, thinking “This can't be good. Surely, the Nationals aren't going to do the standard applause at the end of this budget?” But there they were, clapping away—some slightly confused, I will admit that.

The government must be congratulated for pulling off that con job. Not only did it take \$3 billion out of royalties for regions, but it also had National Party members clapping like trained seals. It had them clapping! I do like the fact that today, when the Leader of the National Party gets to say, “Oh, royalties for regions is still here”, the Treasurer has said to him on public radio, “Royalties for regions is a very vibrant scheme, more transparent, and yes, it's not consuming 25 per cent of royalties, but then again it was never intended to do so.” I was here when that legislation went through the Parliament. I ran back and had a look—section 6, 25 per cent of royalties. I can tell the member for Riverton, it is the greatest con job I have seen pulled on the National Party in the short time I have been in this place, and then its members get up and give him a round of applause.

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Just before I move on from the National Party, whose members are watching the carcass swinging in the breeze as they clap the butcher, I remind members of the media release from the National Party on 18 October 2013. This was put out after the debate in the Legislative Council complaining that John Nicolaou and I, the member for Victoria Park, had suggested that royalties for regions was unsustainable. In its media statement, it made this point:

In the 2012–13 financial year *Royalties for Regions* expenditure on regional projects amounted to more than \$1 billion.

I think the best comment from the debate—it was an interesting debate; there were some names of upper house National Party members that I was not familiar with—was from Hon Paul Brown, who said this when responding to Hon Darren West —

As for his comments that royalties for regions, as far as he is concerned, is gone, if he believes that, he believes in the tooth fairy and Santa Claus. Quite clearly, while the Nats sit on this side of the chamber, royalties for regions will continue in the form legislated for at its inception. In fact, the amount of money coming into the fund is increasing and will be approximately \$1.5 billion a year over the forward estimates.

Hon Paul Brown is no doubt sitting in the upper house, but I am not sure whether he is aware of what happened last week in this chamber—what was put on the table in the Parliament; I do not think he quite understands. But the Treasurer needs to be congratulated on pulling off that particular conjurer’s trick. I very rarely see lambs literally stroll their way to the slaughter, but he managed to pull that off. I just do not understand where the Liberal Party is going. It said “fully funded, fully costed” not that long ago. For the second year in a row there has been a swag of tax increases by the taxation carnivore! Now we will get toll roads apparently from the federal Liberal Party tonight and medical co-payments by people who go to the emergency department. The great Premier who stood up to Canberra is now rolling over dramatically, completely rolling over, and I will remind the Premier of what he said back in 2010, when the discussion was around the GST and its use for health. To make the point, I will quote what he said on 22 April 2010 —

“... there is no doubt this sets up virtually three layers of bureaucracy (at commonwealth, state and on a local level).

“... This is not simplifying the management of health, it’s making it incredibly complicated with literally massive bureaucracies established.”

Is the Premier now thinking that asking nurses to triage people to assess how sick they are and to decide whether or not they will be charged the fee is not setting up a complicated system? The article continues —

The Premier did not believe that the federal government would punish WA over its refusal to embrace Mr Rudd’s reform.

“I’m not trying to be a spoiler and I’m not trying to be some local hometown hero,” Mr Barnett said.

I hope Mr Barnett stands up for the people of Western Australia, because that is the one policy I have heard from the Abbott government that winds back one of the most significant policies for the most vulnerable people of Western Australia—Medicare. If he starts going down this path and simply makes the point, “Well, it’s just seven, 10 or 15 bucks” or whatever it is, it is very, very simple for people on high incomes, like the people in this place. However, it is very, very difficult for people who regularly need to see their general practitioner. The Premier should be very careful before he simply rolls over to Mr Hockey and Mr Abbott to accept that particular policy. The Premier has rolled over on toll roads quite obviously; we have seen that already. Again, on 31 July 2012, Mr Barnett ruled out introducing toll booths as opposed to toll roads. It was fairly clear what Mr Barnett ruled out back in 2012. We are getting a very strong sense from the government that it is now rolling over on that. No doubt next year we will be standing up here talking about pokies in all our pubs! Is nothing sacred? What do the members of the Liberal Party stand for? It is not financial management. What is left? The one sign that I saw post-budget that highlights the fact that the Premier is out of touch was when he increased taxes, when he hit first home buyers. It was a pathetic response from the Treasurer during question time today. What does he do the day after the budget? What is the one thing he goes to sell the day after the budget? “We’re giving \$10 million to the Fremantle Dockers”!

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, we’re not.

Mr B.S. WYATT: He goes out there and says, “We’re giving \$10 million to an organisation” with a revenue of \$50 million a year. That is his signature policy that he rolled out. I did not see anything about mental health. The Premier can say all he wants; we all know what he is doing—\$10 million to an organisation that has revenue of

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\$50 million a year. I dare say we know why the Dockers were rolled out straightaway: an easy media hit from the Premier. It shows how out of touch he is. I note that the question has been put to me, “Well, what would you do?” I would not have delivered the set of books that the Treasurer delivered. No way in the world would Labor have ever delivered this set of books.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Let me tell the taxation carnivore, the man who loves a bit of stamp duty, a bit of land tax, a bit of car registration—give me some of that! The herbivore has gone. We now have the carnivore, who instead of looking at spending, is now deciding to hit everybody, including our most endangered of species—not T-Rex over here, but the first homebuyer is filling the gap the Treasurer has created—actually, it is the member for Cottesloe because ultimately he cannot be controlled, it does not matter what government members do in the books.

The Ripper model that the government has now apparently embraced, this whole idea of large surpluses run by Eric Ripper that it spent books critiquing, the government has now finally understood the importance of a large surplus. It pays for the capital works program. It was an interesting performance on 7:30 WA last Friday, when the Treasurer said \$3.6 billion debt was too low. That was interesting and I had to pause to rewind to watch that again because I thought it was Dr Mike Nahan, former the head of Institute of Public Affairs, I was watching on TV, but it was not, because it was not the taxation herbivore, it was the taxation carnivore! He went on with the audacity to say—this is why I think he thinks that debt under Labor will be higher —

In fact, I can remember looking at the books at that time —

Referring to the 2008 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* —

Labor had forecast debt to grow to \$15–\$16 billion in four years time.

No! The PFPS had debt growing to \$9 billion. But what actually happened when this mob got in is that it did grow to nearly \$15 billion, so maybe that is where the confusion was. The difference between the PFPS, Labor and reality Liberal was some \$11 billion extra over those years. That was the reality, and I think that is why the Treasurer was confused about that issue.

I want to go through a couple of points just to highlight that we have a government without an economic narrative. The Leader of the Opposition referred to what the Premier said back on 4 September 2010, when he said debt would be capped at \$20 billion. I was so surprised by this; it was reported by Robert Taylor who now has the unenviable job of spinning this budget. He has done a tremendous job. A couple of days later in the Parliament, on 7 September 2010, I put that question to the Premier, “So is this the new cap?” The Premier said —

As a guide—in fact I made this comment to Treasury the other day—I would not want to see, in absolute terms, state debt rise above \$20 billion.

It is lucky he made the comment to Treasury the other day!

The Premier continues —

I believe the very strong improvement in our finances and the strong surpluses that we have achieved, and expect to achieve in the coming years, should mean that that is kept in control.

In 2010, the Premier said that he is expecting strong revenue growth and that that should keep debt in control, but what did revenue actually do over that time? Unbudgeted extra revenue increased by more than \$6 billion. The Premier was awash with revenue when he set the cap at \$20 billion but, ultimately, he was simply unable to keep it at that. Yes, he mentioned it to Treasury but no-one was delivering. There was a bevy of Treasurers coming and going but no-one in charge of delivering this \$20 billion debt cap. That was the fundamental problem.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr B.S. WYATT: Two years ago, we had Christian Porter’s budget. I watched him stand right there on that side of the house and say that net debt will peak in the 2014–15 upcoming budget year and then commence to decline. I thought that something must have happened to revenue since Mr Porter said that and, indeed, it did; unbudgeted revenue increased by nearly \$1.2 billion. Twice the government had \$20 billion and Mr Porter had debt peaking, and the revenue increased beyond budget expectations across those forward estimates. That is the reality; the government’s revenue has been fine.

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I note that the Treasurer referred to stamp duty collection during question time in Parliament today, and he is right. Since 30 June 2008, it has declined, but I want to go through the other revenue sources that the Treasurer did not refer to. Payroll tax is up 97 per cent, or \$1.9 billion; land tax is up 80 per cent, or \$334 million; interestingly, gambling tax is up 37 per cent, or \$87 million; insurance taxes are up 80 per cent; and motor vehicle taxes—the new tax that the Treasurer loves—are up 54 per cent. Total taxation, including the stamp duty collection decrease, has increased 45 per cent or \$3 billion. The tax take in the 2014–15 financial year will be \$3 billion greater than it was when Colin Barnett became Premier. That is the reality.

Let us look at the tax per capita. I want to remind members of what the former Treasurer, the member for Vasse, used to say—he was shadow Treasurer a few times when he sat on this side of the house. I quote the member for Vasse from 13 May 2008 —

Does the Treasurer know what? When he uses the most enduring measure of state-based taxation competitiveness—the one he used in 2001 and for many years after, which is taxation per capita—it shows that he is robbing us blind. The people in this state pay more in state taxes than any other Australian state. That is a f-a-c-t—a fact. People in Western Australia, as measured by taxation per capita, are being absolutely hammered by the Treasurer and his government.

What we have seen during the life of the Barnett government is taxation per capita increase from about \$2 500 to \$3 500 now, but, interestingly, the per capita gap between us and the other states is increasing; that is, Western Australia is taking more per capita compared with other states.

I still think that one of the more interesting arguments about the way that the books are presented around the goods and services tax—I have made the point time and again—is that there has never been a GST shock to the budget—ever. The GST revenue comes in almost exactly as expected by the state Treasury. In the five years from 2008–09 to 2012–13, GST revenue came in at 2.4 per cent below expectation, but as a percentage of entire revenue during that period there was a 0.35 per cent reduction. That is the only difference. However, it is interesting to note that this budget is no different. The Treasurers and the Premier like to get up and say, “Look at what is happening out in the forward estimates. Look how low our GST is going.” The reality, though, is that it has not actually gone as low as the fears of previous budgets have pointed out. In the 2009–10 budget, budgeted across the forward estimates compared with what we actually got was an extra \$1 billion in GST. In the 2010–11 budget, there was an extra \$1.6 billion in GST compared with the budget story that was told.

Interestingly, when we look at the relativity for the 2014–15 financial year, what have the previous budgets done in estimating that? In the 2011–12 budget, Treasury was of the view that the relativity for 2014–15 would be 0.33 per cent. In 2012–13, that was revised down to 0.29 per cent. The 2013–14 budget was revised down again to 0.27 per cent, and then we get to budget day and it is actually 0.376 per cent. Woeful, I accept, but it is about half a billion dollars greater than what was expected last year. The reality is that there has never been a GST shock to the budget. The shock has been in the spending side of government. I was stunned at the little bit of honesty from the Treasurer on 16 April this year at the very end of an interview that the Treasurer did with Geoff Hutchison. He said —

We maxed out the spending because that’s what the population wanted us to do.

What an extraordinary statement. The new Treasurer said, “It is the population; it is their fault we did all this. We have come in here, destroyed the books and then looked at the population and said, ‘How dare you!’” That was the response from the now Treasurer. What a diabolical two years we have had with the state’s finances.

Do not for one minute think that this budget has come out of nowhere. I have been talking about net debt every year since 2008—every single year, but the government keeps ignoring the opposition. It was inevitable that we would get to this situation. Let us have a quick look at the last two years. Colin Barnett’s \$20 billion cap—gone. Two years ago, Christian Porter said that net debt would peak, and let us not forget the fully funded, fully costed election campaign. I will quote Gareth Parker in *The West Australian* of 9 May, because I think it is the best summary I have seen. After seeing the member for Riverton’s budget, he finished off his piece with —

The Budget —

That is the 2014–15 budget —

is also the final confirmation, if it were needed, that the Liberals’ “fully funded, fully costed” 2013 election plan was a fairy tale.

It’s like the campaign never happened.

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Tony Abbott is absolutely modelling himself on Colin Barnett: “Don’t hold me to account on anything I said prior to an election. It’s what happens post-election that I’m interested in.” It is like the campaign never happened—fully funded, fully costed.

Then we got the 2013–14 budget last year when the government said, “You know what? Let’s just put everything—all the election promises—in.” Suddenly we go from net debt peaking in 2014 to net debt increasing every single year to 2023 out to nearly \$50 billion. What did the then Treasurer say about that? The member for Vasse said, “The community wants us to.” There is a theme emerging. Liberal Treasurers tend to get in there, make a mess of the place and then blame the community for the result. No wonder our finances are in the shape they are in—no-one is in charge; no-one is taking responsibility. Ultimately, there will be a financial reckoning and that is still to come. The only difference between the 2014–15 budget and the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* is that revenue has gone up beyond expectations by \$1 billion. That is the difference. Gareth Parker is quite correct; it is like the 2013 election campaign never happened.

Remember the fiscal action plan that the Treasurer described as, “Some come, some go”. The fiscal action plan that the member for Vasse, the then Treasurer, delivered before going overseas—I remember that trip—and then we lost the AAA credit rating! We lost it, not as the Treasurer said because of a volatile revenue base, but because of the government’s lack of political will to implement its spending initiatives. The former Treasurer even agreed with that assessment at a Committee for Economic Development of Australia lunch on 5 February this year. I quote the member for Vasse, the then Treasurer —

Last year one of the ratings agencies said (we didn’t) have the political ticker to do hard things and they were probably right.

The member for Vasse knew what the ratings agencies were saying: “A government that talks tough on the rhetoric but delivers nine per cent annual expenditure growth on the other.” That is the reality of the government. Then we get the midyear review in which, suddenly, the capital works program that has been developed for six years by the government is no longer affordable. Suddenly the Treasurer is saying, and I quote again, “We can’t afford it.” That is what the then Treasurer said on 5 February to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. He could have said, “I have spent the past five years putting it together and delivering it but now we cannot afford it.” Despite the fact that revenue projections are up by \$1 billion since the PFPS, the government can no longer afford it. What an extraordinary comment from the Treasurer.

I want to come back to what the Treasurer has said on a couple of issues, especially on household debt. He is looking to the first home buyer to fund his surplus across the forward estimates. In an article of 27 December 2006, referring to Mr Ripper’s surpluses, he wrote —

The problem is that these surpluses have been funded in the main with household debt. The Government has simply shifted its borrowing off its books and onto households. It has done this by mercilessly milking the housing boom. The WA Government, like other State Governments, imposes a raft of taxes in the form of stamp duties on the buying of houses. It imposes duties on property transfers as well as on mortgages and on home insurance.

... The banks tell me that virtually all stamp duties payments are funded by borrowing by households. These taxes are imposed on top of the purchase price of a house, at the end of the transaction, and are simply added to the overall bill and funded by additional borrowing.

In short, the \$2 billion surplus announced for last year was funded by \$2 billion in household debt. Take the debt-funded stamp duty revenue out and Mr Ripper’s stream past and future Budget surpluses turns into a river of deficit and debt.

Now the member for Riverton, who wrote that article about debt transference—the state transferring debt onto the poor householder—is looking to implement exactly the same method to fund his surplus across the forward estimates. Two of the Treasurer’s surpluses have been provided solely by household debt.

One final point I want to make is about the idea of asset sales. I note that there has been a change of rhetoric from the government about asset sales. In his budget speech the Treasurer said that revenue generated from asset sales will be used to reduce debt levels and contribute to the cost of new infrastructure. This is a change. Again, the government is rolling over to the demands of Canberra. I think the member for Vasse in his final six months as Treasurer was on song. I think he had finally worked out what he had to do, and that was to control the member for Cottesloe and the purse strings. On the idea of recycling money from asset sales into new assets, referring to the commonwealth government, the member for Vasse said —

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... they are looking for the states effectively through infrastructure spending, to pump prime the economy,” Mr Buswell said.

“We’re not in a position to do so. We won’t be at the hall for that dance.”

The member for Riverton has put on his bootscooting boots and come along very, very happily to this particular dance. Now we will get not only the sale of assets solely to reduce debt, but also creeping into this is the line, “Oh, we might use it to build new assets because that is what the federal government wants us to do; that’s what it has demanded from us.” I note that the member for Vasse was finally starting to get on top of the member for Cottesloe’s spending but, ultimately, his own behaviour saw that come unstuck.

Members, this is a budget to nowhere. The government has delivered tax increases almost across the board for first home buyers, for land tax and for vehicle registration. It is quite extraordinary and from the one man in Western Australia, who, for the better part of the last 20 years, railed against such taxes. Liberal Party members have to work out what they stand for. What was the point of this budget? How will they get debt under control? If this is going to be a tax-and-spend government, so be it, but the Treasurer is not the tightwad; 9.1 per cent expense growth this year is not being much of a tightwad. He has to act on the rhetoric he used to live by and deliver a clear plan across the forward estimates for the people of Western Australia.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.53 pm]: I rise to make some comments on this year’s Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014. Obviously, I want to spend some time talking about the measures that will impact on our health system and, indeed, the very negative impact that this budget will have on the health system. I think *The West Australian* said it all when it wrote about an all pain, no gain budget. We have a government that has suddenly woken up to the immovable, indisputable truth that it has stuffed up the public finances and it is in trouble. It is wedged between the desire to fund community services, to keep election commitments and to retrieve some semblance of a reputation for economic management. In this particular budget is a set of circumstances that are unique in my time in politics. That is, we are seeing at last the effects of both a Liberal–National government at the state level and a Liberal–National government at the federal level. Through the prism of these two governments we can look into the dark hearts and minds of those people opposite us.

As I said, this is a budget with all pain and no gain. It does nothing to retrieve the debt situation; it puts the icing on the cake for ramping up household fees and charges. Electricity charges have gone up by 77 per cent since 2008; water by 90 per cent since 2007–08; water, sewerage and drainage by 62 per cent; public transport by 29.7 per cent; and cost-of-living increases by 48.6 per cent since 2007–08. We can see that it is this government’s very clear intention to drive up the costs of its profligate spending policies onto WA families and households—the people least in a position to afford them.

Tonight I particularly want to talk about the other measure that has been contemplated in part by Canberra and in part signalled by the musings of the Premier; that is, to implement a hospital tax, a tax proposed by the Abbott government for not only visits to the GP, but also WA patients going to emergency departments in our hospitals seeking the health care they need. Occasionally, we have times of consensus in relation to health. We have enjoyed a certain amount of that over the last decade with the Court, Gallop and Carpenter governments with free health care being available to people in Western Australia, because we all understand, I hope, the importance of free health care. It is based on the principle that people should be treated on the basis of their health needs rather than the size of their wallets. Consensus has not always been the case nationally. For instance, in 1946, in the post–Second World War period, the Chifley government first introduced national funding for hospitals through a national prepaid hospital system. Essentially, that attempt was stymied at that point by the medical profession that refused to cooperate with the implementation of a national health service. In the early 1950s, the incoming Menzies government abandoned that prepaid hospital scheme and introduced a publicly subsidised private health insurance scheme. That scheme was largely criticised because it benefited not so much the people who could least afford health as those who could afford it the most. In response, once the Whitlam government came into office, the Labor Party brought in Medibank, a universal health care scheme. However, that scheme was then dismantled by the Fraser coalition government, which reintroduced the voluntary health insurance scheme of the Menzies era. We then roll forward to the Hawke government when Medicare was introduced. That shows that over time Labor has constantly stood up for a free universal healthcare system, but that it has been torn down by successive National–Liberal governments. Labor introduced Medicare, and that system stayed in place, by and large, until the Howard government achieved government in 1996. Although the Howard government promised to maintain Medicare, we saw that government also dismantle the commonwealth dental program and introduce the private health insurance incentive scheme, which was essentially a way of subsidising private health insurance premiums. However, in Western Australia, by and large,

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that consensus has held sway, and there are very good reasons for that. A universal healthcare system is an important part of our social democracy. What does it mean? The World Health Organization says —

The goal of universal health coverage is to ensure that all people obtain health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them.

It requires —

A strong, efficient, well-run health system ... a system for financing health services ... Access to essential medicines and technologies ... A sufficient capacity of well-trained, motivated health workers ...

For some time this has been the task of the state government in running our hospital system. Dr Margaret Chan, the director general of the World Health Organization, said —

I regard universal health coverage as the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. It is inclusive. It unifies services and delivers them in a comprehensive and integrated way, based on primary health care.

That consensus was blown apart on 2 May 2014 when Premier Barnett, upon being quizzed about his attitude to the general practitioner co-payments proposed by the Abbott government, was reported in the media as saying that essentially he thought it was a move that he would support. He was later reported in the media as saying that the idea has some merit.

Ultimately, despite the consensus that we have had in this state for some time, Liberal politicians revert to type; that is, as a way of regulating these sorts of community services, they put in market mechanisms that essentially send signals to the market to regulate demand. In this particular case they see rampant exploitation of our health system by people such as mums and dads, families and people with chronic health conditions who return time and again to their doctor or to emergency departments. It is not surprising that this simplistic, crass response from the Liberal governments is to simply impose a price—a price that is meant to deter people in Western Australia from seeking the health care they need.

The Premier went on further to say that not only does he support a GP co-payment, but also that if a GP co-payment were to be brought in, he would like to see it extended to emergency departments in hospitals to stop people going to emergency departments for treatment of ailments that he quite frankly believes they do not deserve and do not need. As a result of that, he confirmed that the state government would consider a fee for emergency wards if GP co-payments resulted in patients flocking to public hospitals for treatment, as experts believe they will. It is true that the Grattan Institute estimates that there will be a five per cent increase in demand in emergency departments as a result of the Abbott government's GP co-payment system. We saw the Premier in full flight seeking to impose a charge on families and people who seek assistance in emergency departments, and not surprisingly we saw that declaration condemned—condemned by us on this side, condemned by the health system and condemned by health stakeholders.

The Australian Medical Association's Dave Mountain, who we know is an emergency department physician or consultant of many years' experience, said the idea was not practical or feasible. He said —

“We don't think it will collect enough money to cover its costs,” he said.

“We think it would be the wrong thing to do for patients, and really we're just covering for a federal government that's got a bad policy.”

It is a bad policy. It is a bad policy because it means that people will either cancel or delay going to a doctor when we actually want them to get there as soon as possible. We do not want someone with a child displaying symptoms of a high temperature second-guessing whether or not they should take that child to an emergency department. We do not want someone with a pain down their left side or a headache wondering whether or not they should go to an emergency department, which might be because they are wondering whether or not they can afford the fee. They might be just thinking, “Do I need to go, because I know the government doesn't want me to go there unnecessarily?” This is the issue that doctors have been fighting for many years. If people feel they need to go to a doctor, they should go to a doctor. If they feel they should get medical attention, there should be nothing stopping them from getting medical attention, because medical services should be on the basis of their health, not their wealth.

We can understand the anxiety that this measure will give to doctors and nurses working on the front line now in emergency departments. Remember, this is a very difficult environment to work in—there is a lot of tension in the room, there is noise, people are distressed and family relatives are distressed on behalf of the patient. We can

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understand that the last conversation they would want is, “I’m not sure that you really need to be here and I think I might charge you.”

Let us take this scenario. Someone presents to an emergency department with a headache. The triage nurse has to decide whether or not the headache is particularly bad. Let us say that the triage nurse thinks that the chap should probably be checked out anyway. The triage nurse puts that person into the process to be seen by a clinician or a consultant. They run some tests on the chap. It might be that he has an underlying health condition that is indeed very serious, in which case we are glad that person went to the doctor at the first sign of this headache. But what should we conclude if this chap just had a headache? Do we conclude that the doctor is then going to turn around and say, “By the way, your condition is not serious enough, can you give us \$7.50” or maybe more? Are we seriously contemplating having doctors and nurses standing behind cash registers wondering whether or not they should be charging a patient when they present to an ED?

Let us look at the AMA’s code of ethics. Key to that code of ethics is the line —

Consider first the well-being of your patient.

That is what the Minister for Health, a doctor himself, would have been brought up to believe in his medical training. That is what the member for Eyre would have uppermost in his mind when a patient presents to him: consider first the wellbeing of your patient—not consider first the wallet of your patient! That is essentially what we are talking about here, because we are actually asking doctors and nurses to be tax collectors for the Abbott and Barnett governments. We will oppose this measure. We will oppose this measure today and we will oppose it tomorrow. We will campaign on this issue because it is a very important principle that the Labor Party holds very dear.

According to my notes, on 11 May the federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bill Shorten, said —

“There are many conditions which people have. It could be parents taking their children to the doctor for chronic asthma. It could be people battling with diabetes. It could be older Australians dealing with osteoporosis ... if Australians have got to pay an extra tax to go to the doctor, sick people and people caring for sick people will defer going to the doctor because of the cost of living impact and that won’t save the Australian taxpayer a single cent. In fact it will cost them because what will happen is sick people will defer going to the doctor in Australia until they are sicker and that will mean a greater cost for all Australians down the road.

In Australia, the quality of your healthcare should not depend upon your credit card but your Medicare card. You should go to the doctor if you are sick and you should not avoid going to the doctor because you are poor. Universal Medicare is one of the things which distinguishes Australia from America. Many Australians ... are concerned that Tony Abbott is taking our healthcare system down the path of the class American healthcare system where how much money you have determines what sort of healthcare you get. And Labor believes fundamentally that Australians should go to the doctor not because they’ve got money in their pocket, but because they need the best attention they can get when they are sick.”

That sums up very clearly where we stand on this issue.

There is irony in a Prime Minister who wants to give wealthy people \$50 000 to have a baby while making health care more expensive. Before the election, Tony Abbott promised to protect Medicare. He said there would be no cuts to health. Clearly, as the member for Victoria Park has observed today, Tony Abbott has learnt a lot from the Premier of Western Australia: he can say anything before the election, and then repudiate it and do what he likes after the election. The Barnett government has broken faith with the people of Western Australia and the Abbott government has broken faith with the people of Australia. On the other side of the chamber, we hear this constant clamour from the Tories that health spending is out of control and is unsustainable because seven per cent of Australia’s gross domestic product is now spent on health care. The truth is that in the United States, which has a shambolic, diabolic, inequitable and unjust health system, 17 per cent of GDP is spent on health services. Australia does not have an unsustainable situation in which health expenditure is running out of control. In Australia, we have governments that are failing to respond to the needs of the healthcare system because they are trying to restrict the growth of public funding to that system. It is not good enough for government to say that it has only to put some price mechanisms in place; it has to manage the health system and to look at other ways of managing these costs. Government has a range of things available to it to do that. The previous federal Labor government was making those reforms happen. For instance, the Abbott government can look at task substitution. Do we need doctors performing a task that perhaps nurses can perform?

[Member’s time extended.]

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Mr R.H. COOK: Can some primary health services be provided by a chemist, rather than having patients sitting in a doctor's waiting room? Can the government look at a health-plan approach rather than a transactional approach in a doctor's surgery? Can the government look at health services beyond hospitals and providing integrated health services that provide primary health care in a different setting and make going to a doctor a much more attractive proposition than going to a hospital emergency department? Can the government look at clinical design—integrating patients, nurses and other health stakeholders into the design and co-production of these health services? The government can question the medical model. I am sure the member for Eyre will reluctantly tell us that doctors do not always have all the answers in health care. The government should talk to other allied health care providers, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, nurse practitioners and a range of other people who should be involved in the health care process. They are the hard yards a government has to put into health policy to get control of the health system, and not simply to implement crass market mechanisms to control demand.

The president of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Steven Hambleton, in the March issue of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, states —

The price of medical services is not where the problem lies, and it is not where the focus of the federal government should be.

The drivers of health cost lie in the volume of services—specifically, those related to the growth in non-communicable diseases—and demand this places on the health system.

He goes on to observe —

On the world stage, Australia's health system delivers an enviable service.

He continues —

While mortality from heart attacks decreased from 14 443 in 2001 to 9 811 in 2011, more Australians are now living with coronary heart disease and the disability that follows an attack.

Dr Steven Hambleton echoes the concerns of Mr Bill Shorten when he says —

It is far cheaper if we can prevent people developing such disease in the first place.

We do not want to stop people going to their doctor. That is exactly the thing we want them to do, because if they go to their doctor, we can arrest the advancement of their heart disease or address the development of their diabetes. We are facing a tsunami of diabetes diagnoses in our community. We know that when Fiona Stanley Hospital opens its doors on day one, 165 of the 450-odd beds in that hospital will be taken up with patients with diabetes. Do we want these patients to defer their visit to their doctor? No! We want them to be actively engaged with their doctor so their condition can be treated and they do not have to be in hospital in the first place so they are not a drain on our health system. This is simply health policy 101. It is a test for the Barnett government to understand the very basics of health policy, which we thought a doctor, being the Minister for Health, would have some idea of. Clearly there is a kernel of understanding there, because the Minister for Health says, "I am a little uncomfortable with this measure." The minister does not want to be seen to criticise his Premier or the Abbott government's proposal for a tax in our hospitals. He says that he is a little uncomfortable. I have to tell the minister that the opposition is very uncomfortable about this measure. What would we do if we were in the minister's place? We would say that this was an important principle of government institutions and an important part of Australian society. We want the health minister to say that this is important to him as a doctor. We want the minister to stand up to Canberra and not simply say, "I'm a little uncomfortable." We want the minister to yell from the rooftops that he opposes this measure.

There are other ways to manage the health system to respond to what members opposite see is needed to rein in health expenditure, and it is simply not by a crass market mechanism. This is a challenge for the Premier. It is time for the Premier, in his rhetoric about standing up to Canberra, to be real. It is time that the Minister for Health, for a change, stands up to his Premier and protects the health system. It is time for the minister, who the other day was talking long and loud about the size of his cahoonas when he talked about his vasectomy, to put his money where his mouth is and to show us how big they are and take the fight up to Canberra! However, what we see from this Minister for Health is a meek, pathetic response. We would have expected from this minister, particularly being a doctor who has taken the Hippocratic oath to do no harm and to put the patient's wellbeing before all other considerations, to stand up for universal health care, for free health care, and not promote a policy that says the government is more interested in the size of a patient's wallet than their health needs, and to defend our health system. We have had other health ministers who have been capable of doing this. Why is this minister not doing this? It is a weak response to the Abbott government. It is clear that this health minister is

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simply not able to come up with the detailed response we need to keep our health system free for everyone who needs it.

We have also seen a raft of capital works taken out of the health budget. Time and again capital works were deferred in the Liberal–National government’s budgets, but it has now essentially given up on them. One very important capital works project the government has given up on is the Royal Perth Hospital redevelopment. This government was elected on the promise that it would save and redevelop Royal Perth Hospital, and I dare say the Acting Speaker (Mr I.M. Britza) campaigned hard for that in his electorate.

Mr D.J. Kelly: All there is is an asset sale on a block of flats!

Mr R.H. COOK: As the member for Bassendean said, now all we have from the government is an acceptance that it will no longer redevelop the hospital and the Treasurer sharpening his teeth prior to getting hold of the assets that surround that hospital. We have seen the development of Royal Perth Hospital being put off time and again in this budget. We know that the minister failed to pass any legislation to protect it but we also now know that he failed to redevelop that hospital. In May 2012 I asked the Premier what was going on with the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. I am sure you were wondering too, Mr Acting Speaker. He was so pleased with this promise at the election. The Minister for Health said —

The other thing we made very clear is that we would put \$20 million in the budget towards developing plans, and in our second term of government we would address what we would do with that hospital. I made it quite clear that my preference was for a new west wing; nevertheless, whatever the outcome, that would be in our second term of government.

I know you would be most concerned, Mr Acting Speaker, to learn that money for the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital is nowhere in this year’s budget. The government had \$180 million hanging around in the forward estimates like flotsam and jetsam, flowing backwards and forwards with the tide of budgets as they came and went, but it is no longer even bothering to put it in the forward estimates. We can only conclude that those people in the electorates of Perth, Mount Lawley and Morley were lied to by the Liberal Party because clearly this government never intended to implement that policy. It said that it would introduce legislation. Lord knows, it did that, but then it let it lapse off the notice paper three times until it was simply lost to the four winds of the election, only to be reinstated by us on this side.

When you go back to your electorate, Mr Acting Speaker, you can report to your constituents that the Labor Party is saving Royal Perth Hospital. The Minister for Health was very happy to let the community believe that the hospital would be redeveloped in its first term of government but then said it would be a commitment in its second term. That commitment is now dead. We put the final lie in the coffin of the Royal Perth Hospital saga. The community was betrayed, the hospital was betrayed and the hospital workers were betrayed by this government, which never had any intention to redevelop that hospital. Now we see the full glare of that lie in the budget papers, along with \$330 million worth of other capital works that have been cancelled or delayed, including over \$75 million worth of works that are already in progress that have now been chopped out. We have lost the redevelopment of Osborne Park Hospital, which we will pursue further in estimates. We have lost the redevelopment of stage 1 of Joondalup hospital and we have lost other works right across the portfolio, which has now been decimated for one reason—because the government stuffed up the information and communications technology of Fiona Stanley Hospital.

This budget is a disgrace when it comes to health. The biggest disgrace is the betrayal of Western Australians about Royal Perth Hospital and the principle of free universal health care in Western Australia.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [4.25 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to talk about the budget bills—the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014—and how the budget affects not only the overall community, but also my community, the City of Albany and the surrounding areas. When I look back at the time I have been in Parliament, I realise that the people who suffer the most seem to be our seniors. Maybe members on both sides of Parliament have seen this. The hit that they have received this time is just unbelievable. I can understand that our bills will naturally go up over a period of time but the seniors, young families and people in my electorate like me, who are a little older, are getting hit to pay for things being built in Perth. Some of my seniors cannot put the heater on at night or they turn the light off early because they cannot afford their next power bill, which has risen to pay for things like Elizabeth Quay and the football stadium, which will probably cost up to \$2 billion by the time it is built. The seniors and other people in my electorate probably will not even go to the stadium and will not come and look at Elizabeth Quay but they are the ones who are paying for it.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

The seniors in my area are pretty solid; they have had tough times. The woollen mills and the whaling station in Albany have closed. I have never seen a time when so many of my seniors stop me in the street and say that it is getting too hard to pay their bills and it is getting too hard to survive these days. They cannot go out, so they stay home. When they go to hospital, they will have to pay a co-payment for medical services. My seniors will not go. I have spoken to them before. I have had groups in my office and I talk to seniors groups every year. They say that they cannot afford to go to the doctor anymore. There is no bulk-billing in Albany. If my seniors go to the doctor, they have to pay full dollar and then they have to wait for the money to be reimbursed. This happens each fortnight, and most of them cannot afford it. They should not have to suffer. These people have set up the country for us. We have this mismanagement, especially by the state government. We have had a boom, and what have we got out of it? As I said to my son the other day, it is all right for me because by the time we have to find a way to pay the \$29 billion debt, I will probably not be working or having to pay as much tax as he will. I would not mind if we had a \$29 billion debt and the government had a way of paying it off but there is no way it can do that. There is nothing in the budget. The Treasurer and the Premier were asked about it today. When is this debt level going to stop? How will we get the level of debt down? I have known the Premier for 12 or 14 years. When I first got here, I used to think he was pretty good but obviously I was not listening to what he was saying. He used to get up and talk without any notes, and I used to think he was pretty smart. Now he gets up and talks without notes but I have a better knowledge of what goes on. He is rewriting history. He says what he wants to do and goes ahead and does it. He will retire well on his farm but all the members who are still here will suffer. The good members of Parliament who are still here will get knocked off at the next election because the Premier goes out spending—"Credit Card Col". He wants one thing as a legacy and another thing as a legacy but his legacy is that he will leave a \$29 billion debt for the people of the future—our children and our children's children.

I turn to the co-payment for people who go to hospital. The nurses at the hospital will know some of the people who come in. They will have to make a decision about who pays money and who does not. Imagine what anguish that will cause in a community the size of Albany. It will create chaos. A lot of the seniors in my area will not go to hospital because they are concerned that they might not come out. That has nothing to do with the hospital or anything like that; they just have this concern that if they go to hospital, they might not come out.

Let me move on to royalties for regions. I used to sit where the member for Southern River is sitting. I supported royalties for the regions. Some of my colleagues were disappointed because I said that it is a great bonus for people in the regions. I distinctly remember section 6 of the bill, which provided that 25 per cent of royalties would go to the regions. I have not seen anything come through this Parliament to provide that the percentage of royalties that should go to the regions should be reduced to 12.5 per cent, as it is now. What right has the Premier and the Leader of the National Party to say that they will change it and give the regions only 12.5 per cent? That money is needed for the seniors in my electorate who cannot turn on their power at night, the schools that are without proper teachers, and for the roads in Albany. I had to laugh when the Treasurer said that the money saved will go to where it is needed. It is needed in regional areas. The Treasurer should drive along Albany Highway and the South Coast Highway and on roads in the wheatbelt; the roads are terrible. I am sick of seeing in the newspaper the number of young people we are losing on the Collie Coalfields highway. In August before the last election, the Premier and the Leader of the National Party said the preparation for the gas pipeline was all done and that they were just about to sign the contract. They said that they had the company, the money was there and everything would go ahead. It is funny because looking at the budget now they are saying that they do not think the gas pipeline will be viable for private enterprise and that they will do a business plan.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: I applaud Hon Brendon Grylls for the work he did on royalties for regions, as I have said many times in the house, and the member has congratulated me on supporting royalties for regions. However, we are now in an unfortunate situation. I am sure the Minister for Corrective Services would remember the previous Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Terry Redman. When the member for Jandakot came into the job, he said that the prison system was in a terrible situation. Now Hon Terry Redman is leading the National Party. What was his first gig? What did he do? He halved royalties for regions. I think he has to have a bit of ticker and stand up. He used to be a member for the Liberal Party before he became a member of the National Party. If I were a member of the National Party or a supporter of Hon Terry Redman, I would be very, very wary, because when he is a minister he has a habit of stuffing up things. As Leader of the National Party the first gig he had was to take \$3 billion over four years away from the bush. Where will it go? The Treasurer said that there are better areas within which it could be spent. Let him come down to the bush and see all the issues with our ports, roads, schools, hospitals—everything. We need that money. I would like Hon Terry Redman to stand in Parliament

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with the Premier, his little sidekick, and say what right he has to take away \$3 billion that is ours. It is money for regional areas. It is just not good enough.

I have spoken about the gas pipeline and how it is the pipeline to nowhere. It is funny; we still have the picture up on the wall of the office with the double-trailer—I think it might have even been a triple-trailer—with the slogan “Liberal Party are the only people who can build the gas pipeline”. I think that means it ain’t gonna be built!

A female great white shark was captured and internally acoustically tagged in King George Sound off Mistaken Island, allowing it to be monitored for research over the next 10 years. It is a noteworthy achievement for the local Department of Fisheries, because at 5.3 metres in length and 1.6 tonnes in weight, it was the largest shark in Australia to have been caught and acoustically tagged.

Ms L.L. Baker: That was this year, wasn’t it?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, it was just recent. They turn it over, tickle it on its stomach and it goes to sleep.

Mr J.M. Francis: Rubbish!

Mr F.M. Logan: I heard it happens to someone from Busselton as well!

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They hook the tail and then they roll it on its back and rub its stomach to hypnotise it. Do not ask me to, members, because I am not going down to look!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Thank you, members! That is enough.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is enough one-liners. The shark was then recorded 20 separate times off Middleton Beach when a dead juvenile humpback whale was washed up near Emu Point. Although all sharks are carefully caught to be acoustically tagged for research and released, those in Perth and the south west are caught on drum lines and, if they survive being hooked or are under three metres in length, are tagged with plastic tags, such as those used on sheep, then released. I have spoken before on the need for more than one acoustic monitoring buoy along Middleton Beach and I have suggested that more be put at other popular beaches in Albany. If the Department of Fisheries is capturing and tagging sharks in our waters, we need more than one buoy to warn us of their presence. This huge shark has been embraced—I do not know about “embraced”—by the people of Albany and was named “Joan of Shark” after an online competition was run on local radio. However, like many community protest actions that have appeared on the fence surrounding the vacant former Esplanade Hotel site, “Joan of Shark” has become a protest figure against the government’s drum line policy. She has changed her name by deed poll to Bronwyn, calls Middleton Beach home, has started a Facebook page called “Bronwyn the Great White Shark” and is a frequent Twitter user!

This year’s Anzac Day dawn service on Mount Clarence was a great success, with around 3 000 people attending. The improvements to the Mount Clarence precinct by the City of Albany in preparation for the beginning of the Anzac Centenary commemorations in November were tested by the big crowd. It was seen as a practice run for what is expected to be the biggest dawn service next year. The project has transformed this important historical site. Works include entry statements on Marine Drive, Forts Road and Apex Drive; upgrades to the Avenue of Honour, the car park, the memorial approach steps and the Desert Mounted Corps Memorial and surrounds; and improvements to the Apex lookout signage and Padre White Lookout. The latest market research estimates that 48 000 people from Perth will visit Albany between 1 November and the Anzac Centenary commemorations. It also revealed that more than 16 000 locals will participate in one or more of the various events. Congratulations must go to the Returned and Services League president, Peter Aspinall, for the great work that the Albany RSL branch did to coordinate all the events on Anzac Day this year, and also to the City of Albany for its essential contribution to the smooth running of the events.

On 1 November this year we will commemorate 100 years since the first Australian and New Zealand troops left Australia for Gallipoli with the opening of the National Anzac Centre and a series of commemorative services. As part of these events, the Middleton Beach Group has been given the go-ahead by the Great Southern Anzac Commemoration Events Committee for a project as part of the Anzac Centenary commemorations in November. Called Poppies in the Sand, 30 000 red poppies will adorn the sand by Ellen Cove on Middleton Beach. The plastic poppies are being made by local community groups, including the Granny Grommets, retirement village residents, members of sewing groups, bridge players, students from local schools and inmates at the Albany Regional Prison. All the material for the poppies has been donated by local businesses. People from across the great southern are volunteering because many of them have a family connection to the war.

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Volunteers will set up Poppies in the Sand by Friday before the centenary and take it down at a community breakfast on the beach on the following Monday morning. The City of Albany is doing a lot of good work in a number of areas under the eye of new CEO Graham Forster and his senior management team. The leachate management works at the Hanrahan Road landfill site are on track to achieve the outcome of no leachate discharge from the site, which will be a great environmental outcome for the community.

A much-needed upgrade to the intersection of Frenchman Bay Road and Princess Avenue, which is the turn-off to the wind farm, is near completion and will improve safety and traffic flow by installing a right-turn pocket. The wind farm is positioned on the spectacular coastal cliffs overlooking the rugged south coast at Sandpatch, and is therefore one of Albany's most popular tourist destinations.

The beach area at Emu Point has seen serious erosion of the shoreline for decades. Despite several different attempts to stop it, and to protect the existing infrastructure near the beach, it has been an ongoing problem. The city, in conjunction with Albany Port Authority and the Department of Transport, has recently commenced a comprehensive two-year monitoring program of the shoreline that will gather data to provide essential information for future coastal planning for the area. This will include the collection of wave, wind and water currents data, along with the construction of two geotextile sand container groynes and sand renourishment works.

For the first time the city also has a bike plan and a bold vision to go with it, which states that the vision for the City of Albany is to become Australia's primary cycling destination—a cycling city where the community embraces the social, health, economic and environmental benefits provided by cycling.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: This vision is supported by the following five objectives: to develop and implement a bicycle network of safe, connected, accessible and well-maintained routes and facilities; to be a city where walking and cycling become an easy choice of travel for all trips up to five kilometres; to be a city that recognises and expands on the potential of cycle tourism; to be a city that attracts, supports and encourages cyclists of all types, ages, backgrounds and skill levels; and to build a bike-riding culture in the City of Albany so it is seen as a legitimate use of the road, with mutual respect between all users. Other longer-term projects as part of the bike plan include the completion of the Albany harbour's path to lower Kalgan in the north and Whale World in the south.

The town square project will provide a community meeting place and information hub, and a gathering space for learning and cultural engagement that will enable small-scale events to take place during the Anzac commemorations and beyond. It will be an open and level grassed and planted space with feature seating and wall elements, with integrated lighting, artwork and interpretation elements. It will be next to our historic town hall and will have easy access to the adjacent Alison Hartman Gardens and adjacent streets.

Stirling Terrace was once the main street of Albany and is one of the most significant heritage sites in Western Australia. It overlooks Princess Royal Harbour and has pedestrian access to and from the waterfront precinct, including the port, Albany Entertainment Centre and Anzac Peace Park. It is a showpiece for tourists, linking the precinct to the CBD. Improvements to Stirling Terrace will enable Anzac programming to be carried out, as well as facilitating further community activation of the place.

Congratulations must also go to Jo Taylor, the City of Albany events coordinator, and other staff from the city, as well as Trish Travers from Act-Belong-Commit, and all the volunteers who made the inaugural Vancouver Street Festival such a success. The festival was held on the historic Vancouver Street precinct and coincided with the Western Australian Heritage Festival. It was a unique and quirky mix of great music, art, and local food and wine that was enjoyed by 3 500 people on the day. A highlight was the Tweed Ride from the Albany Museum through surrounding streets to the festival site by cyclists dressed in tweed and riding an assortment of historical bikes. The ride was supported by the Western Australian Historical Cycle Club—Great Southern, and the Albany Triathlon Club, which supplied bike racking for the tweed riders. Local art was also on display in the Vancouver Arts Centre, which was displaying the Great Southern Art Award. It saw 800 people pass through its doors. The event was embraced by the residents of Vancouver Street and the Albany Historical Society, which researched the ownership and usage of the historic houses in the street and provided that information in front of those houses.

I now come to "fit boys become fab gents". Recent research from Cornell University and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology shows that if a person played a sport in high school, they will feel those benefits in their 70s. The research examined 712 men in their 70s and found that the best predictor of whether a person in their 70s would exercise regularly was if they had played a team or individual sport at school. The research also found

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that those who played sport as secondary school students also reported visiting their doctor fewer times a year than those who did not participate in a sport. The researchers have stated that these findings clearly show the long-term benefits of exercise and should be used to preserve and encourage participation in school-based sport.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: What about former Olympic competitors? How do they compare?

Mr P.B. WATSON: They break down very regularly as they get older!

Earlier research that was done also showed that children today are 15 per cent less fit than their parents were at the same age and have more body fat, except in the situation of the member for Mandurah!

Great Southern Grammar had great success at this year's ISWA State Interschool Equestrian Championships. Congratulations to the equestrian team members Sienna Bergersen, Bethany Rainbow, Adel Forrester, Kirra Putland, Lilly Barton, Bella Rae, and Satinka and Olivia Miller, who scooped the pool winning team reserve champion, secondary dressage school champion, secondary show horse school champion, rural school champion, and overall secondary school champion. Congratulations also to equestrian coaches Lynn Boon and Amanda Pritchard; equestrian coordinator, Belinda Van Helden; team manager, Glen Bergersen; and one-day event coordinator, Carol Bergersen. Individual award winners were Sienna Bergersen, champion rural rider and champion overall secondary rider; and Bethany Rainbow, "off the track" high points winner.

Albany basketball players Shaun Rost and Jonty Richardson were part of the under-18 men's team for WA Country, which also had Adrian Masters as assistant coach, at the Australian Junior Championships. Shaun had a fantastic series of games, scoring 123 points and grabbing 72 rebounds in his nine games, and was a key contributor to the team's two wins. Just remember that name, members—that boy will go a long way. Jonty had limited opportunities, but when he came off the bench, he made a valuable contribution in his role as a point guard, and will no doubt be better for the experience.

Albany Bowling Club finished a fantastic season by winning three out of the four league finals. Congratulations to Danny Jacobs, Terry Clarke, Jim Hunter and Bob Thrift, who won the fours. Congratulations also to Don King, Bill O'Meara and Arthur Becroft, who won the triples, and to Rick Rodgers for winning the singles title. It was indeed a big year for the club, with the men's first division finishing second, while the second division finished first and earned a promotion, and the third division team was runner-up. The ladies first division team also a winner.

In racing, local trainers Steve Wolfe and Paul Hunter tied to win the great southern trainer premiership, with Steve going into the last meet of the season leading by one win. With both trainers having wins on the day, it came down to the last race to break the deadlock, but neither of them managed to get the win needed.

In late 2011, local jockey Edward Creighton won the great southern jockey's premiership. Eddie moved from Ireland to Albany with his family to ride in the great southern. I had the opportunity to help get him here, so it was great to see him and his young family. But his life was set to be turned upside down after a season of racing when the Department of Training and Workforce Development removed jockeys from its list of occupations eligible for sponsorship. He had the choice of moving to Canberra if he wanted to stay in Australia and continue to ride, or going back to Ireland. Fortunately, with the help of his employer, Steve Wolfe, he was able to nominate as an eligible migrant to Skilled Migration Western Australia, and he is eligible for permanent residency.

The next thing is something that is close to my heart. When we had the Blaxell inquiry, one of the major recommendations of the inquiry, recommendation 2, called for the creation of a one-stop shop to manage reports from the public, including from children, concerning child abuse. A year after this promise was made, there has been no progress by the Western Australian government. The federal Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has announced that every day it still receives up to 40 reports of abuse.

A review of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People was handed down in May last year. One of the recommendations was to examine what amendments to the act are necessary to enable the Commissioner for Children and Young People to operate as a one-stop shop for any complaint concerning child abuse, regardless of the public sector agency that the matter relates to, as per recommendation 2 of the inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel. We put a lot of work into this, and so did Justice Blaxell. One of the most important things that came out of the inquiry was the recommendation for a one-stop shop. It is an absolute disgrace. The government and the Premier took all the accolades, but these sorts of things are still happening. Members should not think that because we have had the Blaxell inquiry, these things have stopped. It was a recommendation in a report that was released 12 months ago. It was in the report of the Blaxell inquiry. Two years later and not one thing has been done. It is an absolute disgrace. Young people are our future. They are the ones who cannot stand up for themselves. We heard at the Blaxell inquiry that they could not talk to anyone. It took them 20 years or

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30 years to say something. Now we have the opportunity to have a one-stop shop for people to go to, and the government has just ignored the recommendation. I think it is an absolute disgrace.

It is a shame that Hon Joe Francis is not in the chamber. Ross Fenwick, who is one of the fireys in my area, sent a letter to the Minister for Emergency Services on 13 April stating —

Good Morning Minister,

The Albany based water bombers are due to be withdrawn on Tuesday after an unsuccessful attempt by the local DFES office to extend the contract by 2 weeks.

I seek your support to extend the water bombing contract and retain the Albany based water bombers until the end of April.

I am concerned these water bombers are being withdrawn during a critical period ...

And it goes on. He never got a reply. Just before the water bombers were taken away, there was a fire at the back of our house. I happened to be home on that day and the water bombers flew continuously over my roof. I have some great photos. It is a bit hairy when a person looks over their back fence and sees big flames. If those water bombers had not been there, a lot of people in that area would not have a house.

I would like to congratulate all the volunteers this week. As part of National Volunteer Week, I will go to an afternoon tea and bowling party in Albany on Thursday. I will have to get the old bowls out.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Don't do that!

Mr P.B. WATSON: No, the bowls!

Several members interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Mr Acting Speaker, can I have some protection?

I have not had a chance to look at the budget yet, but for the past four years the state government has funded \$13 million for One Life roadshows in regional areas. It is partly funded by the CBH Group, with the West Australian Country Football League arranging the clinics. It is very important to address mental health issues in regional areas. People in the bush or on the farm think they are tough and do not need to see a doctor. These guys do a tremendous job in the community. I hope that money will be found for the next four years.

I congratulate the government for our new fire station. The minister made an announcement today about the passing lanes, but I am concerned that there are other issues. There are passing lanes on Chester Pass Road, but we have not had any money for the ring-road. The ring-road is a huge issue. Everyone who has driven into Albany will have seen the roundabout. It is very dangerous there, especially around school time, as people drive at a rate of knots.

Just before I conclude, I am chairman of the regional football development group in my area. The West Australian Football Commission is very concerned because it has a \$10 million debt hanging over its head. The commission asked the government for \$10 million but it was given only \$3 million. The commission is concerned that when all the new stuff happens at the new stadium, it will be left with this huge debt and nowhere for local football to be played. If the Eagles, the Dockers and the Premier think that a big stadium is good for grassroots football, they should look at the West Australian Amateur Football League; it has a large number of players. The biggest issue for all sports is a lack of ovals; there is a lack of sporting space. We have to get developers to put in parks when they develop new areas. Instead of a little rockery with a bit of water that people can walk around, we need areas where our kids can exercise and get healthy.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [4.55 pm]: I, too, rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014, otherwise known as the budget. I understand from the budget summary that this budget delivers to Western Australia state debt that is expected to blow out to nearly \$30 billion in the long term. Families will be slugged a massive \$1.1 billion in additional taxes and levies. This continues the previous assault on family budgets, and, unfortunately, we will see household bills soar. This is despite an increase in revenue of a very healthy 8.8 per cent in 2013–14. The problem is not what we earn; the problem is the government's spending exceeding what it earns. This year spending growth has been 9.1 per cent, and the long-term trend of average annual spending growth will be 10 per cent each year under this government. The only answer that the government has to its debt growing from \$3.6 billion in 2008 to \$25 billion in this budget is to sell the family jewels in our state assets.

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Electricity prices will rise by 4.4 per cent, water bills will rise by six per cent, public transport fees will rise by four per cent and car registration fees will rise to cover this government's spending. The landfill levy, which applies to every household, will rise; it will double. Incredibly, only 25 per cent of the extra revenue generated will go into initiatives to reduce or re-use waste. In addition, abolishing the concessions on vehicle registration fees for private use will result in a 62 per cent increase for vehicle owners. Coupled with the litany of fees and charges at the counter to use government services, this will leave all Western Australians understanding that the benefits of the years of growth have been wasted. Then there are the proposed federal measures that are about to be handed down in the federal budget. The member for Kwinana outlined very concisely the co-payments for visiting a doctor, which all members in this place should oppose. It leaves us to wonder why those who can least afford it in our community have to bear the brunt of paying for the excesses of others.

As was clearly stated in the Western Australian Council of Social Service "Cost of Living Report", in this period of restraint or, as some would say, austerity—I would argue that it is self-imposed through very poor management—the government needs to be mindful of those in hardship to avoid escalating the financial crisis of many in our community. Recently, at a conference I listened to a leading economist who remarked that there was little to show from the benefits of the boom in Western Australia. This gentleman, who lives in the eastern states, flew into Perth and drove into the CBD and he viewed wealth as something on display—something to see. It is a worry to me that we have to mark our wellbeing by the nature of our city scape and that those who hop off a plane, give a speech and return to their city of choice can make such a claim and be given credibility because they have status as an economic commentator. I understand that those who want to invest and grow jobs in WA want confidence in its capacity, but built structures are not a measure of community capability. A healthy, well-educated and safe Western Australia should be the measure. I fear that we have lost this perspective and have squandered our inheritance to a facade of success without delivery of it into all our neighbourhoods.

The backbone of Australia as the Lucky Country is the social contract that it ensures—through a set of policy objectives in the areas of health, education, housing and social services—that every Australian is able to have a basic but decent standard of living. I have always known that this is a continual fight to maintain. Of course, as a union advocate, I took up that fight but I never envisaged that it would be under such a sustained attack from the agenda of members of both the state and federal Liberal Party who lecture restraint by telling people to lower their expectations, while showing no restraint themselves.

People in our community who can least afford it have been hit by an increase in household bills—namely, electricity, water, sewerage and drainage, and public transport. At page 305 of the budget papers we see the quite significant increases in vehicle licences to \$63.08; electricity, \$62.88; water, sewerage and drainage, \$84; student public transport fares are up to \$52 and standard fares to \$39. All of these changes have come at a time when the community can least afford it. Since July 2013, there has been a 25 per cent increase in the demand for financial counselling services. Waiting lists have blown out from two weeks to four to six weeks, and no emergency appointments are available for financial counselling.

ShelterWA has reported an increase in the demand on homeless services, due primarily to an increase in homelessness. In fact, I have been dealing with a lady called Maria who is camping in bushland in Wanneroo. She is a grandmother of six primary school children. Her and her son are living out of three tents and use a camping stove for heating food that also serves as their only warmth. They do not want to make a fire because of the problems it will bring. The ranger has spoken to this woman and is leaving them alone at present. The children attend a local primary school in Balga, which means the family spends a considerable amount of money on petrol and other costs. It has now got to the point that I have sent emails to friends, families and all those who are on my contact lists to see whether I can get housing for someone who is homeless. That should not be the role of a member of Parliament. Our role is one of policy and of strategy, not dealing with the day-to-day aspects of homelessness. I have a memo from my office—for when we have Department of Housing matters—that states at the top, "No way to manage a department." "Mrs O" of Balga had maintenance difficulties with her bathroom that made it untenable for her to live in the premises, yet the only way to make sure that the issue was resolved in a timely manner was for her to contact her local member of Parliament. Again, managing a department through complaints to a local member of Parliament is no way to manage a department.

Overall, the cost of living has increased by \$2 000 per year, or 40.41 per cent, at the same time as the provision of government services in education and other cornerstone areas of civil society has decreased. The post-budget media release by Western Australian Council of Social Service states —

Increasing the cost of living allowance by 4.5% is not commensurate with offsetting a 4.5% increase in electricity prices, let alone additional increases in water, transport, and other fees and charges. In reality it means concessions rise by \$9 but household fees and charges rise by \$324—Households on low and fixed incomes cannot afford to be another \$315 worse off each year.

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... the Council is worried about the 80,000 families with children at risk, and the 120,000 households struggling to pay their bills—we are concerned for the 250,000 households in WA living on fixed low incomes.

... these price rises not only break faith with the Western Australian community by failing to keep costs under CPI, they also render more families in the position where their living costs continue to rise beyond their means.

I think that is a real cry for assistance and of crisis from WACOSS. For the people of Mirrabooka, the insult is amplified by a government that pays lip-service to its commitment in the 2013 election to provide light rail to the area. This constant wishful thinking by the government that it is still committed to MAX serves only the property speculators in the area who push up prices in the foolish belief that the government has the capacity to deliver. We have seen property speculators come into the area and buy properties, making it unaffordable for people who need to live in the area. Speculators believe that this government has the capacity to deliver because of its wishful thinking, but it does not have the capacity to deliver light rail; it has a mounting debt. The government needs to be honest with the people of Mirrabooka about its intentions because all it is doing is making housing less affordable for those who need it most.

Indeed, the WACOSS post-budget comments also note the increase in public housing rentals. The government introduced on average a \$624 per year increase to public housing rents for tenants, many of whom rely on income support payments that have not increased over the past decade. For these households, the budget impact is closer to an additional \$950 per year to their cost of living. As I understand, this information was provided in response to a question that was asked during the lock-up for the budget when the Treasurer released his budget speech and budget paper No 1. The third dot point on page 11 states that \$26 million for the installation of electrical safety devices in all public housing properties owned by the Department of Housing is to be funded from increased rents over the forward estimates. To be funded from increased rents—that is outrageous! It is the responsibility of homeowners to ensure the safety, including the electrical safety, of tenants. This government is saying, “To ensure your own safety for a property that we own, we’re going to get you to pay for it by increasing your rents.” That is through the gradual incline of up to 25 per cent of people’s income for people who can barely already afford the rents they are paying. The increase in rent is so that the government can meet its commitment to tenants which was made by the previous Labor government and which allocated \$7.6 million to install residual-current devices into houses. Why are we still waiting for that to occur in 2014? This is the responsibility of a property owner; it is not the responsibility of tenants. It is unbelievable that those in our community who can least afford it are expected to pay for the excesses of this government. Despite the increase in public housing rents, including in the increased income received to offset the increased costs in energy that was received from the federal government—that is now included in the percentage of rental income—those battling in the private rental market are in even greater need of public housing because of the cost of rental properties, even though that has not occurred in other states but is occurring only here. The median rental price in Perth is \$475 per week, which is an increase of 10.5 per cent on last year, and the vacancy rate is 3.4 per cent.

In the North Metropolitan Region alone—that is the Mirrabooka area—the total number of applicants on the Department of Housing’s waiting list is 8 042. The 2011 census recorded 9 594 homeless people in WA. That includes people living in severely overcrowded conditions, but not those marginally housed, including living in overcrowded conditions. The previous census noted “severely overcrowded” versus just “overcrowded” caravan parks and impoverished dwellings, such as tents and boarding houses.

Although many in Western Australia enjoyed the benefits of the boom, it is clear that many missed out as Australia shifted from a society that prided itself on equity to one in which the recent Gini coefficient, which is the measure of income inequality, ranked Australia as the eleventh most unequal society. The index increased from 0.27 in 1981–82 to 0.328 in 2009–10. Basically, it means that the rich are becoming richer with the top 20 per cent of income earners receiving over 40 per cent of total household income.

The report by Curtin University’s Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre titled “Sharing the Boom” established that 65 per cent of extra wealth created in WA by the boom went to the wealthiest 20 per cent of households. Alan Duncan, the director of the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, illustrated that the increase in the middle class in WA has seen it stretched away from the bottom 10 per cent of households. He says —

“Low income households access most of their income from government benefits, so the rate of their progress is tied more to those benefits rather than the local labour markets which have accelerated at a much higher rate.”

This gap between rich and poor has implications for us as policymakers, as it is an indicator of the wellbeing of our society, be it health, education or community safety. As Martin Laverty, chief executive officer of Catholic

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Health Australia, said in a submission to a Senate enquiry in June 2010, on the social determinants of health, those factors that include housing, income, educational level, family support and supports at times of personal crisis in a person's life, can have more bearing on a person's health outcomes than access to a health system.

One of the most pressing health issues that faces Australia is the rate of obesity, which has now increased in Australia to the second highest for males and the fifth highest for females in countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. This is underpinned by the relationship between socio-economic status and obesity, such that people who live in disadvantaged areas are more likely to be obese than are the less disadvantaged. This is a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation because those struggling financially will find that the high cost of housing forces them into built environments that do not cater for activity and do not have good transport infrastructure. Susan Thompson, associate professor at the University of New South Wales, points out in a recent article for *The Conversation* that where it is easier to get around on foot or on a bike and not in a car, people are healthier, but real estate in those areas is more expensive. In addition, she says that for a neighbourhood to support physical activity, it also needs to be perceived as safe, pleasant and reliant on infrastructure for bicycle paths, shade, lighting at night and attractions. This government has indicated some commitment for bicycle paths, but I am not sure whether it has made the delivery—certainly not in the area of Mirrabooka, although I commend the government for the bicycle path built alongside Reid Highway. However, it frequently crosses very dangerous roads, so it does not allow for safe or convenient riding.

The electorate of Mirrabooka consists of constituents earning varying incomes. The median family income is \$1 281 a week and is significantly less than the WA median of \$1 722, and has an unemployment rate of 6.3 per cent, which is two per cent higher than the Perth average. However, the lower socioeconomic status does not undermine the aspirations of the community. The myth that poverty is self-afflicted due to bad choices is simply wrong. Disadvantage and low socioeconomic status is about lack of opportunities and structural disadvantage. It is obvious that the government does not want to know about those matters because it is trying to limit the capacity of the well-respected and recognised Equal Opportunity Commission to raise issues such as substantive inequity in housing delivery or aspects of our community. Instead, in this budget, the government has again sheared the bone of an already bare organisation. In 2011–12 and 2012–13, the Equal Opportunity Commission required close to \$4 million to operate, which is very little in a budget the size of the Western Australian budget.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The commission again received an allocation of around the \$4 million mark in the 2013–14 budget, but the actual cost was over \$5 million due to paying out the workers and the commissioner when the government got rid of the substantive equity unit and discontinued the commissioner's contract. She would have received payments and entitlements. There has been an acting commissioner ever since the former commissioner's contract was not renewed. What really concerns me is that in future years the organisation is expected to operate on a budget of \$3.5 million and \$3 million in 2015–16. An organisation that has operated on a shoestring budget is now expected to operate on even less, yet it is one of the cornerstones by which lack of opportunity and structural disadvantage can be raised in a policy setting such as ours and commented on—reminding us all of the issues, as the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity reports directly to Parliament. In addition to lack of funding for its operation, the uncertainty because of the review of the equal opportunity commissioner bodes badly for those who want to ensure structural disadvantage is dealt with in our community.

The results of the downturn in the economy are having a harsh effect on employment in the seat of Mirrabooka. In the last month, a number of professionals have come to the Mirrabooka electorate office for assistance. A young geologist, who came over here as a 457 worker from Iran, has worked for a number of years and has been granted permanent residency. All was going well for her until she was made redundant, but because she has not had permanent residency for two years, despite the fact that she contributed for many years in Western Australia, she is not entitled to any Centrelink benefits. She is not entitled to any income benefits. This young, well-educated woman, who wants to make a great contribution in Western Australia and who has applied for numerous jobs, is finding it impossible to get employment in the mining industry. Her situation is a good example of what is happening to people in the community.

An information technology specialist, a father of a child at one of the schools in my electorate, who was working in the oil and gas industry also has been made redundant. Despite sending out around 30 applications and despite his years of experience and a number of recommendations, he has not been able to find work. The work is not there. There is also Mr Morsal of southern Sudanese heritage who came with his family to Australia to escape war. In South Sudan he was a teacher. Since being in Australia he has retrained to become an education assistant to use his skills and education from his home country. Of course, he worked as an education assistant, but as a casual there is no work for him in the Department of Education. Now he is seeking to become a bus driver. Each

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week he finds it a struggle to make ends meet. He lives in private accommodation that is expensive and if he complains about maintenance, he is threatened with eviction. Mr Morsal did not make bad decisions; he made the right decisions to retrain but the opportunities afforded others have not yet been afforded him.

It is clear that migration has been a foundation of economic progress in WA and Australia generally, and, therefore, it is imperative that this government not restrict opportunities through increased TAFE fees and the like, but supports those in the community whose only desire is to make a better life for themselves and their families and to contribute to Australian society. The worst of the bad choices myth is that of those seeking asylum on our shores. Asylum seekers currently living in the community on bridging visas, of whom there is a substantial number, have no right to work, and they receive minimal financial support. They are shrouded in uncertainty due to lengthy delays in their visa processing. Imagine sitting at home with no right to work, no right to do anything that contributes to our future, no right to go into education, and no right to attain the future we have been seeking and risked our lives for. How can someone fleeing for their life, who has been accepted as a refugee, be faced with a process that further damages their opportunities and their future?

The issue of poverty and low income in our society is now represented as one of risk. People are dismissed as individuals and families who think they are entitled, with announcements that the age of entitlement is over. People on low incomes do not believe they are entitled; they are contributors and citizens who need structures that are responsive. When governments label those in poverty as criminals, addicts, jobless, pensioners or refugees, intimating that people choose these paths, it excuses government from building a community that is for everyone and it deflects from the real issue of an economy that undermines stable and reliable ongoing employment with government funding that prioritises policies that benefit the community.

Let us look at something as simple as car registrations, which will increase by 62 per cent through the removal of the discount for private vehicles, and that will cost people another \$36. People might say that \$36 is not significant, but that is not the experience of the community in Mirrabooka. Uniting Aid in Westminster deals with clients who frequently cannot pay their car registration because of their low incomes. Some of them are the working poor, and if they do not pay their car registration, they cannot go to work. Therefore, that cycle of unemployment and low income kicks in. When I was there recently, I was invited to sit with a gentleman who was battling to get through on the phone to pay his registration by credit card. He could pay for only three months, and a three-monthly payment could only be made by credit card and he was unable to get the \$36 discount. In fact, low-income people were caught by having to pay by credit card; they could not pay in person. Many of them did not have a credit card, and they were not getting the discount. Many of them made life choices about shifting funding, and the financial adviser showed me how they do that so that they could get that \$36 discount by paying the six-monthly fee. I put it to the government—I know the Minister for Transport is not here—that if it is going to get rid of the private vehicle subsidy then it absolutely has to allow for people to pay for three months' registration in a licensing centre. There is no longer a reason that that cannot happen.

The anxiety over secure employment and the proliferation of casual and contract work creates social anxiety, and nothing fuels social anxiety more than fear. This government capitalises on difference and fear through pursuing a “law and order” mantra of punishment that fails to see safety in our community. Actually, quite the opposite has occurred, as has been previously illustrated in this house. Despite this government's bravado and spin, people feel less safe in their communities and disconnected from those who are charged with their safety. It is commonplace in our electorate offices to have constituents complain about response times or a lack of response from police to the extent that many have simply stopped reporting issues to police. There is no greater example of this than the recent situation where a family had to wait for—I ask the member for Warnbro—I understand, four hours —

Mr P. Papalia: Yes, that is correct.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Four hours for the police to respond to a kidnap attempt on their child. Yet this government, while parroting its faith in and commitment to police, has established a wages policy that will lead to industrial disputes and a community that suffers. In this environment of government spin and no substance it is pleasing to work with the local constabulary, with whom I enjoy a very good relationship, and I am again grateful for their assistance in meeting constituents' concerns.

I am especially pleased to see that the police and community youth centres continue to fund the LivAlive program—which I have raised in this house—that ensures that intensive social work support is provided to kids at risk. The result of this has been a significant decrease in at-risk youth offending. I believe it is a project that is worthy of being implemented across all suburbs and police areas. This program is beneficial to all in the community in my area as it ensures that the west metro youth crime intervention officer can undertake his role with professional assistance that results in changes to kid's lives and the lives of people those kids would impact.

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I previously spoke about the economic benefits of migration. There is no greater economic benefit to the Australian economy than the participation of women in the workforce. Yet, Western Australia still suffers from the disgraceful situation of having the largest gender pay gap in Australia of 24 per cent, whereas the Australian average is 17 per cent. I recognise that this figure has improved since the low of 27 per cent in November 2013. This improvement is no thanks to this government but to the social services federal equal pay case which saw the community services sector recognised for its contribution to the community. This government's policy of privatising services such as disability accommodation services and other areas will do nothing to address the pay inequality in Western Australia.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency states —

The gender pay gap in the public sector is considerably smaller than in the private sector. In November 2013, the private sector gender pay gap was 20.2% ... compared with 13.1% in the public sector.

...

For example, the main method of setting pay in the private sector was individual arrangement (47.2%), while the main method of setting pay in the public sector was collective agreement (89.8%).

This government does not care about the wellbeing of women in the WA community. If it did, it would ensure that its ideologically-driven privatisation and the contracting-out campaign would not be at the cost of wages and it would ensure that any contract it takes with a private provider will have wages set at public sector rates or above.

I now talk about waste and the local government levy. I have talked about this before, in the house last Thursday and again today. The Minister for Environment got up in this place and lauded himself for his great work in this particular area. He said that after doing a lot of work in the waste area, it has been a big issue with a huge number of hits on Channel Seven's Facebook page, then he went on to say —

This state significantly lags behind other mainland states in resource recovery rates. The latest national tables that I have seen have us at around mid-30 per cent, whereas many states are performing at well over 50 per cent or higher in the current recycling rates. A key to higher recycling rates in Western Australia is source separation—that is what this program is all about—and consistency in bin systems across the metropolitan area.

Yet, he has no concern about what is happening in the City of Stirling at present. Since the closure of the Atlas Disposal waste centre—where one bin was taken and sorted so that the council could say it was recycling with up to 80 per cent recycling rates—the City of Stirling is throwing all of its waste into landfill and the minister does not care one bit. This has been happening since July 2013.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: No, they did not have that system. The change came out only because someone had thrown away something that they wanted to find again and believed it would have been recycled. The City of Stirling had to confess and say, "Actually, we are not recycling anything. It is going into landfill." Yet, in an answer to a question that I asked the minister in the other house, he did not care less about that. He said that he was happy because they were picking up stuff from the side of the streets. The minister needs to do something about that if he is so concerned about it. He also needs to be really concerned that in the City of Stirling's survey to the community about this, the question was, "Do you want to pay more to recycle or would you like us to throw the rest away and then you will pay the same rates?" I have to say, what a loaded question! People will always vote with their hip pocket especially when their hip pocket is severely under pressure from this government. They will always vote in favour of saving and say, "I'll just keep throwing everything into the general waste instead of paying the additional costs." Those are the questions that I put to the minister. Was he concerned about the question? Was he concerned that this was happening? Not one bit, but he was happy to stand up in this place and laud himself for what a great job he is doing on waste. He was happy to stand up in here and tell us all how good he is doing because he will be bringing in a three-bin system.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [5.26 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill. In reply to a question from the member for West Swan today, the Treasurer said that we need to look at the history before we can move forward. I would like to spend the considerable part of my contribution looking at the history of the Barnett government as it has squandered the biggest economic boom in this nation's history or, as Joe Spagnolo, who I believe has been in the news in recent times, titled his *The Sunday Times* story "Barnett's lost legacy".

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There has been no other leader in this state or nation who has come to power at the beginning of such good times. When the member for Cottesloe was elected as Premier in September 2008, it coincided with, that very month, the beginning of an unprecedented boom in demand from China for our iron ore. That was followed in more recent years by a demand from north Asia for our liquefied natural gas. This was the catalyst for some of the biggest resource infrastructure development in the history of Australia since Federation. One would think that this unprecedented boom would be manna from heaven as the coffers overflowed with royalties and tax revenue, particularly payroll tax. Unfortunately, the legacy of the Barnett government, since its election, has not been good.

In 2007–08—the year of the change of government—royalty collections from iron ore, which comprise about 91 per cent of state royalties, as measured in current dollars, accounted for \$1.32 billion. In the current financial year, they are estimated to be \$5.52 billion. Payroll tax, in real terms—stripping away inflation—has increased by an astonishing 65 per cent to \$3.6 billion over the course of this government. Insurance duties have risen by 48 per cent, vehicle licensing by 42 per cent and land taxes by 34 per cent. We hear that goods and services tax revenue has dropped by \$1.3 billion from 2007–08 to 2014–15. That may be true, but what we do not hear is that overall government revenue over the same period has risen by \$9.3 billion. GST revenue may have decreased by \$1.3 billion but overall government revenue during the period from 2007–08 to 2014–15 has risen by \$9.3 billion. One would think that with an increase of \$9.3 billion in government revenue that Western Australians would justifiably expect to receive a benefit from this once-in-a-lifetime boom. Unfortunately, from the election of the Barnett government in 2008 until now, a tale of two states or two communities has emerged. Unfortunately, the community I represent and, I imagine, the communities represented by the members for Warnbro, Cockburn and Kwinana have not benefited from this boom to a large degree. For instance, unemployment in Kwinana has nearly doubled in the lifetime of this government from 6.3 per cent to 11.9 per cent. During that same period, youth unemployment across the south west corridor has never dropped below 20 per cent.

In the lead-up to the 2013 election, the forgotten people—those who live in my electorate and in the outlying electorates of Mandurah, Wanneroo, Rockingham, Kwinana, Cockburn, Swan, Gosnells and Serpentine–Jarrahdale—were asking for a fair go on spending in their communities. The CEOs of the local government authorities that represent those outlying regions of the metropolitan area were asking for an increase in spending on infrastructure and services by the Barnett government; after all, one in five Western Australians live in the outer metropolitan area, and eight in 10 new Perth residents will make their homes in those regions by 2026. A per capita review of government allocations to Perth local government authorities shows that they are funded at a rate that is less than half of the rate of funding for the western suburbs. Therefore, the outlying metropolitan region local government areas are funded by the Barnett government at a rate of less than half of the rate of funding the western suburbs receive.

Of course the mining boom has directly benefited some individuals. Many people who work in the mining industry are receiving good incomes. The companies in the resources industry are doing well and are benefiting from the industry. However, many other people not in the resources industry or not directly related to the resources industry have not been receiving great pay rises and massive bonuses, but they still have to cope with the increase in the cost of living. As we know, with the boom has come a massive cost-of-living increase in utilities, housing and other costs. WA families, up until the budget last Thursday, had already been slugged nearly 70 per cent more for power since the member for Cottesloe became the Premier in 2008. We also know, from the measures announced last Thursday by the Treasurer in the budget for the forthcoming year, that households will be slugged a further \$74 a year for electricity, despite a 2013 election promise by the Premier to keep power bills in line with inflation—another broken promise! Meanwhile, in the same period, water charges will have increased by 90 per cent.

The problem is that the pain keeps on increasing for the average householder, but the economic boom is diminishing. In 2014–15 the average household will be hit by an extra \$420 in government fees and charges. I imagine that members opposite have received the flood of emails that I have received, which was coordinated by an RAC campaign, about their concern at the increase in not only transport charges but also basic government fees and charges. If members opposite have not received them, I think they would be concerned to read the content of those emails.

Water charges will rise by six per cent as a result of this budget, public transport by almost five per cent and motor vehicle registration by three per cent. If we isolate each charge, members might say it is not much. But when we add it all up, it is significant—a \$420 increase in household charges for families and related charges such as public transport et cetera. The government has failed to peg back to the consumer price index not only its electricity rates, but also most other charges and fees.

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Of course the boom, as I stated previously, has benefited some companies related to the resources industry. However, other whole industries have been gutted by the side effects of the resources boom. If an industry has not been one of the anointed few to directly or indirectly benefit from the resources boom, this government has left it to fend for itself. Members may say that is the market working. It may be the market working but those companies employ people and if those people lose their jobs, the consequences for the state and for the government are enormous. In 2009 our Premier promised that projects such as Gorgon would fill Western Australian workshops for years.

Mr F.M. Logan: Ha!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Exactly, member for Cockburn!

Rather, workshops have been empty. Manufacturing in Western Australia has actually diminished at a greater rate than anywhere in Australia, including Victoria. We were told by the Barnett government that local content regulations for materials such as fabricated steel would risk these resource projects. Ironically, one of the companies that aligned itself with the Premier's statement was Chevron, which asserted that Western Australian firms could never be competitive. Chevron said as much about a project it had with other partners in Canada, the Hebron offshore oilfield, to the point that it actually walked away from the project in 2006. However, funnily enough, it returned a year later to agree to local content requirements; \$14 billion will be invested in projects in 2017 of which 65 per cent will stay in the provincial economies of a number of provinces in Canada. Companies may moan and whinge and they may be upset that their profits will be diminished, but if there is still a substantial profit to be had, they will return. The Premier should have stood up for the jobs in Western Australian manufacturing and he should have agreed to some of the measures that were proposed by the Labor opposition in the last term of Parliament, which were very sensible, minor measures that would not have created a great burden on companies.

The tourism industry in Western Australia has been severely affected. Of course the government cannot be blamed for the rise in the dollar—I am sure we will try to blame it on the government!—which has had a significant effect on the tourism industry. However, the government does not seem to have a plan. Do members remember the Minister for Tourism saying that her campaign was based on saying that people should not go to Bali as they might get diseases if they go there? That was basically her visionary tourism policy. I do not think it has actually worked, unfortunately—although I have never been to Bali. I am probably one of the few members of this house who have never been to Bali.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Swan Hills!

Mr I.C. Blayney interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Geraldton! Why, if the member lives in Geraldton, would he go to Bali—of course, of course!

Mr T.K. Waldron: To go on another marathon!

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right. It might be a bit too warm, though, minister.

The boom has not resulted in major benefit to many citizens and residents of Western Australia. Although people may not have directly benefited from improvement in their conditions of employment or may not have received stardust from this unprecedented boom, they would have expected to benefit from investment in infrastructure.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Unfortunately, we have witnessed hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars lost in infrastructure projects and contract mismanagement, including the following small selection of projects. There was a \$250 million bill to refurbish Muja power station in Collie after Premier Colin Barnett said in 2009 that it would be funded by the private sector. The blowout in the cost of Fiona Stanley Hospital is \$330 million and counting. Just as one of my favourite TV shows *Yes Minister* depicted, we have a hospital without patients. However, we will all be able to rest in our beds tonight knowing that Serco is looking after that hospital without patients! The government has failed to prepare a basic cost-benefit analysis to compare the airport-Forrestfield link with the Metro Area Express light rail proposal. It is a shame that the Minister for Sport and Recreation has left the chamber because I refer to the contract amateur hour over the nib Stadium that has been absolutely amazing.

The Economic Regulation Authority, in a recent microeconomic reform inquiry, went so far as to say that the government often failed to adhere to its own strategic management guidelines and processes. When the

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government drafts its own rules and then fails to keep them, something is seriously wrong. It is ironic that while state royalties are expected to increase and remain strong as a result of iron ore production, our new Treasurer feels the need to strip the royalties for regions program to pay for this government's legacy of gross incompetency. With just the stroke of the pen, in the budget last Thursday the Treasurer gifted an instant \$3.1 billion to consolidated revenue over the forward estimates period by stripping royalties for regions back from 25 per cent of royalties to just 12 per cent in 2016–17. Not so long ago—I think it was early this year—there was a newspaper article about the new Leader of the National Party, in which he said he would be sticking up for the regions and would stand firm against the Premier and the Liberal Party. He has rolled over and says that he is not going to be fiscally irresponsible. It is the first time I have heard a head of the National Party talk about fiscal responsibility. It is a first. Members might remember that the Leader of the National Party was once a member of the Liberal Party, and maybe that is where he gets his fiscal responsibility from. I hope I am not defaming him, but I understand he was a member of the Liberal Party before he became a member of the National Party. Fiscal responsibility has never been at the forefront of agrarian socialist policy in the National Party. I am surprised that is the justification the National Party is using for rolling over. I am sure the member for Pilbara is hopeful of clawing his way back to the leadership. Although stripping back the royalties for regions program may be sad news —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members! Member for Cockburn, I did ask you to be quiet. Member for Armadale, go on.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, for that protection. Although stripping back the royalties for regions program is sad news for the bush, what about the impact of the budget on the Perth metropolitan area? What is the infrastructure future for the metropolitan area under this government? The signs are not good. I presume that the federal Treasurer handed down his budget tonight and confirmed that the federal government will provide 80 per cent of funding for the Roe Highway extension, but it is surprising that the state budget handed down last Thursday did not allocate any funding to the Roe Highway extension. No doubt the state Treasurer would have known, because it was in the newspaper and I am sure he had been in negotiations with the federal Treasurer, about the federal government's willingness to fund the extension of Roe Highway to the tune of 80 per cent. Where is the 20 per cent that the state will contribute? It was not mentioned in the state budget. I assume that the federal budget also confirmed \$4.7 billion of federal funding for WA infrastructure, most of which comprises infrastructure projects instigated under a federal Labor government, including the Gateway WA project, Tonkin Highway extension, and the Swan Valley bypass. Is the state government coming to the party on these infrastructure projects?

As the mining boom unwinds, what is the state government's tally on the scorecard for the boom from 2008 to 2013? WA has a record level of state debt, with \$11 000 for every man, woman and child in the state, compared with less than \$1 800 per person when Labor lost government and this government came to power. The Treasurer stands up time and again and talks about the Labor mess. What Labor mess? When the Barnett government came to power, state debt was less than \$1 800 per person in Western Australia; now it is \$11 000 for every man, woman and child in the great state of Western Australia. The real problem is that debt is rising faster than our ability to service it. I can tell members that if China's economy slows—there are signs of it—the consequences for this state will be grave. This state now has the highest unemployment rate in the last decade. It is estimated that 27 500 construction industry employees are working on resource infrastructure projects, a large proportion of which will be completed by 2014–15. What will happen to those workers then? Given this government's refusal to plan for any future after the boom, the ability of Western Australia to absorb these workers into other industry sectors will be sorely tested. The 2013 December quarter employment figures show that the construction industry workforce shed 12 330 jobs. The employment of a large proportion of those 27 500 resource workers will be in grave jeopardy over the next year. Western Australian business confidence in the March quarter was at its lowest level since 2004, with over half of business expecting revenue, profit and employment to deteriorate over the coming year. What is the final verdict on the Barnett government? In the view of Professor Peter Newman, in another article in *The Sunday Times*, the Barnett government would be expelled. In 2017 the electors of Western Australia are not going to give the Premier the benefit of the doubt. He has breached promise after promise. He has failed to deliver time and again. The Treasurer can talk about learning from history before we can move forward. Yes, we should do that, because the legacy of the Barnett government since it came to power in 2008 is that it has squandered opportunities from the biggest boom in our nation's history. That is the history that the Treasurer needs to come to terms with.

In my final eight minutes, I want to mention a couple of local issues and then another matter. In this budget, as usual, my constituents in the electorate of Armadale basically received nothing. I acknowledge that the Minister for Sport and Recreation has funded a certain basketball project for young children in my electorate and

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also that he has come out to my electorate a number of times while we try to work out issues in Champion Lakes. I will give him credit where credit is due. Where is the funding for the Davis Road underpass that is required in Kelmscott? Where is the funding for an increase in services in my electorate? There is none. There is to some degree in the sense that the government has committed to spending an extra \$90 million on child protection over the next four years but that is statewide and that is much needed. Unfortunately, the sad fact is that that will not be enough because the amount that needs to be spent on child protection is absolutely phenomenal.

I will tell members how people are doing it real hard. Once upon a time I would never see a homeless person in Armadale. As members know, I like to go for an early morning run. In the past 18 months, I have come across three to four people sleeping rough in the Armadale region early in the morning. The other day I was at one of the local ovals at about 10.30 am or 11 o'clock. I was there for a media event. A young man—29 years of age—came up to me afterwards and asked whether I was Tony Buti. I said that yes, I was, and he asked if he could have a word with me. He has been homeless for 18 months. He sleeps in the park in Armadale. There are many reasons for someone being homeless. I am not blaming the government or saying that it is responsible for somebody being homeless but the fact is that some people are homeless. The cost-of-living increases in Western Australia and the lack of appropriate services, coupled, I assume, with the federal budget that has just been brought down, will only increase the number of people who are homeless. The City of Perth may be concerned about beggars. It can try to outlaw them but it will not have any effect; there will be more beggars because that is a sign of the dire straits that many people find themselves in.

I want to move to another topic. I will return to the local issues if I can. I talk about this with some hesitation. As we know, there has been exploitation of people in the workforce in Western Australia. We had the recent event in the northern suburbs with the exploitation of foreign workers working in market gardens. I bring this to Parliament because I feel that I have no other choice and I have a responsibility to the people who have come to me about this. This relates to a gentleman by the name of Danne Forte, a managing director of Nicheliving Construction. He is the managing director of Projex Management and Construction Pty Ltd and Niche Q, which is a division of Nicheliving. He is also a group supervising board director of Nicheliving Construction and a registered builder. Nicheliving has been employing a number of foreign workers, a lot of whom are on 457 visas, in Newman. I have corroborated this information from a number of witnesses. A number of foreign workers, most of them from the Philippines, have been working a 60-hour week, with only Sunday being a day of rest. They work for 11 months before they received a holiday. They were being paid from \$10 to \$20 less an hour than what they should have been paid. They were also being charged \$100 a week for donga accommodation. They were not given accommodation; they had to pay \$100 net, so it is about \$130 before tax. At one stage they had to share accommodation; I believe they now have single quarters. They have a contract for a 38-hour week so any work done over that is obviously overtime if they are working 60 hours a week. I believe that three of these workers went to see Mr Forte on one particular morning about payment for working after 38 hours. He said that he would have an answer for them in the afternoon. At 3.00 pm, he said that they had been sacked and they had one hour to remove themselves from Nicheliving property. They had to drive back to Perth, a 12 or 13-hour drive, because they had nowhere to live in Newman.

It is the first time that I have named an individual under parliamentary privilege except when speaking on a bill relating to police. I did not name any particular police officer with regards to a friend of mine. I name this person with a heavy heart but I do it because I feel I have a responsibility to the people who came to me and to the foreign workers, many of them on 457 visas, who have no voice to try to overcome their exploitation. I hope that Mr Forte or Nicheliving will come back to me and say that things are being corrected or I have it wrong. I am sure I am not wrong. This is quite disgraceful. The people who exploit workers, whether they are foreign or not, need to be brought to account. A free market system does not work because we have people who abuse the system.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [5.56 pm]: I have five minutes in which to speak before we take a break. I will start my speech on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 in the normal way in which I approach the appropriation bills—that is, to split what I am about to say into two. First, I will deal with the budget and its impact on the state economy, particularly its impact on my shadow portfolios of housing and training. The second part of my response will relate to how the budget has impacted my electorate of Cockburn.

I first turn to the budget and its impact on the state economy. We heard the member for Victoria Park talking earlier about the reasons the government finds itself in the predicament that it is and questioning why it finds itself in that predicament. I will go back to some of the things that were referred to by the member for Victoria Park but I will deal them in a bit more detail. If we look at the changing circumstances for governments between the outgoing Labor administration in the 2007–08 financial year and the incoming Liberal–National government that has been in charge of the administration of the state from that point in time, we see that between

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

2007–08 to current budget indicators, revenue has increased 34.7 per cent—a \$9.85 billion increase in the revenue to state coffers over the past six years.

Unfortunately, when people talk about the wasted years, as the member for Armadale just did, that is reflected in the expenditure over that period that I just referred to. Government expenses have grown by 41.3 per cent, or \$11.7 billion, since 2007–08 to the current budget indicators. I will repeat that: revenue has grown dramatically—we all know why, and I will talk about the reasons shortly—by 34.7 per cent from \$9.85 billion, but government expenses have outstripped revenue growth because they have grown by 41.3 per cent or \$11.77 billion over the same period. That is why the government finds itself in the predicament that it currently does, with a ballooning debt that it does not seem to be able to control. There has been a growth in royalties over the period that I have been referring to of 148 per cent, or \$3.68 billion. Land tax has increased by 43.6 per cent and payroll tax revenue has increased by 48.8 per cent because of the growth in the economy and in the number of people—an increase in revenue to \$1.87 billion. The income side of state government revenue has increased dramatically.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Before the dinner break I went through the first of my two points about the appropriation bills. The first point was about the impact of the budget on the state and the second is the impact on housing and training—two of my shadow portfolios. I was talking about the benefits that the government has squandered over its years in office. I talked about revenue growth compared with expenditure growth over the same period. I want to finalise the figures that emerge from an analysis of the key budget indicators from 2007–08 to 2014–15. As I indicated, revenue is up 34.7 per cent or \$9.85 billion over that period, but expenses grew by 41.3 per cent or \$11 billion. There has been a massive 148 per cent increase in the royalties stream, a 43 per cent increase in the collection of land tax and a 48.8 per cent increase in the collection of payroll tax. We can deduct from that revenue stream the decrease in goods and services tax returns from the federal government, which the Premier constantly complains about. They are real complaints and ones that are supported by this side of the house; nevertheless, when they are put in the context of the revenue stream over that period, they fade into insignificance. If we take those concerns into account, GST receipts have declined between the 2007–08 and 2014–15 budget indicators by \$1.82 billion. There has also been a decline in stamp duty over that same period of \$471 million. If we take those into account and compare them with revenue growth—that is, we subtract one from the other—we still have revenue growth of \$4.057 billion. That is why Gareth Parker, in his analysis of the state of Western Australia's finances in *The West Australian*, said that he is sure that people would rather be in the situation in Western Australia than the situation in Tasmania when it comes to GST, because the revenue stream we have from royalties in this state far outweighs the revenue we would get back in GST returns.

Despite being in government during a sensational time economically, where does the Liberal–National government find itself? With debt of \$25 billion that is estimated to grow to \$28 billion. You would remember, Mr Acting Speaker, that the Premier has said both outside and inside this house in response to questions on the growth in debt that state debt would probably grow to \$25 billion and would then decline. Well, he got one thing right—it has grown to \$25 billion, but it is not declining; it is continuing to head up. These budget papers indicate that state debt is heading beyond \$28 billion and will probably head towards \$30 billion in the out years. There does not seem to be any plan to rein in that debt, beyond what we see in this budget and what we saw in last year's budget. The Liberal–National government is struggling to keep its head above water financially and is trying to maintain some sort of control over ballooning debt through job cuts, staff freezes, cuts to agencies and departments and increases in all government charges and services. If we add up the increases in charges and services in this year alone, it is effectively a tax increase of over a billion dollars over the out years. That is the desperate situation in which this government finds itself in its attempt to try to keep its head above water financially and to try to do something to control ballooning debt.

What is the impact of those cuts, freezes and increases in charges? We can look at housing generally. The stamp duty exemption has been cut from the \$500 000 mark to \$430 000. The Treasurer said today that this would still have the capacity to support first home owners because they can still get into a home at \$430 000. I have in front of me the Cockburn market update for my electorate, which outlines the properties that were sold in Beeliar, Bibra Lake, Cockburn Central, Coogee, Coolbellup, Hamilton Hill, Hammond Park, Munster, North Lake, South Lake, Spearwood and Yangebup in the last quarter. I assure members that no houses in this list were sold below the \$500 000 mark. A property might be sold for less than \$500 000 but above \$430 000 because a person might find a semi-detached unit for sale at a price above \$430 000 but below \$500 000. This is the update for this quarter for the sales in the Cockburn area. Cockburn is not the equivalent of Peppermint Grove; this is an area where first home owners do buy properties. The Treasurer's desperate attempt to rein in ballooning debt and the financial problems of this government, which are all self-inflicted, will have a direct impact on first home

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owners through the changes to the stamp duty exemption. The stamp duty exemption could be a benefit to first home owners of up to \$20 000. It has gone. For first home owners in Cockburn, it has gone completely. As I have pointed out, from the houses that have been sold in the Cockburn area, there is no way that a first home owner will get a stamp duty exemption for an existing house, and there is no way they will still be able to get a stamp duty exemption for a house-and-land package because they are all above \$430 000.

Let us look at the other cuts in and impacts of this budget. The Housing Authority's capital works program has been torn to shreds with a decrease by \$359 million, yet page 528 of the 2014-15 budget paper No 2, *Budget Statements*, volume 2, reveals that cash on hand has grown by 146.7 per cent to \$218.9 million. On the one hand, the Department of Housing is cutting its capital works program, while on the other hand, it is keeping massive wads of cash—nearly a quarter of a billion dollars—in cash on hand. What is going on in the Department of Housing? It has done this because it has been directed to do so by the Minister for Housing and the Treasurer. It is a sleight of hand financially and a way of trying to improve the books and the balance sheets: keep more cash on hand and the level of debt looks a lot less; if the department cuts back on capital works, it avoids future growth in debt. That is being done in every single government department across Western Australia. A financial sleight of hand is being carried out across every department to make the government's books look better. Who will pay for this? It will be those on the housing waiting list. Hardly anything is to be spent on capital works for new starts in public homes in not only this year, but also in the out years. The budget books indicate that there will be a reduction in the expenditure on crisis housing, and no further expenditure on housing for women who have suffered from domestic violence—none; it has gone! The wait time for crisis housing, emergency housing, is two and a half years, yet the government has cut expenditure on crisis housing. No wonder the member for Armadale talked about people sleeping on the streets because they are homeless. What has been done to the Department of Housing's budget to make the Treasurer's books look better will result in an increase in the number of people sleeping on the street because they are homeless. There will also be a further increase in the time people wait to be housed.

I turn to training. Last year, the training budget was subject to \$26 million worth of cuts in appropriation, and an \$11 million cut in procurements. There was a staff freeze, redundancies, the cancellation of courses and monstrous increases in student fees. Indeed, the cost of some diplomas increased by 390 per cent. This budget sees a \$45.8 million cut to appropriation. If we take into account the reduction in expenditure in cash and the supply of cash to the Department of Training and Workforce Development, and, from there, to state training providers, from royalties to regions and other sources, there will be a \$99.8 million reduction in cash flow. This budget reveals a continuation of the freeze on staff and more course cancellations. As a result of the minister shifting the responsibility for the payment of student fees at nine per cent of the cost of providing TAFE courses to 17 per cent in the out years, another monstrous increase will occur in student fees next January—as there will be in January 2016.

I will give members an example of the effect of these budget cuts. I have two receipts from Polytechnic West for a young person who is a second-year apprentice auto-electrician. The charge for his course last semester was \$394.58; it is \$607.78 this semester. The apprentice advised me that 50 per cent of people in his course are paying for the student fee increase out of their tool allowance. That is the real face of the budget cuts and the debt that has been accumulated by the Barnett Liberal–National government over the past six years, and it is why we continue to attack the government over its financial incompetence. The real face of the budget cuts is provided by people such as the young apprentice electrician, who may have to bail from his course simply because he cannot afford to pay his fees.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [7.17 pm]: I take great pleasure in making a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–2015 Bill 2014. Much has been said in this place so far—indeed, this was identified by the shadow Treasurer—about the government's hypocrisy in delivering such cuts to the people of Willagee.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: He also identified the most fraught parts of the budget and what it will mean to the people of Willagee, and the effect it will have on their lives as they toil away in an attempt to make their way in the world. At some point in the margins, the people most severely attacked are those who do not even have a start. On Friday just gone, I was visited by a young couple with a baby at my electorate office. They have been entirely cut out from the rental market. They have searched all over the south metropolitan area, intent on trying to secure a place. Aged 17 years and 18 years, the couple is young. The girl had a teen pregnancy; there are all sorts of backstories there. They camp on a couch with their baby at their grandmother's two-bedroom flat. That is the best accommodation they have been able to find. I asked the young man why he did not try to find a job.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

p3187b-3240a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

He talked to me at great length about the difficulty of a 17-year-old trying to get a job to support a young family. These two are particularly strong-minded, and keen to make a go of it, but they cannot get ahead. Why? It is because the young man is on youth wages. A 17-year-old can barely get an interview for a job that pays the sort of income he needs to support his young family, so he is being cut out of the gate.

Those are the sorts of people who are being directly affected by this government and its \$1.1 billion grab over the forward estimates; that is cutting them out of an opportunity and cutting us out of a resource. This young man was doing a certificate III in landscaping at TAFE. Of course, the fees were exorbitant and he had no hope to continue. That is what this government is doing; it is taking out the future of Western Australia. It is not only trying to fund its legacy projects; it is cutting resources and killing the opportunities of future generations. This young couple and those like them will not only have to deal with the circumstances of a high-cost, no-gain budget, but also inherit a \$24 billion debt. The cost of servicing the interest payments is, I think, in the order of \$550 million a year. They and that little child will inherit such a legacy from this government. To make sure that we can participate as we have in the past will take a serious effort from the government; it needs a vision and an intention to deliver a future that recognises the circumstances in which our young children will grow up and the structural shift in both the economy and the region.

I remind members who might be interested that we have had 21 years of straight economic growth in this country. This state has not known a recession in that period. I have tried to look at various changes to the way economic growth is measured. We have to go way back to the 1970s to find anything approximating two-thirds of negative growth for the state on the basis of gross state product or final demand, whichever way we want to strike it. We have had 22 years without a recession. Members should think about it. In 1988 I had a mortgage with a 17 per cent interest rate. Nobody who has left school in that time has known anything but above-inflation wages growth. We have never been richer or had a better opportunity. However, unfortunately, with this sort of budget and this sort of government, that looks to be something we will see only in the rear-view mirror as we drive this trolley further into the future and find nothing but rocky territory. If we do not have some sort of linkage to the idea that there is a greater vision with a changed set of circumstances for our region and a growth in opportunity, we will simply perpetuate the mistakes of this government and its past five years of reckless behaviour in building monuments to itself. There is no shortage of examples of mismanagement, bad ideas and just dumb culs-de-sac of grief that I have no doubt will come home to roost in 2017.

Over the past five years we raised in this place several times the impact of Asia on our economy and the fact that this government stood by and twiddled its thumbs as 550 000 tonnes of fabricated steel got shipped offshore to be worked on by low-wage Asian workers at the cost of our businesses and jobs for our people. I am not suggesting for a second that we have mandatory requirements in the way we negotiate for the natural endowment of our state; I am suggesting that this government has been idle and completely indolent in finding solutions for the jobs after next, the jobs that our kids and grandkids will occupy. We are very clear that we will never compete with Asia, particularly South-East Asia, for the muscle jobs and all those traditional smokestack industries as we have in the past. The closure of traditional industries, such as the car industry, has been well documented and quite high profile. However, the small engineering companies, the small design companies and the small service providers are slowly but surely being leached out of the supply chain to the single biggest natural resource of this state—its natural endowment in the ground. It needs to be exploited under a different method from what this government has given attention to. There is no better example than the Premier putting up the white flag for floating liquefied natural gas and thereby allowing companies to ignore their social and moral impact in this state to ensure that the opportunity that they are about to extract and export overseas is shared equitably and fairly.

The Asian century, as has often been talked about, is given more lip-service than any actual policy or vision by this government. To see this we have only to look at the First Murdoch Commission report, which was released earlier this year by a group of eminent Western Australians who worked hard at Murdoch University to produce what I thought was an outstanding report, which is, basically, a very good response to the Asian federal white paper that was released by the Gillard government several years ago. The report refers to the size of the opportunity in Asia and the changing nature of it, which we in Western Australia need to understand. Western Australia is this nation's leading edge into the Indian Ocean. We need to take seriously that responsibility to lead the way and produce a future in which not only Western Australians can believe, but also Australians, to ensure that we have something that approximates the replacement of the jobs from those traditional industries that are now going offshore. The Murdoch Commission identified several challenges, but lots and lots of opportunities. I quote —

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

p3187b-3240a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

Asia's recent economic performance has placed it among the central drivers of the global economy. Most economists believe that Asia is going to become the world's largest economic region by GDP in 2030 —

2030 is not that far away —

surpassing North America and Western Europe. By 2018, Asia is expected to account for 30 per cent of world GDP ... increasing to more than 50 per cent by mid-century.

More importantly, and closer to home —

In Southeast Asia, urbanisation rates increased from 25 per cent in 1980 to 44 per cent by 2010, while in China they rose from 19 to 49 per cent over the same period. —

We know China has an ambition of, I think, in the order of 70-odd per cent urbanisation for its population alone —

The overall urban population of East Asia rose by 700 million in the three decades to 2010, of which two-thirds was accounted for by China alone.

It has a growing population with a growing spread or distribution of wealth. China now has \$11 000 per capita as a proportion of gross domestic product. Australia is at \$22 000 per capita. China is rising at a rate faster than we can sustain that \$22 000. We have never been richer with \$22 000 per capita as a representation of GDP. It is a massive number. The structural drivers for economic growth in Asia are significant. The International Monetary Fund forecast that between 2014 and 2018, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations+6 nominal GDP will grow by 8.9 per cent per annum. We are trying to chug along at ones and twos, although as a mature economy that is understandable. World growth is forecast to be 6.3 per cent. The opportunities in Asia are not insignificant. We have a choice: if we can no longer undertake those traditional roles in the economy, what will replace them? We cannot continue to rely on a "rip it, dig it and ship it" rocks-and-crops attitude that if we have it, we will transport it over the horizon to come back as value-added goods. Although they might be cheap because we are completely internationally exposed as a country because we have the lowest tariff barriers of any Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development country bar none, if we do not replace that and identify the next opportunity, our wealth and our standard of living will go off a cliff. I say that because there is a political implication of allowing such a thing to occur, of course, for each and every one of us in this chamber. Nothing will focus the attention of the electorate faster than not having a job. Nothing will focus the attention of the electorate on the government of the day faster than a double-digit unemployment rate. That is the first sign.

Leading the way in that unemployment rate is youth unemployment. We have heard from many members in this place about double-digit youth unemployment in their regions, particularly in the southern areas of the city and other parts of the state, being as high as 27 per cent. The example about the young couple I gave as I rose to my feet was a very good one. We need to invest clearly and quite deeply in the idea that we need to produce at least 100 000 jobs and identify the top 10 in-demand jobs we cannot currently identify. The choice is quite simple for me. We are replacing what we used to do manually with what we do between our ears. The skilled services sector and the knowledge economy are two of the most fundamental things we can promote, here and now in this place, to produce better results for the young and the generations after us.

The economic profile produced by the Department of State Development identifies the skilled services sector more broadly, but I want to talk about the skilled services sector more specifically. Mining obviously made the largest industry contribution to gross state product, as we know, in 2012–13, with a real value adding comprising 11 per cent. I think the value of the resource sector in this economy is now \$115 billion—nothing gets near this. I think education is at about \$9.5 billion and agriculture after that. GSP growth, including that of the service industries, was up, but specifically talking about the skilled services sector, our exports rose by four per cent to \$5.9 billion in 2012–13 mainly due to increases in travel to the state, with personal travel up 10 per cent to \$1.6 billion and business travel up seven per cent to \$858 million. Technical, trade and other business services exports also increased. If we extract things such as business travel, transport, education travel and trade, other business services only account for about 10 per cent. We need to build on the success represented there. We need to build on the idea that there is a value-added participation in the supply chain that can take advantage of a growing middle class in South-East Asia. I give an example. This government and every other government after it should lobby hard under the commonwealth trade arrangements with Indonesia, as an example, to lower the 250 per cent tariff wall that exists there for our wine. If we were to reduce the tariff wall by any measure, our exports in wine would go through the roof, because there is a growing group of people with discerning taste in South-East Asia, and Indonesia more specifically as a close neighbour. Our wine industry could capitalise on the opportunity if we could just get a foothold in the negotiations by making sure we lobby the federal government

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and by working with the Indonesian government to see whether we cannot reduce that tariff in any way over time. It is a long haul. We all know that trade negotiations take a very long time, but we need to start now; we need to start making loud noises at every opportunity to press the case.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The other part of this is the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy is thinking smarter and it is not just related to capacity growth of the domestic ability; it is about what we export and how we export. The Murdoch Commission report states —

Aside from the resources sector, Western Australia has significant prospects in developing its demonstrated strengths related to the knowledge economy. It has excellent research and technology capabilities in minerals and energy along with life sciences and agriculture, with research opportunities arising with the State's ranking in the top 34 locations in the world for bio-diversity.

That is no mean feat. To be in that percentile grouping of biodiversity is essential because it produces an opportunity to capitalise on our traditional industries using technology such as aquaculture. The Murdoch Commission report states further —

Indeed further development and investment is needed in Western Australia's knowledge economy in order to meet demand in the Region and to make the most of emerging opportunities.

What do we see from the Barnett government that gives us any evidence that it is committed to a vision of a future that our children can believe in and that the remainder of the electorate can invest in? The Premier made great efforts to take the science portfolio and what has he done with it? Not a lot—not much at all. In the estimates from this budget alone, the estimated actual in the science portfolio will be about \$25.7 million. More worryingly, in order to save it down to get the wafer surplus the government wants in the out years, we will see that figure reduced in 2017–18 to \$16.3 million. That is millions of dollars, not billions and not hundreds of millions, but \$16.3 million. That is a reduction of \$9.4 million. Therefore, not only is the government not investing enough in science, it is stripping funding out in the out years to ensure it can deliver something approximating the veneer of a surplus. That means that the government is not serious in committing the state to a vision of a grand opportunity in our very region, just three hours from here. Three hours north of here there is a grand opportunity to look at markets.

I will give an example of some of the things we are up against; this is just one insight. The rate of teaching of Asian languages in our public education system is appalling. In the year 12 cohort currently in public schools, which is made up of something in the order of just over 14 000 kids, in 2013, of those students who graduated from year 12, a total of 1 061 graduated with a language at an Australian tertiary admissions rank level. Just over 1 000 kids took up a language. How many of those took up an Asian language? There were 373 kids who graduated with an Asian language out of 1 061 who took a language out of 14 000 students in total, and that is just from public schools. It does not get any better in the private schools. It is a very similar set of numbers, except that in the private schools the weighting for French and German is about three times that of the public schools, which is an indicator of what is done at Scotch College, Wesley College and St Hilda's. They are certainly not being prompted by this government to look at the opportunities of at least being conversational in an Asian language because of the insights and entry it gives us into the culture, given the importance of understanding the culture of the countries we want to trade with. That is a hell of a message to send to our region: "We want your dough, but we are really not prepared to work for it", and it is pretty shoddy work at that.

I turn to medical research. The support of medical research by this government has received nothing but condemnation from every sector. Even the Australian Medical Association president, Richard Choong, last week made the following statement to the media —

"Not only this, but medical research seems to have been removed entirely as a separate line item in the budget," ...

"We have fought long and hard for increased funding to medical research. We will not give up on this campaign. It is vital to our future as a society."

We are not doing anything for the skilled services sector; we are not serious about local content; and we are not serious about defining the things that we see as important for trade of our natural endowment, over and above a cheque written by the resource companies. We are not serious about a skilled services sector that might tap into that opportunity and that might grow the opportunity for our traditional industries and find new opportunities in areas we think could help the future generations coming after us. Not only that, we are not interested in the knowledge economy. It is the sort of policy area that must transcend changes in administration as this side and

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that side swap. There must be a whole-of-Parliament commitment to the idea that to think and to be educated is far more valuable, portable and tradable than simply bumping along and kicking the can down the road saying there might be a program for that. We are competing with Asia when it comes to the knowledge economy and we all know it. We have either been there or heard stories about it. Hong Kong is a very good example. In the late 1990s there was a \$10 million investment in the Hong Kong Science Park on 22 hectares of land. The stage 3 green buildings were recently completed, and 400 companies are based there. There are companies at the incubator stage through to multinational companies, including Philips and large Silicon Valley companies. The park focuses on five areas, but there are three main flows, being digital technology, medical research and agriculture. There is nothing to say that this state cannot participate in each of those areas, and sometimes with a competitive advantage that will leave South-East Asia for dead. The areas of focus are shaping the companies they want to attract; in other words, they have set the markers they would like the companies to follow.

Not far from here is Murdoch University, of which 28 hectares is sitting out the back ready for development. That land is right next to an agile, capable university that is brimming with very, very good people—I am not suggesting any of the other universities are not—and it is ripe for investment, just as Curtin was in the 1980s when work was started on the iVEC project; look at what has been done at Curtin. This government does not take seriously the idea and opportunity of a growing brain sector; the idea that thinking hard is better than the traditional methods.

We see that in other ways. The Minister for Energy has announced a review of electricity tariffs; they will shift from the component of usage, to weight the bill of the average household to a fixed charge for being part of the grid. Anybody who has invested in any sort of renewable—particularly solar photovoltaic systems or those sorts of renewable energies—for their home or business will have a diminishing investment. From what the minister has said, it is clear that the government is going to shift the weight or the cost of delivery of power to our households to a fixed charge. No amount of solar on anybody's roof will actually reduce their bill. We need to understand, in simple terms, what that will do; it will shore up the revenue streams for the fixed-pole power industry, being poles and wires and old generation. This government has turned losing money in an art form; \$370 million-plus on Muja, and nothing will shore up the business case for that to be sold at anything close to a profit other than guaranteeing revenue for the investment bank that will come in and strip it out.

Another sign that this government does not take the knowledge economy seriously is that we still do not have a Chief Scientist. Professor Lyn Beazley resigned some time ago, and there have been no indications from this Premier that he as the minister is anywhere close to appointing a Chief Scientist. If the government does not take it seriously, how can it expect anybody, including private capital, to take us seriously and think of us beyond being a pit—a hole in the ground—or a well offshore? We have to be seen and we have to advance the identity of what it is to be Western Australian through the opportunities presented in our region. It is closer and easier to get to Asia than it is to Melbourne yet we continue to ignore it, which may be to our future disadvantage.

Finally, I send a thank you to my electorate for the support it has given me. I am very proud to be a councillor on the Hamilton Senior High School board. I show my appreciation for what my fellow council members are doing under a very difficult set of circumstances. The school rationalisation in the Fremantle district has been, in my view, poorly run, and potentially predetermined. The board consists of Lindsay Wetton, a local councillor, Phil Casas, who is the deputy down there, Richard Walsh, Danae Jolly and Karen Bennett, and they are all ably led by the principal, Donna McDonald. I really do thank those people for their work, and I really hope we can deliver opportunities for the kids in the seat of Willagee, and certainly at the school at Hammy.

The other school council I sit on is that of North Lake Senior Campus, which does a unique job for some of the most disadvantaged and difficult kids in senior college. The college takes a very large percentage of immigrant students at both junior and senior ages, as well as people having another go at year 12 and trying to find their way. The college has fantastic results, and I am very proud to be a council member of that board, led by Mary Margetts. Well done to that college, in spite of the cuts and the hard and brutal approaches that are without vision from this government. These fantastic people are working away in the community to create better opportunities and a better future.

The Coolbellup community is a good example of people using self-motivation. The “Coobie markets” had its inaugural farmers’ market or growers’ market last month, and it was a tremendous success. It really did add value to a suburb that has previously not had the best of reputations. I can only thank the founder and motivator of that, Pip Brennan, and her supporting committee: Jules Colson; Zoe Campbell, who coordinated it; Greg Peterson; Sonya Lamond; and Ross Porter. They have all been outstanding in their dedication to building a better community and giving people an opportunity to congregate and understand the beauty of the lovely old suburb that is Coolbellup. Well done to them! That will now move to a monthly program, and we are really proud to be supporters of it. I will always give it my full-throated support. These are the sorts of things going on

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in the seat of Willagee, but we must as an entire Parliament give those people, their kids and their grandkids the opportunity to have what we had and enjoyed. This is one of the richest generations that has ever been born in this country, and we need to ensure that we deliver something approximating that same advantage and benefit to them.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [7.47 pm]: I rise in my customary position of speaking late at night on the first night of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–2015 Bill 2014 budget reply speeches—early evening anyway.

Ms L.L. Baker: It's not late.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not as late as I have been in the past; that is true, member.

I thought I might change my approach this year and begin with a couple of quizzes just to try to pique the interest of the Minister for Health; Deputy Premier sitting across there—who is no doubt fighting off the urge to slumber or work—to test how his mind is travelling at this time of the evening at this part of the debate.

My first question—members on this side can participate if they want to—is: what is the understatement of this year in this year's budget presented to us by the Treasurer last week? My view is that there were a lot of competing statements that could easily be any one of the obscure references to debt. The most recent that came today was about recalculation of the debt and how we have been miscalculating it all these years—

Mr P.C. Tinley: Silly us.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Silly us; that was the problem.

But I think the understatement of the year is printed on page 81 of budget paper No 3 under “Law and Order”, which states in relation to the Criminal Law Amendment (Home Burglary and Other Offences) Bill 2014 —

There is a risk that enactment of the proposed legislation will result in an increase to the State's custodial population, due to increased sentence lengths for applicable adult and juvenile offenders ...

That qualifies as the understatement of the year because it is undeniable that there will be an increase in the adult prison and juvenile detention population as a result of the legislation the government has introduced into this place already. I must point out that I have not completed the entire quote because it goes on to read —

(although the legislation may also provide an offsetting deterrent effect).

That is an interesting observation, because there is absolutely no science behind it. There is no science behind the first observation that there may be a risk, because had the government merely consulted with the Department of Corrective Services, I am sure it could have given the government a very accurate assessment and indication of a range of costs. It could have started with a low level, going up to a high level, but it would be accurate because it is the sort of thing that the Department of Corrective Services does all the time. In fact, the Department of Corrective Services did it when I asked it earlier this year. It took a couple of times to get an answer, because the department did not really want to give us a response. We asked what the department's modelling had determined would be the result of this legislation. We asked that for each of the out years, because, surely, no serious government would introduce legislation claimed to be a good innovation that would have a massive impact on the rate of aggravated burglary in the state through its deterrent effect without having analysed the impact of the legislation and its consequences; that is, the government would know how many offenders would go to prison who would not have done so previously as a result of this legislation and, consequently, the government could make the argument that the threat to society would be reduced. Unfortunately, the government is not capable of doing that at the moment, and it has not been included in the budget. On 13 March this year, the opposition asked the Attorney General representing the Minister for Corrective Services in the upper house the following question —

I refer to the announcement by the Attorney General and the Minister for Police of new home invasion laws and changes to the three-strikes burglary legislation.

(1) What number of additional adult prisoners does departmental modelling predict will enter the prison system as a result of these laws in 2013–14, 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17?

The Attorney General answered —

The Department of Corrective Services has conducted some preliminary modelling that shows that the changes are expected to cause an increase in the prison population. The government's priority with these changes is the victims of crime and ensuring community safety.

I would assume so. The Attorney General went on to say —

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The impact of the changes to these sentencing laws is difficult to predict because offending behaviours are predicated on a range of factors. It is also worth noting that the government is also investing in diversionary programs.

We did not think that was good enough. The government said that it had modelling, but it would not reveal it to us and claimed that it was difficult to predict. I suggest that the impact of this legislation as costs to the system is massive, but minuscule as a reduction in crime in society. It is completely without justification, and no research, analysis or modelling has been done to determine whether it will deter offenders. The government concedes that this has not been done; otherwise it would have rolled it out in the course of the second reading debate and the budget. It would have been able to project exactly what the cost will be, but the government has not got that.

On 19 March, the opposition asked a question that we thought might help the government and assist it to provide a more honest evaluation of the impact of its legislation. As the government would not tell us about the impact of this legislation in the future, what if it had already been enacted? What if we asked the government how many adult offenders in the last year were charged with aggravated burglary but did not receive a custodial sentence? How many people were charged and convicted but did not receive a custodial sentence? We asked the same question for juvenile offenders, and we got an answer because that question cannot be avoided; it is a matter of historical fact. The Attorney General responded —

A total of 425 cases resulted in a conviction for aggravated burglary and did not receive a custodial sentence.

In one year, there were 425 cases of adults and 158 cases of juveniles. Conceding that perhaps not all of the cases would result in the incarceration of the offender under this legislation, that is a significant number of cases. Fortunately, not only the opposition was asking questions, and sometimes the government is a little more forthcoming when approached by the media with the same questions. Amanda Banks from *The West Australian* pursued the minister and his office for some weeks in an effort to ascertain the same information. The minister and his office avoided the question, procrastinated and delayed and ultimately gave an answer, which they changed prior to her article going to print. The first answer given suggested that the historical figures of over 400 adults and 158 juveniles might actually be pretty close to the sorts of numbers one would see in the prison system. The first answer suggested that large numbers of offenders would come into the prison system—an extra 200 or so adults and 147 juveniles. That was changed. Rather than breaking it down into the number of adult and juvenile offenders, they gave an overall anticipated additional cost as a consequence of the legislation. This was printed in *The West Australian* of 16 April under the headline “Harsh burglar sentences to stretch jails”. The indication was that an additional 200 beds would be required as a result of this legislation by the second year of it being enacted. Minister, I am assuming it will pass through the upper house and receive royal assent this year, so in the next two years it will result in an additional 200 adults entering the prison system, with an increase in recurrent expenditure over the next three years of \$93 million. That is an additional \$93 million recurrent on top of the projected costs of the Department of Corrective Services for its provision of services and the normal anticipated growth, which is not insignificant. That is \$93 million recurrent effectively left out of this year’s budget and the forward estimates. It is not included in the budget for no reason. The government had accurate enough analysis to provide to *The West Australian* on 16 April, but it could not put it into its budget papers when they were delivered last week. One has to wonder why—and the only answer is because it is embarrassing. It is embarrassing because of the threat it represents to the fake surplus that has been claimed, particularly the surplus for next year, which will clearly be a deficit no matter how it is calculated. That aside, it is embarrassing because there is no evidence to confirm that this will have a positive impact on aggravated burglaries in Western Australia. I am not talking about the high-end aggravated burglaries that the banner headlines will pronounce when the law is passed—namely, those people who violently assault people in their homes. We are talking about the other part of the legislation that government does not talk about very much—the part that will close the so-called loophole on three-strikes legislation. That is in the same bill. It will have an impact on the budget of tens of millions of dollars recurrent, above and beyond the current budget forecasts. It is extraordinary to see in black and white in the budget papers acknowledgement that the government has not put that impact in here. It is an intentional omission. It is claimed in the budget papers —

The potential financial impact is uncertain at this time and has therefore not been reflected in the 2014–15 Budget.

That might be appropriate with respect to the impact on WA Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, because the courts and police will have additional costs as well as the ones identified by the Department of Corrective Services. The government well knew exactly what additional costs it will have to find for this legislation in the Department of Corrective Services, and it has not been given to the Minister for Corrective Services. In the course of the next three years, the Minister for Corrective Services will effectively

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have a \$93 million cut to his department. Unless a massive injection of funds occurs next year, when this law will start to really play out, the Department of Corrective Services will be even further behind the eight ball with funding and resourcing. The department will be overwhelmed with overcrowding, because there will be another 200 adults and a significant number of juveniles—I think 63 was the final number decided upon—in systems already overwhelmed, overcrowded and dysfunctional.

But the minister is going to do it with a reduction in the budget because he is not getting any more money for it. That indicates a minister who has failed to represent his own department in the interests of Western Australians. He has rolled over. In the face of the Premier's desire to be seen to be doing something in at least one portfolio and in one field of endeavour—failing in just about every single portfolio and every single sector of public debate—the Premier wants to attempt to continue to claim his tough-on-crime laurel. Unfortunately, the impact will not be felt predominantly in the portfolio that is leading the debate on the legislation—the police portfolio; it will be felt in the Department of Corrective Services. The people who will suffer will be the people who work in our prisons—the prison officers and other staff, and community corrections officers when individuals leave prison. The rest of the community will also suffer as society becomes less safe as a consequence of these individuals coming out of a prison system that is dysfunctional and under-resourced. It will result in them learning to be better criminals than when they went in. All those things indicate a minister who has lost the ability to see where his priorities should lie and has failed to defend his portfolio. The important outcomes that his department requires have been lost at the expense of political expediency—that is, rolling over for the Premier and joining in the spin on this law. I have no problem supporting a law if it can be shown that it will be effective and if it can be shown and quantified that it will reduce crime and result in a safer community. But that is not the case; otherwise the Minister for Corrective Services would have put it in his budget. It is a sad indictment of the law itself and the agenda of the government, and of how poorly the government is travelling, that it sees this to be a necessity.

I know that few members on the other side of the house think about things very deeply in this sort of debate. They see the Premier pound his chest to show how tough he is. They listen to the Minister for Police and manage to keep a straight face, even though we are all laughing, along with most of the state. They do not think very much about what is being said. If government members think it is not important, they can keep throwing thousands more people into the prison system but it will not have an impact on anything else beyond the fact that “crime universities” are being created, particularly at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Beyond the direct cost of corrective services, there is the impact on the rest of the budget. That money has to come from somewhere. These people still have to be incarcerated and their incarceration has to be paid for—it costs money.

There is another quiz I would like to throw out there. It is probably appropriate that the Minister for Corrective Services think about this because I heard him suggest on radio recently that the reason the prison population has grown is that the state's population has grown. What absolute baloney. Without any reference to reality, he claimed that the prison population is directly linked to the state's population growth. That is stupid. What does the minister reckon the state's population has grown by under the Barnett government?

Mr J.M. Francis: Roughly about three per cent a year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It has grown 16.85 per cent. That is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Look it up.

Mr J.M. Francis: That is roughly three per cent a year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What has been the prison population growth in that time?

Mr J.M. Francis: A little more than that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister should know this. This should be immediately at hand. The growth in prison population in that period was 39.7 per cent. It is not just a couple of per cent above it and it is unrelated.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister knows that the people in the prisons have not changed. It is not as though there are hoards of Aboriginal people storming across the Nullarbor to commit crimes and be thrown into prison at a rate of 40 per cent of the adult population. The minister knows that despite growth of 39.78 per cent in the prison population, the number of adult prisoners who are Aboriginal has remained unchanged as a percentage. It is 40 per cent—exactly what it was in 2008! The people in the prison system are the same people; it is just that there are more of them. They have not come from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria or Tasmania looking for a job and then ended up in the prison system. The minister knows that is not true. It is farcical to suggest that.

Mr J.M. Francis: Which offenders do you want to let out? Which class of offenders do you not want to lock up?

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Mr P. PAPALIA: I will talk to the minister about how he needs to deal with this in a moment. I will give him some hints. The minister knows it is absolute rubbish to suggest that the population growth in the state has resulted in prison muster growth. That is stupid. Just think about it. The minister should tell his staff to go back and think about it before they create the spin they send him out with to face the cameras or send him on radio 6PR with. Tell them to think about it. Tell them to look at the actual make-up of the prison population and the fact that it has not changed. The demographic in the prisons has not changed since 2008, with the exception of the number. Does the minister know what else has changed way above population growth? The cost of the provision of corrective services to the taxpayers of Western Australia has changed. How much does the minister reckon that has gone up by?

Mr J.M. Francis: Which offenders do you not think should be in prison?

Mr P. PAPALIA: How much does the minister reckon that has gone up by? The cost of adult custodial—this is only adults by the way —

Mr J.M. Francis: If it costs too much money, we will just let all the prisoners out! Okay; go for it. Do you know how stupid this sounds?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What I am trying to convey to the minister is, if he thinks about what he is doing, he might come up with some different answers. There has been 57.7 per cent growth in the cost of operating prisons since this government took office. Does the minister think it is a good idea to build prisons instead of schools? How many people think it is a great idea to pay for more prison officers instead of education assistants to teach kids how to read in grades 1 to 4? The minister read my paper; I hope he knows that there are a lot of better ways to deal with crime prior to individuals entering the juvenile detention system and prior to them going into adult prisons. A lot of it has to do with education and teaching a child to be literate by the time they are in grade 4. If a child can read by the time they are in grade 4, there is a direct link to the likelihood of them not becoming a problem in school with their behaviour and falling out and not becoming a problem with crime. This government has allowed it to happen —

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know it is embarrassing. I would be upset too, minister. This government has done the exact opposite of what will make a positive impact. The government has cut back on education assistants in the education budget. It has cut back on measures—including school support program resource allocation for attendance and behaviour—that get kids into school and keep them there. Of all the states in this country, which one has the worst attendance rate for Aboriginal kids? It is Western Australia. Which state is failing dismally at making a positive impact on the crime rate in Aboriginal juveniles? It is Western Australia. Which state incarcerates more Aboriginal kids per head of population than any other state? It is Western Australia. Under this government —

Mr J.M. Francis: The number of juveniles incarcerated is going down. It is down to 160 today.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Bollocks—excuse me. That is absolute rubbish.

Mr J.M. Francis: It is. I know what the prison muster is every single day; you don't.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am going to get on to that now because the minister asked earlier —

Mr J.M. Francis: You tell me whom you want to let out.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will tell the minister whom he should get out of prisons right now. I will give the minister the answer. I told him on the radio the other day and he went on to say some absolute garbage about the number of people who have entered the prison system under this government. The minister answered me in this place in response to a question on notice that confirms that, of the people who have entered the prison system under the Barnett government, one in seven are there for fine default alone. That is the minister's own answer.

Mr J.M. Francis: No. There are 11 people in prison for fine default alone out of a total population.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The question on notice did not ask for a snapshot answer to “On this day of the week, how many are there?” I asked how many since the Barnett government took office. Of the entire global entry number, what was the raw data figure? I wanted the percentage of the overall population who had entered as a consequence of fine default alone. The minister told me it was one in seven; I did not make that up. That is the reason there were only three on a certain day. The minister needs to tell his people to think about what they are telling him, because they are setting him up for embarrassment. He needs to tell them to look at the answer he gave me in Parliament. The reason that there is a small number on any particular day of the week is that the vast majority of them enter on a Friday and exit on a Monday. They sit on their backsides watching TV—at a cost,

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according to this year's budget, of \$345 a day—to pay off a fine at the rate of \$250 a day! They do not actually pay \$250 a day; they sit on their backsides, watching TV over the weekend, and they do it concurrently, so many of them save it up until it is thousands of dollars. They do not actually pay anything; they make no reparations, but neither do they get any life lessons. What they learn is: do not pay the fine because they can instead go and sit in Broome Regional Prison, Roebourne Regional Prison or Hakea Prison. They will disrupt the prison system and make the taxpayer pay \$345 a day for the privilege of sitting on their backsides, they will create the extra burden of processing administration, and then on Monday they will leave with a clean slate so that they can go and do it again. It is not working. It was the minister's government's idea when Christian Porter was the Attorney General.

Mr J.M. Francis: This will only take a second. Here is the problem: if you don't have the incarceration as an end game for fine defaults, and don't forget —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I love the way the minister wants me to solve his problems for him!

Mr J.M. Francis: If you go along your path, people won't pay their fines. People won't do community service, because there would be no consequences. You've got to have incarceration as an end game.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right, so what might the minister do? He should use the stuff between his ears and think about another alternative. What alternatives might there be?

Mr J.M. Francis: Do you know what they're there for? They are there for bodily harm, breach of bail, driving after disqualification and assault causing bodily harm.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How can the minister compel them to do it? How can the minister compel them to do work in the community to pay their dues to society, which, as the minister knows, would be much cheaper? It is actually in the budget papers how much cheaper it is. He knows exactly how much, and we are talking massive amounts of money. It costs \$345 to lock them up in prison so they can sit on their backsides and watch TV, but it would cost only \$43 a day to have them out in the community, working, cleaning up or at least doing something. How does the minister reckon he could get them to do that? Has he contemplated income management? Has he talked to his fellow ministers at the Council of Australian Governments and discussed the possibility of the federal government compelling people to do that, on pain of losing their entitlement to government support? Has the minister considered a legislative change? He has not brought anything in here of any value, apart from that stupid corrective services legislation he brought in the other day, which was laughable. Has he thought about a legislative change that might enable him to do what the former police minister did, which was to impound people's cars? A lot of these fines are related to vehicles, and I am talking about the people who have the money to pay but do not want to because it is much easier to pay off their fines by sitting in jail for the weekend. Has the minister contemplated other methods that might result in a better outcome? No, he has not. He has thrown his hands in the air and said, "No, I can't do it. Three ministers before me in this government have failed, so it can't possibly be solved", even though he has created most of the problems himself. I understand that, but if he does not stop and think about it, he will not find a solution.

It is easy to go to the media and say, "Well, what is the opposition going to do about it?" One thing I would do is to think about possible solutions. I am being generous to the minister here. He might actually agree that it would be better to reduce offending and recidivism at a younger age, prior to these juveniles graduating from Banksia Hill Detention Centre to adult prisons; I think he might really believe that. He has gone deep and silent, in true submariner fashion, since the Minister for Police went out there to tell everyone how tough she is with this burglary legislation, but apart from appointing his advisory board, has the Minister for Corrective Services thought about anything else?

I have only a few minutes, but I would like to recommend something to the minister. I refer to a report that is in the hands of his department, and I commend it to him. It was written in 2009 by Katalin Kraszlan. She was a Churchill Fellow in 2009 and was a Department of Corrective Services staffer, and the name of the paper is "To Study the Development, Provision and Evaluation of Re-entry Services for Prisoners—USA, Israel." The minister's staff will know her; she left the department in exasperation, but she was good. I met her after she published this report, and I recommend that the minister contemplate it. It calls for a focus within the department on the reduction of recidivism, and it requires a directorate with that entire focus. The minister has to shift his whole focus; I know he has talked about that. He is really going to be undermined by the Minister for Police with this legislation, and I know she is not alone. The minister is supporting it as part of the cabinet, so he is part of the problem, but that aside, that legislation will completely undermine any efforts he is going to make. However, this is one paper I recommend that the minister have a look at.

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Another initiative I have mentioned to the minister in this place before is the intensive supervision program, which changed its name to family intensive team. The minister will be told by his staffers that it was dumped because it was not effective, but he should read the review of the intensive supervision program, which was prepared for the Department of Corrective Services by Social Systems and Evaluation in June 2009. That was not the reason the program was discontinued; the report revealed that the wrong people were going into the program, and that relates to what I was saying earlier about how the minister needs to compel people to do things. He has parental responsibility legislation that will enable him to force the right people and their families into these programs. That is what it is all about—multisystemic therapy; wrapping services around the entire family and the home, where the problem lies. That has been cancelled, and not for any other reason than to save money, despite what was said in this place. I urge the minister to read that report and to challenge his own staff and his department on it, because I think they are misleading him, given some of the things that have been brought into the public domain in this debate. If the minister were to look at those two reports, I reckon he would be well down the track of trying to find other alternatives. It is incredibly frustrating when people say, “What would you do? I didn’t make the problem.” I will try to help the minister; if he does something good, I will commend him for it.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [8.18 pm]: I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014, which were introduced in this house last Thursday. Both this state Barnett government budget and the federal Abbott government budget, which we have seen delivered in the last hour or so, have hacked at the people I represent in the Mandurah and Peel regions. Seniors, pensioners and self-funded retirees—of which there are many in Mandurah—have all been targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government. Young families and new home buyers settling in the booming Mandurah suburbs of Lakelands, Madora Bay or Greenfields are all being targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government. People seeking to retrain, single mums or dads with kids wanting or needing to re-enter the workforce, or people seeking to reskill to find a job to provide for their families are all being targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government. Students and workers who use the Perth–Mandurah rail line every day to get to work or for education and training opportunities in the Perth metropolitan area are being targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government. Families that rely on their car to get to work and school and to go about their business are being targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government. The most vulnerable people in our community, the homeless, people finding it difficult to find a rental property or a place for their families to live, people suffering from mortgage stress, and people trying—as many more people in our community are every day—to live day by day and to find the money to pay their bills and the increasing costs of survival are being targeted by the Liberals and the Barnett government.

Increases in electricity and water charges, stamp duty and the very important aspects of day-to-day life are now impacting more than ever before on some of the most vulnerable people. This budget sees the Barnett government continue to max out the state’s credit card and take state debt, which the Western Australian Labor Party when in government had at \$3.6 billion, to over \$23 billion. It is projected to go to nearly \$30 billion in a few short years, demonstrating that the priorities of this government are not the priorities of the people whom I represent and those sectors I mentioned previously. The fact is that the Barnett government has taken a hatchet to the household budgets and livelihoods of most sectors of our community. My community of Mandurah and the Peel region has larger than state averages of young people, larger than state averages of unemployment, many young families with children, many more older Western Australians and people on fixed and low incomes than other areas—this budget in particular will hurt many of my constituents.

I would like to cover many aspects in the 30 minutes I have to speak, but I will focus on some key areas. No-one in my electorate really escapes the pain, but the pain is delivered to some of the most vulnerable. Let us look at the royalties for regions program. In its five years of existence, I do not know how many speeches I have made in this place that have highlighted the consistent poor allocation of royalties for regions funding to the Peel region. Consecutively, every year the Peel region has been the recipient of the lowest funding of royalties for regions money. Although regions that I have no beef with have deserved their share, we have not had our share at all in the whole five years. Now we know that effectively the royalties for regions program has been halved, with \$3 billion being carved out over the next four years in the forward estimates. Now there will be less royalties for regions money to be shared around the nine regions. My fear, of course, is that once again Peel will consistently and continually be the poor cousin to the rest. It is interesting to note that I went past the Swan Mace room earlier and noticed a number of National Party members having a great time, no doubt celebrating their partnership with the Liberal Party in government. It is a dark day for the regions when the National Party does not realise what it has bent over and allowed to happen—but it has.

The budget has a \$600 million allocation to the south west, Peel, the great southern and the wheatbelt. We know that this money will be tied. The south west region and Peel are the two regions with the greatest populations of

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

any of the regions, but they collectively have been the recipients of the least amount of royalties for regions money over the last five years. The government will champion or trumpet, “We now have \$600 million allocated and you will get some of that, Peel.” It is too little too late, but I have to put in my bid for where the royalties for regions funding should be delivered to Mandurah. I am putting in a bid that will equate to over \$100 million. I fear that piddly little projects might get a look in, but the real big ones that will make a difference will not. That is the great fear I have.

I want to start with rail infrastructure. Mandurah railway station now services the whole of the region. It is the regional station connecting people from as far as Waroona, Pinjarra and Dwellingup to the rail system, yet it is the only rail station that services Mandurah with a population now of over 80 000 and the region with a population of over 100 000. We now need as a matter of urgency—it is not in the forward estimates, so it is not on the radar of this government—a new rail station north of Mandurah. If it is not going to be built at Paganoni, which is what the Labor Party promised at the 2013 state election, it needs to be built in Lakelands. It will be a less expensive station if it is built in Lakelands. We do not need all the bells and whistles in Lakelands; we simply need a station that will allow the burgeoning suburbs of Meadow Springs, Madora Bay and Lakelands to be serviced. That section of the northern part of my electorate is the most rapidly growing part of the Peel electorate. That is my first bid. Peter Martinovich will say it will cost \$30 million. A station at Lakelands need not cost \$30 million, but this government has no plan for a second station.

My second bid is to address the parking at the Mandurah railway station. It is now chronic. The people who live in and around the Mandurah station are now confronted every single day with people parking on their front verges and blocking their driveways. It is bedlam. Wyeree Road, Crawford Street, Truarn Street, Milgar Street and Stirling Grove are chockas every single morning because people now cannot park in the car park. There are no places in the car park after 8.30 am, so people are parking in these streets and that is impacting on the residents of those areas.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: Do they catch the train?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am not going to take the interjection from the member for Belmont because I have too much to get through. The member can get up and make her own speech.

The fact is that Mandurah is discriminated against because one station attempts, or needs, to serve the whole population of the city. If we go north to Warnbro and Warnbro North, four stations service Warnbro through to Rockingham–Kwinana. Only one station services Mandurah. It is time for a new railway station to provide for those people living in the northern part of our city in particular. There are my first two projects.

The third and one of the most crucial projects of all not in the budget—if royalties for regions is a fund, I need \$10 million minimum for it—is saving the Peel–Harvey waterway. At the moment, 25 or more separate agencies or entities have some interest in the Peel–Harvey waterways, but demarcation lines are always involved. One example of that is the following: two big fan-like boats similar to those that operate in places like the Everglades are operating on the Peel–Harvey estuary. The Peel–Harvey system is not the Everglades. A couple of years ago I wrote to the former environment minister and asked how to ban these fan-like boats, which make a huge, appalling noise and drive away migratory birds that are part of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to which Australia and Western Australia are signatories. What did the then Minister for the Environment, Hon Donna Faragher, say? She said that it was not her responsibility! I thought it would be, as she was the then environment minister! She told me to go to the Department of Transport. I went to the Department of Transport, and it said it had no jurisdiction. I went to the City of Mandurah and the Shire of Murray and was told that they have no jurisdiction. I went to the Department of Water and was told that it had no jurisdiction. No-one has any jurisdiction, yet these boats can float about disturbing the natural habitats, ecology and foreshore reserves willy-nilly because no-one has any jurisdiction! That is one of many examples. It is also one of the reasons money goes to the existing departments—the Department of Water and the department of the environment as it was and now the Department of Parks and Wildlife. They have their little pools of funding, but it is not enough. In fact, no scientific report in the last 15 years has indicated that the health of the Peel–Harvey waterway and water quality are improving.

I have quoted a number of those reports in this place, particularly during the past five years. All the reports reveal a number of indicators that give cause for concern. We already know that there is black ooze and acid sulphate soil underneath the water and land—but it does not come under anyone’s jurisdiction. Well, here is the fix! The government should give us \$10 million to establish a legislated governance body that has the teeth to ensure that all the agencies that have a role to play fulfil their responsibility; and to establish the Peel regional park, which should incorporate the green bits on the map—that is, the terrestrial pieces of land that have been identified for the park—and create, as Labor did with the Canning and Swan Rivers, a Peel waterways park. This

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would not affect fishing or crabbing; indeed, those two pursuits are part of what makes the place so appealing, and we want them to continue. However, if we do not do something in the two-year window of opportunity and there is a catastrophic collapse of the system, then you guys in government—and us in government if we are successful in 2017—will be faced with a bill in the billions to fix the system!

David Rennie is a Mandurah local whom I admire greatly. He was featured on *Australian Story* only a month or so ago. He has a mental health condition, but part of the way he addresses the challenges he faces is through his photography. Although he told his personal situation on *Australian Story*, the episode was really about where he lives in the Peel. His pictures clearly show the beauty of where we live, of the Peel–Harvey system and of the native fauna and flora. They also show the degradation of the habitat and ecology of the system. He said that if he could do anything as a result of having his profile elevated by *Australian Story*, it would be to get those who live in Mandurah and the Peel to understand and value how important it is that they become champions of the Peel waterways; and how important it is for the rest of Western Australia to realise just how special and unique is the part of the world in which I have chosen to live for the past 27 years. When I saw David Rennie last Friday, he said—he is so right—“David, we only have a little bit of time left.” The Minister for Environment and the Minister for Water should come on board, as should the Deputy Premier, who represents the area. This is crucial. Ten million dollars will help establish the Peel waterways park and a governance system. It is critical. I have just spent between \$50 million and \$60 million from royalties for regions, but we absolutely deserve it because of the pathetic amount we have received from that fund!

I will highlight a couple of other issues. I do not understand why this government continues to attack education—I refer to the recent cuts—and why it has made a ridiculous attack on training. I listened to the member for Cockburn highlight the situation perfectly. Those who are being hit are young apprentices and single mums and dads who are trying to lift their opportunities so that they can provide for their families.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They are the ones who have been targeted. The member for Cockburn referred to a young apprentice who last year paid \$250 to access his course and who has found out that he has to pay \$600 this year. These people are already on low incomes. The government is increasing fees for the very people who cannot afford to shoulder that burden. They are trying to lift themselves so that they and their families have better opportunities. The government has attacked education and training. I have told the Deputy Premier, who is now the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, that if there is one thing he does before he retires in a couple of years, it should be to attack the stain of unemployment in Mandurah and Peel; indeed, a 17.5 per cent youth unemployment rate is a travesty of justice—it is disgusting. The government cannot attack unemployment rates that have historically remained at that level for nearly two decades by making budget cuts in education and training. It is ridiculous—absolutely ridiculous! The member for Dawesville can go around saying that he is wonderful because he secured money for the Peel Thunder Football Club, but that will not provide jobs for people and it will not make sure that at least one member of a family is earning and providing, which is the priority. That is what he should be focusing on. I will join with him to fix the problem of unemployment.

What does the budget mean for a worker who travels from Mandurah to Perth by train because he cannot find a local job? The government has increased public transport fares, so it now costs \$20 a day to get on the train! People who live in Mandurah and travel to Perth for work will have to pay \$20 a day—there is also a new \$2.00 charge for parking—which equates to \$100 a week or \$5 000 a year from their budget. Many of these people are not highly paid. They work in Perth or in the industrial and commercial areas of the metropolitan area. They use the train because driving to Perth on the freeway would take two hours. The government is hitting them the hardest, because they will have to pay \$20 a day to go to work! The government has also hit students who travel by public transport. I do not understand why the government has done this. Many people in my area are some of the most vulnerable in our community because they are on low or fixed incomes.

While on the theme of education, I refer to the Minister for Education’s recent flagging of the closure of behaviour centres. There is a behaviour centre in Mandurah and it is my understanding that it provides for more than 50 kids who are at the pointy end of behaviour management. Those 50 kids should not be in the classroom because they need one-on-one, consistent assistance to, hopefully, fix their behavioural problems so that they can go back into the classroom to learn and to find a worthwhile career path when they leave the education system. What has the government’s dopey Minister for Education done? He is thick! He has flagged the closure of behaviour centres. I will not mention the name of a principal who wrote to me about the closure of behaviour centres, because the Minister for Education will slap a gag on him and threaten him. Indeed, during the education cuts campaign, the Minister for Education told principals to shut up. The principal highlighted how important the behaviour centre is to his school and to other schools, many of which have a low socioeconomic status. Most of the schools in my area have a low socioeconomic status. Most of the primary schools in my area have a low SES

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as do the only two high schools in my electorate. The principal's letter states that the behaviour centre provides —

- The development of behaviour change plans for students
- Supporting teachers and providing professional learning for them in working with students with behaviour difficulties
- Providing a safe classroom setting for other students in our classrooms
- The creation and provision of resources to support behaviour change plans
- The wellbeing of staff members who work daily with students with difficult behaviour
- Allowing students with difficult behaviours to access the social & emotional and academic curriculum

These are his words, but I ain't telling his name —

I have grave concerns for the wellbeing of my staff and my students should we no longer have access to the support of a Primary Behaviour Centre. I am sure that all of the schools in Mandurah would hold similar concerns. I look forward to discussing this matter further with you at our next school board meeting.

He wants to discuss the matter with me, and I will. Get it into your thick heads over there that this is the sort of stuff that you, the government, are trying to do to the most vulnerable children in our state, and I have a huge number of them in my electorate. The government is whacking them with their family household budgets and it is whacking them with the cutting of behaviour management and some other programs from their schools because of the cuts to education in the last few months since last year. Schools now have \$100 000, \$200 000 and \$300 000 less in their budgets to provide support for Aboriginal students, for kids with learning difficulties and for kids who have numeracy and literacy difficulties. They are the very programs that will help these kids out of a poverty cycle. Fix these kids and we will start seeing a decline in unemployment rates, we will start seeing an improvement in retention rates at school and we will see an improvement in the number of kids who have aspirations to go to university or to get a trade. These are the things that this government is gutting and cutting, and government backbenchers, no matter who they represent, have the same sorts of people in their electorates and they are turning their back on them because they are following this great, big wizard who will retire from this place. The Premier will retire from this place in probably a year or so and he will have his fat parliamentary pension—don't worry, he will go out of here with probably \$180 000 a year, indexed for life. But that is not the case for my people who live in Mandurah and find it difficult every day to pay their bills, borrowing from this little pile dollars to make sure the electricity supply continues and to make sure there is food on the table. Government members may think this is just me going off, but I am sorry this is real; it is the reality. It has an effect on the people in my community in particular.

The government has turned its back on retirement village people, and I want to talk about one case. The Retirement Villages Amendment Bill went through this place in 2012. That was a bill promised by this government and was supported by the opposition. The bill proposed to change a number of issues regarding people who live in retirement villages, including looking at the contracts that people sign and the moneys they pay into sinking funds or funds that are used for the provision of services and the maintenance of the retirement villages. That bill was supported by the opposition, but then the Western Australian Retirement Villages Residents Association highlighted how this government has now reneged on a major undertaking by the then Minister for Commerce. I met with representatives from that association and will be having lunch with them tomorrow. On Tuesday, 18 December 2012, in the Legislative Council, the previous Minister for Commerce, Hon Simon O'Brien, stated —

... payments will be prescribed that are of a class not to be passed on to residents. The sorts of costs that we intend to prohibit from being passed on to residents under this provision are basically costs that are not related directly to the operation of a village. Those costs would include certain administering body legal costs, such as costs awarded against an operator by the State Administrative Tribunal or other courts. Other possible examples include fees for membership of industrial or professional associations, and travel costs.

What do we find? In the drawing up of the various regulations, the government has turned its back on people who live in retirement villages and they will now have to pay those costs. I will try to make sure that that issue is raised in a private member's motion later this year.

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Finally, I want to raise an issue with the Minister for Health regarding a constituent of mine, Mrs Yvonne D'Ascenzo. I will say this briefly because I will be writing to the minister again. Yvonne is now over 65 years old. A couple of years back she sought to have an operation for stomach stapling and she was caught in a convoluted, confusing and complicated medical bureaucracy with the then surgeon who was to provide the actual operational work, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and the health department. Because of what I can describe only as a debacle, she never had her operation; it did not take place. There were difficulties with the doctor and in the end Mrs D'Ascenzo was not able to have an operation that she needed. Then when she sought to try to have the operation again, the response from the health department was that because she was over 65 years of age, the operation could no longer be performed. Basically, because of circumstances beyond her control, she missed out on her surgery and she is now 67, I think, and according to the department is too old for the operation. I will be writing to the health minister again about Yvonne's circumstances, because I want him to investigate this matter thoroughly and to look at a special provision to accommodate her needs. Quite frankly, she has been very, very poorly treated by the system and, indeed, deserves to have her circumstances reviewed by the minister.

This budget is a disgusting budget; it is an outrageous budget for the people of Mandurah and for the people of Peel, but I have put in my bid for just some of the projects that I want funded, and we deserve the funding because of the nature of our population, the nature of our demographic and the fact that the Peel region will be expected to accommodate a huge amount of the population's growth in the future.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [8.48 pm]: I rise to take the opportunity to speak to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 in response to this year's state budget. I will address a number of issues, but the frustrating thing when preparing this speech was to try to limit the number of items to address, because there are so many within my electorate of Fremantle. In a broader context, there are issues of how increases in fees and charges affect ordinary Western Australians and some of the lowest paid people in our community. There are many issues of frustration that I need to have placed on the record about how the government is dealing with the state's finances. Like many Western Australians, I listened intently to the Premier in the televised leaders' debate during the last state election campaign. In that debate he said that under his government electricity price increases would be limited to "about the rate of inflation". This is the second budget that has been handed down since that election and this is the second time that that explicit promise has been broken. Power bills will go up by 4.5 per cent, water charges by six per cent, public transport fares by 4.5 per cent, and there will be staggering increases to land tax and car registration fees. In all, as many members on this side of the house have already summarised, it is estimated that the average family will be slugged an additional \$420 a year as a result of specific measures in this budget. The headline figures in the broader budget are known all too well. These increases represent what could be described as a \$1.1 billion tax grab on Western Australians. State debt has increased from \$3.6 billion in 2008 to \$25 billion, although I note the comments of the Premier in question time today about that specific figure. By this budget's estimation, we will reach \$30 billion by 2017–18. In 2013–14, state revenue increased by a very healthy 8.8 per cent, and over the life of the Barnett government it has increased by 52 per cent, to \$28.6 billion.

In last Friday's *The West Australian*, Gareth Parker wrote a summary of this budget. The headline of that article was "No one spared from revenue grabs". He wrote —

Mike Nahan's first Budget has spared no section of the WA community from rises in taxes, levies, fees and charges.

The revenue grabs, worth \$446 million in 2014-15, are accompanied by assumptions on royalty revenue that are hopeful and spending growth that are wildly optimistic.

All so he can deliver —

He is referring there to Mike Nahan, the Treasurer —

a razor-thin Budget surplus of \$175 million—which amounts to a rounding error —

That is in the context of the current budget. The article continues —

... and a debt pile that continues to hit new records with every passing year.

In that article Gareth Parker also wrote —

For all the talk of reforming the Government business model, it is clear that WA's debt will continue to grow as long as Mr Barnett is Premier.

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The article continued —

So much of Dr Nahan’s financial plan hinges on his target of containing spending growth to 2.6 per cent, a dubious prospect given it was 9.1 per cent in 2013–14 —

There are some qualifications to that comment. I notice that the shadow Treasurer, the member for Victoria Park, made some of these comments in his address today.

Gareth Parker’s article continues —

And that plan relies on growth of the public wages bill to be curbed at 2.9 per cent, when it averaged 8.1 per cent not just last year but every year for the past decade.

It stretches the bounds of credibility—unless the Government decides to use its new forced redundancy provisions in a far more aggressive way that it has foreshadowed.

We already know that the redundancies scheduled for the public sector are severe; we know that they will hit hard the workers who take redundancy and will impact whether they will be able to get work in the future. They will affect those workers left in the public sector who will need to try to pick up the slack of the work and, of course, they will affect services provided to the public.

The article concludes —

The Budget is also the final confirmation, if it were needed, that the Liberals’ “fully funded, fully costed” 2013 election plan was a fairy tale.

That article sums up the position in regard to the health of the revenue in this budget and the frustration of the effect of additional fees and charges.

It would be one thing if the record increases resulted in tangible benefits for our community, but I can say with complete confidence on behalf of the electorate that I represent—Fremantle—that that is very demonstrably not the case. I would like to spell out why the people of Fremantle despair of this government’s attitude towards the state’s second city. In June 2012—nearly two years ago—the Barnett government, under then minister Hon Simon O’Brien, committed to a decentralisation plan for government office accommodation to be moved from the CBD to various suburban sites. A press release of June 2012 stated —

Finance Minister Simon O’Brien today announced plans to relocate 80,000sqm of government office space from the CBD to Stirling, Fremantle and Murdoch in the second stage of the State Government’s office accommodation reforms.

The press release specified that Housing was to go to Fremantle. This issue has been a huge disappointment for the Fremantle community, as I imagine it has been for the communities of Stirling and Murdoch, which were also encompassed in that announcement. Having the head office of the Department of Housing locate somewhere around 900 workers to central Fremantle would have been a tremendous boost to the local economy. In practical terms it would mean that Kings Square—that is, the old Myer building—could accommodate a key anchor tenant and the development of that location would then proceed. It would be a win-win situation.

The expectations of the Fremantle community were raised when they read the minister’s unqualified commitment to relocate the Department of Housing to Fremantle, but what have we heard since? The expressions of interest went out, and the owners of the old Myer building and the key private stakeholder in the Kings Square development, Sirona Capital, were encouraged that the process had commenced. But those expressions of interest have come and gone, and still there is no word on whether the department will relocate to Fremantle. I have asked questions of the two ministers responsible for this portfolio at different times in this house. When I asked questions last December of the then Minister for Finance, the member for Riverton, he said that the expressions of interest were being evaluated. In April I asked the new Minister for Finance, Minister Nalder, and at that stage he said he was looking at the finalised business case for office decentralisation, and when that was finalised he would let us know. There has still been no word. I have raised this issue because, perhaps with no great surprise, there appears to be nothing in the budget that would give the people of my electorate any hope that that government commitment will be fulfilled.

I move now to the question of Fremantle high schools. As far as I can see, this budget has no separate allocation to facilitate the high school amalgamation process. This is a key issue of concern. Since the Premier made the announcement of amalgamations of high schools in the wider Fremantle area, it has been the subject of much awareness and discussion in my electorate. We know, through questions asked in Parliament—not from any information volunteered by the government—that the amalgamation will involve South Fremantle Senior High School and Hamilton Senior High School. The site that will be utilised and how the amalgamations will take

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place are still unknown. The government will say that it is in the process of community consultation, but in my view so far the process has been poorly handled. There have been no parameters around the change, and so since the announcement by the Premier last August, high schools have found it more difficult to continue to grow with the threat of amalgamation looming. Similarly, there has been no time frame made clear, and so local schools and local families are in the dark as to when the new school will be operational. But most importantly, any amalgamated school will require investment to ensure that community confidence is instilled in the new school. Investment in a gifted and talented program of academic excellence would ensure a fast-building cohort to enrol students in ATAR subjects. To ensure that the amalgamated school is greater than the sum of its parts, dedicated resources will be required. I do not see that in this budget. There have been off-the-cuff announcements by the Premier and a very broad and directionless consultation by the minister, but no policy direction and no resources to help build the revamped, amalgamated school that the Fremantle community so desperately wants. That is what was needed in this budget.

We need look no further to see how the government's neglect of Fremantle manifests itself than this government's neglect of its own; that is, state-owned assets. The warders' cottages were the subject of an announcement by the Premier and the heritage minister last week. The announcement purported to deliver on an election promise in the heritage portfolio of a rolling heritage fund. That was an \$8 million promise, but the announcement was actually for \$4 million and the details given were that \$2 million was to be allocated to the Fremantle warders' cottages. There are 18 cottages—I previously thought that there were 13—that have been completely ignored since public tenants were evicted over two years ago. Because of that neglect, the buildings are in a terrible state, so \$2 million for 18 cottages—a sum which is also for a feasibility plan on what could happen to the cottages in the future—is a poor outcome. The last estimate of the amount needed to fully restore the cottages was over \$7 million. I have been working with the Fremantle Society and other community members who are passionate about these assets, and we have collected over 1 000 signatures to urge the government to recognise the heritage value of these cottages; to find all the resources needed to restore the cottages, not just to do long-neglected repairs; and, finally, to have a feasibility plan for what will happen to the cottages in the future. I do not see any of those items addressed in the government's announcement about the heritage cottages. We will continue to work and advocate on behalf of those people who care about those cottages until the assets are properly restored and in use.

Next to the warders' cottages is the old courthouse, which was used as the police station until last year. Since being vacated, this complex has been fenced off and left vacant. I have written to the Minister for Police, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Heritage to ask what is happening to this complex, but there has been no clear answer. Will this heritage asset be neglected like the cottages? I undertake to come back to this matter of the courthouse at the next budget in 2015 to see whether any progress has been made.

Ten years ago this year, a report on the state of the Fremantle Traffic Bridge was commissioned by Main Roads Western Australia. That report into the replacement, planning, design and preliminary works for the Fremantle Traffic Bridge found that the bridge was at an unacceptable risk of collapse if any sort of river traffic hit the bridge from underneath. That was 10 years ago. It has been 30 years since its life span was due to expire, so again it is concerning, but perhaps not surprising, to see that absolutely no money has been allocated for a replacement bridge. Last year's budget item referred to the planning, design and preliminary works for the traffic bridge and \$1.65 million was allocated in 2013–14. However, the government was asked how that money was going to be spent for the design of a new traffic bridge; in fact, that money was allocated for repairs to the traffic bridge and I was told that there is no money in the 2014–15 financial year or in the forward estimates for a replacement bridge. The report from 10 years ago found that the bridge was an important distributor road carrying heavy-vehicle traffic around the Fremantle port facilities and connecting Fremantle and the Perth CBD. It was described as being at the end of its serviceable life 10 years ago. As I have said, no money has been allocated in the budget this year or in the forward estimates. I think that is a real concern. I think that the repairs have been completed now. I certainly intend to keep advocating for that piece of infrastructure because I cannot see that doing repairs is sufficient.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.F. McGURK: The engineer's report from 10 years ago contained three options. The first option was to do nothing—that is, just to do repair work; the second option was to revamp the existing bridge; and the third option was to build a new bridge. The government has done the first option, which was just to do some repairs and basic maintenance on the bridge. That was the least favoured option in the engineer's report 10 years ago.

The Liberal Party's attitude to transporting freight has been made most apparent in this budget and, of course, in the federal budget that we heard delivered this evening. This is a crucial issue, as the wider Fremantle community and much of the Fremantle area deals with increasing congestion, including trucks containing freight

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travelling in and out of the Fremantle port each day. The state Liberal government has in the past mouthed platitudes about adopting Labor's target of 30 per cent of Fremantle's freight being transported on rail. When in government, Labor achieved an increase in that rate from two per cent to 17 per cent, proving that with will and application, increases can be achieved. This budget confirms that last year's target was 16 per cent. What was achieved is expected to be 13.9 per cent of freight being transported on rail, and 14.5 per cent is budgeted for in 2015–16. During the budget estimates hearing last year, I asked the then Minister for Transport, the member for Vasse, to detail the government's strategy to get more freight on rail. To cut a long answer short, he said nothing. There was no specific strategy, no push from government and no concerted effort to assist the logistics industry, the port and the stevedoring companies to improve that rate. If the government's target for the percentage of freight being transported on rail was not proof enough, this government's lack of credibility on improving the use of rail to transport freight into and out of the Fremantle port is further demonstrated by looking at the subsidy given to the Fremantle port rail service. In 2013–14, \$4 million was allocated to that subsidy, and it was welcomed. I understand that in past years, budget allocations by this government were not included, but when push came to shove and the subsidy was about to run out, money for the subsidy was found. Last year, the inclusion of the subsidy in the budget figures was welcomed. This year, however, the subsidy has been included, but it starts to decline. It will decline over the next three years, so that by 2017–18, it will cease altogether. That is very concerning for the Fremantle community and for the logistics industry. I think I mentioned in a similar speech on the budget last year that I had met with national freight and logistics industry representatives who said that they welcomed transporting freight on rail as they saw it as an efficient and effective means of transport and that they were concerned that the percentage was not increasing. However, it is a real concern that the subsidy will peter out by 2017.

We need look only at the road strategy that this government has embarked upon to have confirmed that the government's solution to congestion and, in this case, congestion caused by freight movements is simply to build more and more roads. An amount of \$118 million has been allocated to the High Street–Stirling Highway intersection, which needs upgrading. That allocation was also contained in last year's budget. My view, and the view of many residents I have canvassed on the subject, is that that intersection does not need a road that is six lanes wide with limited capacity for pedestrian access along the route. The upgrade particularly does not need six lanes when the Stirling Bridge, which feeds in and out of that upgrade, has only four.

Tonight we heard confirmation of what had been reported in the media last weekend that the federal government will fund a multimillion-dollar, five-kilometre road through Ramsar internationally recognised wetlands, channelling all freight traffic through the local communities in the form of the Roe 8 extension. This is not just any road. It will be funded by what is euphemistically called a PPP—a public–private partnership. I understand that sometimes might apply to the construction of the road, but in this case there will be tolls on freight being transported through that particular passage of road.

It was reported in *The West Australian* on the weekend that Deidre Willmott—who is now head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia but has, in past lives, been a staffer in various ministerial offices for Liberal ministers and also a former candidate for the Liberal Party—confirmed that the chamber supports tolls not just for trucks but for all road users. Roe 8 is a bad road. It is not only bad for the environment and local communities, but also hugely expensive. It is a lost opportunity to invest in rail capacity, which would deliver better outcomes for efficient and clean freight movement at a fraction of the price.

Are we surprised at the state's management of its finances in this year's budget? Perhaps not. I have listed a number of items in my electorate that have been neglected and missed out in this year's budget. As I said at the commencement, I could have listed many more. I am concerned about some of the more disadvantaged people in our community. I am also concerned about school funding generally. I am concerned about school programs that have been cut through the program of education cuts announced last year. We know that the devil will be in the detail in regard to education funding contained in this year's budget. We are yet to uncover exactly what some of those headline figures in the education budget will mean for schools in practical terms.

There is an allocation of money to Fremantle Hospital. The Fremantle community, and the broader community that has come to rely on that hospital, respect the work that is done at that hospital. The allocation of money to Fremantle Hospital is really to wind up many of the services that the local community has come to rely on, particularly the emergency department, which will close under the government's current plan. People will be required to go to the emergency department of Fiona Stanley Hospital when it comes online. Although there has been an allocation of funds to Fremantle Hospital, I am interested to see the detail about how those funds will be spent. The information we have about the government's agenda for Fremantle Hospital is that it is a reduction in services that many in the broader Fremantle community have come to rely on. I understand that people cannot have everything. They cannot have a large new hospital in Fiona Stanley. There will obviously be a lot that is

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good about that new hospital coming on board, but I have a lot of concerns about there being no emergency department facility or capacity in the Fremantle area. Fremantle is an entertainment precinct. It is right on top of a working port. Many industrial areas feed into Fremantle. Having some sort of emergency facility in Fremantle would be sensible. It may not contain all the services that are in the Fremantle ED now, but some sort of capacity for people to walk in off the street or present to the hospital and be seen in the case of an emergency is very important.

I could have also spoken about increases to vocational training charges. The member for Mandurah spoke about that prior to me. I too share a lot of his concerns about what those increases mean for some of the more disadvantaged in our community who rely on accessing vocational training to skill themselves up to be job-ready and also what those increases will mean in terms of skill shortages. I note that the former Minister for Training and Workforce Development is in the house. There is a lag that applies to vocational training. When there is a peak in skill demand, such as a construction boom or the resources boom that we saw recently, people need to get into training and try to get their skills up and ready. But of course a lot of those skills take up to four years to develop. It is constantly the case that we need to encourage people into vocational training areas. We need to encourage people to take up those opportunities, not discourage them by massive fee increases, as we have seen recently. The effect of that will be felt in adverse social impacts in the community. People will be discouraged from taking up opportunities in vocational training, but I think we will feel them very keenly in local skills shortages in the future. Future governments will be scrambling to make up the difference because this government has actually discouraged people from entering vocational courses.

I wish there was some good news in this budget. There is a small amount allocated in the budget for Fremantle Cemetery—that is a good thing. I have a few constituents who regularly see me about the state of Fremantle Cemetery. I will be happy to tell them there is a bit of money allocated for it. Apart from that, I am sorry to say that there is not a lot in this budget for Fremantle.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [9.18 pm]: Tonight in the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014, I have chosen to speak about a report that was given to me in November 2013. I will explain, after I have spoken to the report, why I have delayed bringing it into the house until now. It was completed under a parliamentary internship program. It covers two of my portfolios as a shadow parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Small Business; Women’s Interests and is entitled “Report on Women Entrepreneurs and Women Business Owners in Western Australia”. The report sought to map the demographics of women’s participation as business owners across all levels of business and industry in Western Australia and to look for trends in their participation. It comments on what the future holds and what recommendations might be made to enhance and build women-owned ventures. This is important in the context of how the state is run and the role of small business in the state. Are we doing the best we can to prepare people for small business and to make sure that the businesses started are sustainable, last longer than the two-year average and actually return a solid income and a living wage for proprietors?

I will quote quite a bit from the report. I ask for tolerance from the house tonight. Entrepreneurs in Australia, specifically Western Australia, choose to start their own business for a range of reasons. This report relates specifically to women’s entrepreneurial engagement and business ownership levels. It suggests a focus on empowering women through the delivery of training and support programs, as well as on the need to address society’s perceptions of women. Increased involvement of women in the economy is positively related to higher standards of living. Globally, there are fewer women entrepreneurs than men, and this entrepreneurial gap is also found in Australia. It was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s that scholarship on female entrepreneurs was considered necessary and that gender was in fact acknowledged as a factor in small business ownership. The typical Australian woman in small business is an Australian-born woman aged between 30 and 50 years who is the eldest or an only child, has completed a university degree, and is married with children. However, one in five women business owners is also a single parent. At the end of 2011–12, there were 219 918 small businesses in Western Australia, with the majority falling under the service industries. Not surprisingly, WA has the highest number of small businesses in the mining sector. Nationally, small businesses in Western Australia account for just over 10 per cent of Australian small businesses, and the proportion of women business owners in Western Australia is slightly higher than for the rest of the country, at 35 per cent. Women are more likely than men to be sole owners and to not have partnerships or to be in other forms of business structure, and they like to maintain an absolute control over their business. There is little distinction between personal and business assets.

A popular school of thought held that women home-based business owners were content to keep their businesses at home and not attempt to expand them. However, recent research indicates that women do wish to grow their businesses and to relocate to more commercial premises. Although the bulk of this report refers to for-profit

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businesses, a large number of social enterprises also should be mentioned. Social enterprises serve the common good, if you like, and can be either for-profit or not-for-profit businesses. They are driven primarily by a mission to help society. Consequently, social enterprises do not distribute their profits; they reinvest them into the community. More women sit on the boards of social enterprises in the corporate world than do men.

Men are more likely than women to become business owners, and the socialisation processes that women and men are exposed to seem to be a contributing factor to this. The socialisation theory contends that individuals maintain an ideology or a set of ideas constructed by society. Therefore, the masculine hegemony has resulted in traditional male traits being associated with business success and leadership. Women tend to devote fewer hours to their businesses than do men, with just under half of women business owners working full time, whereas 83 per cent of men work full time. A key reason for this is that more women than men maintain a business and have primary care of children. Given that women spend fewer hours on their business, it is perhaps not surprising that of the near one million women business owners in Australia, only half can pay themselves a wage.

More women than men start their own business out of necessity. Women start their businesses to assure their own employment rather than develop it. Risk-taking is a fundamental element of entrepreneurial activity, and studies have shown that risk tolerance tends to differ between women and men. In general, women entrepreneurs have a limited risk tolerance and so tend to set a limit on the size of their business that is lower than the upper limits set by male business owners. The Australian small business key statistics and analysis for 2012 revealed that 27.3 per cent of male-only businesses aimed for maximum possible growth, while only 13 per cent of women-owned firms did. So, women-owned businesses, on average, are smaller than male-owned businesses and to that end, women-owned businesses have fewer employees. Additionally, women tend to exhibit increased anxiety regarding the possibility of failure, which again may limit their plans for initial development and later expansion. Finally, women business owners, on average, earn less than men, with 29 per cent earning under \$400 per week, compared with only 14 per cent of men.

With regard to rural businesses, approximately 35 per cent of small businesses are based outside Perth. Regional businesses are often favoured by low cost and reduced competition, but there are generally increased freight and transport expenses to be covered and reduced markets. Rural entrepreneurs may also encounter difficulties in engaging with professional services due to the vast distances, but rural women make use of a wide range of marketing strategies and their social networks are perceived to be of greater significance than formal business networks. The Australian Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 2012 business report revealed that regional and rural businesses were twice as likely as metropolitan businesses to obtain funding from a bank loan and that, conversely, more metropolitan businesses were funded by personal savings than regional businesses. This finding may be explained by the closer relationships people in rural areas have with their banks. It is evident that rural entrepreneurs face different conditions from city-based businesses and, accordingly, programs should be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women business owners outside Perth.

One of the main reasons women choose to establish their own business is the flexibility it affords, allowing them to juggle their home and family responsibilities with paid work. Women are 10 times more likely than men to name family responsibilities as the basis for their decision to enter self-employment. Women are also motivated to start their own business as a means of advancing their career, which may otherwise be hindered by structural barriers present in a patriarchal society. Despite advances made to achieve gender equality, women still meet with continuing prejudice in the workplace. In a system that supports and furthers male advantage, there exists implicit sociocultural and psychosocial barriers to women's full participation in the corporate world and the wider economy. We often refer to the glass ceiling in this context. Some women see entrepreneurship and business ownership as a way of eluding the glass ceiling and in so doing become "corporate refugees". Therefore, for some women the choice to start their own business is a response to the gender discrimination they face.

Networking provides a number of benefits for entrepreneurs and it is important to examine women's involvement in networks and to identify ways to encourage their participation. Importantly, network involvement is considered to be positively associated with business growth. Historically, business networks have been run by men for men, so women have found themselves disadvantaged when accessing information, making new business contacts and engaging in training seminars and professional development. Studies reveal that men utilise formal networks more so than women, who in turn are more likely to consult family and friends. For the significant number of women who not only run their own business, but also are tasked with the majority of family obligations, there simply may not be the time or opportunity to network.

This paper, of which I have provided members a brief overview, makes a number of recommendations. It addresses many of the barriers that prevent women from achieving their entrepreneurial potential and ends by

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referring to the challenges women face and some of the obstacles that are unique to women, and why that should dictate specific programs for women. Women of all ages, education and qualifications take on business ownership. Therefore, any program or training scheme must acknowledge the diversity of potential women business owners and be designed accordingly. The existence of negative stereotypes about women and their abilities is preventing women from gaining the credibility and self-belief they need to be successful entrepreneurs. The paper continues —

... the female underperformance falsehood must be squashed to allow women to reach their full potential ... Unfortunately, “stereotype-based expectations are tenacious and are resistant to disconfirming information” ... Therefore, we face the difficult task of challenging and then changing social attitudes.

... some critics believe that as women’s businesses will ultimately compete in the wider market, training programs should not be gender specific. However, as this paper has detailed women do confront gender specific difficulties and thus gender targeted programs are not only appropriate but vital ...

... training programs for women should include both soft and hard competencies, such as self-empowerment and how to secure finance respectively ... The goal of training programs should be the development of women’s skills and knowledge, which ultimately will “result in confidence building and changing women’s perceptions of themselves...[and] their perceptions are key” ... women, more so than men, question their financial abilities and so training programs should specifically deal with the quantitative elements of financing and running a business ...

...

There needs to be encouragement of women to enter all sectors of the economy, not just those believed to be suitable for the gendered expectations of women.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: The paper continues —

This encouragement could come in the form of government funded programs which assist women to identify business opportunities in non-traditional sectors as well as grants to financially support business development in high-growth sectors.

...

... women tend to start businesses in low-growth, low-risk sectors such as personal services. Directed government programs should support women starting a business in a high-value sector ...

The paper goes on to make a number of final recommendations, all of which add weight to the need for the Small Business Development Corporation and all of the business associations out there to think carefully about the training that they offer; how it is structured and whether it meets the needs of women as entrepreneurs. The paper concludes —

Women are more than capable, and so if changes are made to facilitate women’s business ownership, then not only will the economy be boosted but a more equal society will result.

I would like to thank Tamara Horstman for the work she did to produce this report. Tamara and her mother were found murdered in their home in the northern suburbs at the beginning of the year. It has taken me a while to present the report because of that.

In the last 15 minutes of my presentation I would like to talk about some of the issues that relate to my electorate. John Forrest Secondary College is still using the original kitchen that it had when it was built in the 1960s, and some of the toilet blocks have not been upgraded since the 60s. I fail to see how this government can possibly spend money on more recently built schools, in its members’ own electorates I might add, claiming that they need fixing, updating and amenities added more than they do at John Forrest Secondary College. The last time I went to the college and spoke to the principal and the Parents and Citizens Association about the needs of the college, the amount of asbestos in the old trade training centre at the back of the college was pointed out to me. There has not been appropriate funding to get rid of the asbestos. Hundreds of children and young people are at the college and go into the old trade training centre every day. I am not talking about the spectacular new trade trading centre that was funded by the Gillard government and supported by the Master Painters Australia and the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association of Western Australia, but the old trade training rooms, which are walled with asbestos, with gaping holes in them. It is a very sad day when this government cannot see its way

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 May 2014]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Janine Freeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love

clear to fund a school that desperately needs funding. But it does not surprise me, because it is in the electorate of Maylands and nothing out of this budget is being spent on the Maylands electorate.

I mentioned John Forrest Secondary College, and I will now mention the Collier Road upgrade. In April 2013, the RAC highlighted the Tonkin Highway intersection upgrade at Collier Road as one of several “national priorities” for consideration in the federal election, citing “prevalent crashes and congestion” on this section as “posing significant costs on the community and business”. The 2013 state budget listed the Tonkin Highway grade separations as funded and scheduled to commence in 2014.

Road projects funded under the next tranche of that National Building Program are scheduled to commence in 2014. These projects include ... construction of three interchanges on the Tonkin Highway,

One of those is the intersection with Collier Road, which is in my electorate.

In early 2013, a Liberal Party media statement on the state budget identified Tonkin Highway separations including Collier Road as one of its major projects requiring funding. In the same year, *The West Australian* labelled Tonkin Highway the “worst road for speeders”. The RAC black spot campaign has just given feedback to members about its concerns with particular areas in our electorates. In my electorate, the Tonkin Highway–Collier Road upgrade is one of them. Anyone driving across that intersection cannot miss the inherent dangers. Main Roads Western Australia posted a bulletin online that called the project —

... vital ... to enhance freight efficiency and productivity by reducing travel time and improving journey time reliability between the Perth Metropolitan Area at the north west of Australia.

The bulletin claims that construction will commence in 2016 and be completed by 2019; but let us look at what has been said in this budget. On the Tonkin Highway grade separator project, which includes Collier Road, the Western Australian government in the 2014–15 budget, has provided funding of \$66 million out of a total required of \$281.2 million. That is effectively \$235.2 million short, and the project has been pushed out to 2018–19. As I stand here tonight there is no confirmation of when this project will commence, but based on the budget, it looks like the bulk of the project—the \$140.6 million—is pegged for the 2017–18 budget. I seriously doubt whether the project is on the government’s agenda at all, in any fashion. I think it is on the books to make it look good. I think the people of Maylands and those who cross my electorate every day to or from work will continue to drive through one of the nation’s most dangerous intersections and across one of the most dangerous roads, because I cannot see any real commitment from the government to do anything to upgrade that intersection.

I want to raise two more points in the 10 minutes I have left. The first is the review of Liquor Act. Members will know that in my electorate—as in some of their own electorates—we have been waging a small but noisy war against Coles and Woolworths proposal to build immensely large liquor shops. A couple of years ago, Coles sought planning permission and a liquor licence to open a 1 200-square-metre liquor store on the old Cascades Tavern site, on Guildford Road, in Maylands. I am pleased to say that due to the incredibly hard work of constituents, the ratepayers’ association and the many agencies in my electorate who opposed it, the Liquor Commission rejected the application. Coles appealed the matter to the High Court and the appeal was rejected and the decision upheld. The block is still vacant so, clearly, Coles has not decided what to do after losing the appeal. I hope that some significant work will be done in the not-too-distant future because the site is an eyesore in its current form. All I can say is that if it had gone ahead, it would be not only an eyesore, but also a dangerous and destructive part of the community rather than simply a vacant block.

Now on the agenda is a plan by Woolworths, which purchased the Peninsular Tavern site in Maylands some years ago. Woolworths has been working with the City of Bayswater for years to come to a decision about what to build on the site. We would absolutely welcome the old tavern that is there being removed for good and a smart new tavern being built in situ that matches the heritage of the big domed peninsula building located nearby and that fits in with the ambience of the area. Members who have visited the new, redeveloped Maylands for a coffee will appreciate the amenity of the place. Members may not know—I hope that they do not know—that many shop owners in the area and residents living around that site and all the way to The Rise, which is the redeveloped Alma Venville Centre on the other side of Guildford Road, have reported a lot of antisocial behaviour stemming from excessive alcohol consumption, and this has caused big problems. It is a seasonal problem in that area of my electorate that occurs regularly every year. The instances of antisocial behaviour are related to very vulnerable people with some very difficult issues, some of whom suffer from a combination of mental illness with drug and/or alcohol problems. They may be homeless and living on the streets because often they have been brought to Perth from the regions for medical procedures such as dialysis at Royal Perth Hospital but were found to be drinking and have not been allowed back into the hostels where they were accommodated.

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There are currently 17 alcohol outlets within a one-kilometre radius of this centre in the heart of Maylands. I do not think anybody will be able to truly say that we need a 999-square-metre liquor store to add to the 17 or so other outlets in that very small space. The vulnerable people who have problems with alcohol consumption or other combinations of conditions certainly do not need those outlets. The site is right on the railway line and is within a few hundred metres of the Shopfront, an emergency relief provider that gives out emergency food parcels and helps provide accommodation for the transient, homeless and vulnerable people who go there every day. The Shopfront is run by the Catholic Church. There are another two centres for homeless people: the C.R.O.F.T. Centre in Inglewood and 55 Central, which is within 500 metres of the proposed Woolworths building. I am pleased to say that the proponents of this application took notice of the community unrest and sent a delegation, with their legal team and a community consultant, to meet with me prior to Christmas to discuss why the community has a problem with the proposal given that there is a liquor licence covering a very jaded, old, small tavern. They are really only seeking to extend the licence, but the plans and the size of the liquor outlet they are trying to have approved is a 999-square-metre Dan Murphy's liquor store with a tiny little pimple on the bum of a tavern with just a few tables. Members will have to pardon my expression, but it is obvious that what they want to do is open a very, very bloody big liquor store in the area.

Mr R.S. Love: Won't it be better than the old tavern that is there now, if the tavern is run-down and in need of replacement?

Ms L.L. BAKER: Absolutely; and the hundreds of residents I have spoken to would be happy to see that tavern gone and a new tavern built that offers an environment where people can take their children for tea and to socialise a bit. None of that comes with a destination alcohol outlet such as Dan Murphy's or Liquorland. The evidence on this is very clear. The emerging body of evidence is creating even more awareness throughout the scientific community, as well as the alcohol industry, on the negative impacts of massive destination liquor outlets. The three drivers of overconsumption of alcohol are affordability, availability and advertising, and huge liquor stores tick all three boxes. This is the twenty-first century and I am absolutely clear Coles and Woolworths have the wrong business model. I am not a business expert or a retailer, but as someone who has lived in and worked with the community, that business model will not fly anymore. People are sick of seeing children binge drinking and young people buying cheap alcohol. They are sick of seeing signs that say "Find a price and we will beat it", "Beat you to the bottom", "We are the lowest price ever", "We will charge you less than \$3 a bottle for wine" and "We'll discount under wholesale prices." All of that is fundamentally and morally wrong. Coles and Woolworths need to reconsider their business models. There must be a better way to retail alcohol in the community. We like a drink; I like a drink. I am not a wouser, but I do not want to see my electorate suddenly swamped with enormous, great destination liquor outlets that do nothing for the social fabric of the community except destroy it and have a negative impact on our families, children and the entire amenity of the area.

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [9.48 pm]: Once again, I am proud to outline in debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 the very generous support the Liberal–National government has given my electorate of Swan Hills in the 8 May 2014 budget, especially for infrastructure projects. The first is \$642 million towards the Swan Valley section of the NorthLinkWA project, formerly known as the Perth–Darwin highway. Both the federal and state governments have committed \$1.12 billion to the project, which is due for completion in 2019. The project involves two parts: firstly, a 37-kilometre link from Reid and Tonkin Highways to Muchea, also known as the Swan Valley bypass; and, secondly, the Tonkin Highway separations at Collier Road, Morley Drive and Benara Road. Transport and trucking companies based in Kewdale or beyond will have a far more uninterrupted voyage northwards to our resources projects in the north. Growing traffic volumes have been impacting on our community, particularly with issues of safety and the capacity of our tourism venues and wineries in the Swan Valley. An improved and direct route to the north via Muchea will be far more attractive and practical for our heavy-vehicle freight commuting between our state capital of Perth and our mineral wealth in the far north. When we consider that for two terms of the previous Labor government there was not a single—I repeat, not a single—road infrastructure project of any significance in the Swan Hills electorate, my constituents are understandably excited at the prospect of the completion of this major infrastructure project. There will be flow-on effects such as local jobs and safety improvements, which will allow Bullsbrook and the Swan Valley to undertake their aspirations for the future.

One of the largest beneficiaries will be the immediate population of Ellenbrook and the surrounding area of Aveley. The one thing Ellenbrook has missed out on is the availability of work nearby. There are a lot of tradesmen and others nearby who are not always working locally. We now have the potential to have industrial, commercial and logistical land on our doorstep—it is the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle. Land development can start going ahead once the southernmost part of the Perth–Darwin highway, or NorthLink as it is now called, gets going and the overpasses further down are underway. Once the first leg of the highway comes through,

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adjacent to Ellenbrook, I think a lot of people will say wow and realise that it opens things up. With the development of the north Ellenbrook area, as it is often called by the locals, Ellenbrook township will come into its own as a regional centre. A local developer describe this project as follows —

“There is no doubt the commitment of the federal and state governments to funding the Swan Valley Bypass —

As it has been called; now is called the NorthLinkWA —

and the broader Perth to Darwin highway has helped to put the Northern Gateway Industrial Park at Bullsbrook on the radar for businesses looking for industrial land north of the metropolitan area.”

“The prospect of infrastructure such as the highway in the proposed intermodal terminal tells us that Northern Gateway Industrial Park is well-positioned for the future provision of much-needed industrial land. There is the potential for employment opportunities for ultimately —

In his opinion —

10 000 people in logistics, transport and freight as well as support services for the mining, oil and gas industries.”

Some members who have not travelled to my electorate may not have noticed the completed new lights at the intersection of West Swan Road and Great Northern Highway. Heading further westwards they will notice a new roundabout at Gngalara Road and West Swan Road, which was completed some time ago at a cost of \$1 million. Further westward there is the upgrade of the roundabout at Pinaster Parade, the main entry to Ellenbrook, and the new lights at Drumpellier Drive not far away. Further on there is the almost completed Reid Highway and Lord Street lights at a cost of some \$8 million. Although they would normally predominantly be the responsibility of the City of Swan, and the City of Swan is a contractor doing the physical work, these are large projects funded by the Liberal–National government—a great result for our electorate from our first term.

In the first term of government, Swan Hills saw the successful building of two secondary schools, Ellenbrook Secondary College stage 2, for some \$25 million, and the Bullsbrook District High School, also in excess of \$25 million. The Bullsbrook school in particular, which was built in the 1950s, has seen a well-deserved and remarkable transformation catering for K–12 in Bullsbrook and surrounding areas. Two primary schools have also been built; they are complete and now operational. They are Malvern Springs Primary School, at a cost of some \$14 million, and Aveley Primary School, also at a cost of \$14 million, and they are each complete with air-conditioning, as other schools in the whole of Western Australia will be. These have had exceptional support within the community. While on schools, I mention the north Ellenbrook senior high school, which will be built over the next four years and \$53.5 million will be spent on stage 1 of that school, with an initial \$500 000 estimated for the project in the 2013–14 financial year. The remaining balance of the \$54 million project has been allocated in the forward estimates with the school due to open in 2018. In addition, stage 2 has been announced, with additional funding of \$1.5 million allocated in the forward estimates as part of this additional \$52 million project. The reason I mention this is that it is located in my electorate of Swan Hills, in Aveley. This new school will cater for nearby suburbs and the government’s commitment to stage 2 will ensure that public secondary education needs will be catered for well into the future.

Another project I am particularly proud of in my electorate, or close to it, is the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will commence in the Perth hills from 1 July 2014 at a cost of \$58 million over two years. This trial will be run by the National Disability Insurance Agency and implemented under commonwealth legislation, in comparison with this state government’s WA NDIS My Way trial that will commence in the south west of the state and expand to the Cockburn–Kwinana area in 2015. These two different models of service will be trialled and independently evaluated, and both will offer more individual support and services for people with disability, their families and carers.

Another great project I am particularly proud of is mentioned in the forward estimates of the budget—that is, \$12 million included in the state budget earmarked for upgrades to Great Eastern Highway in Mundaring, with \$8.6 million due in 2015–16 and \$3.4 million in 2016–17. Running from Bilgoman Road to Mundaring, these upgrades will be a major safety upgrade for the area.

Also, to do with sports, the Mundaring sport and recreation complex continues on from the good work we did, Premier, for the Mt Helena Football Club. Three million dollars has been committed to the upgrades at the sport and recreation centre with \$1.5 million due in 2014–15 and a further \$1.5 million in 2015–16 to allow for undercover courts at the complex, which hosts more than 2 000 users, predominantly young children. I raised this project with the Premier, Hon Colin Barnett, when he visited Swan Hills in 2012 but I am really pleased to see it is scheduled in this budget, which will fulfil a key election promise to Swan Hills.

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There is also another intersection that is particularly important as a gateway to my electorate, Ellenbrook and the built-up areas of Swan Hills—that is, Alexander Drive–Gngalara Road. The state government has committed \$46 million for the Reid Highway–Malaga Drive intersection.

Our health is also being considered with the \$104.9 million for Midland Public Hospital. I will spell public out—P-U-B-L-I-C—because of the union campaigns that were trying to fool people into thinking it was going to be a private hospital. This will replace the very dated Swan District Hospital. I also mention from a very grateful hills community the already completed Roe Highway and Great Eastern Highway overpass, both state and federally funded, which has been an overwhelming success, saving commuters from Mundaring and surrounding communities some 20 minutes, morning and afternoon at peak times. It has been tremendous.

Another commitment that is icing on the cake—it is not in my electorate, but I am particularly pleased that our state government has committed to it—is the \$10.6 million commitment for a Ballajura police station. Why am I pleased? Law and order is very important in the electorate of Swan Hills, which services a very large area. A Ballajura police station will allow Ellenbrook police more time to venture as far north as Bullsbrook and across to Brigadoon and places like that. Yes, I would have loved to have had a police station in Bullsbrook, but as I have said to my constituents, the numbers are not sufficient. Yes, I would have loved to have had an extension of Mundaring Police Station, but this is a second choice and I think the police in Ellenbrook Police Station will be happy to have the support.

I think I am pretty well there. I would like to again thank our state government for the wonderful contributions to my electorate. We are thrilled. Unlike the opposition, Premier, I do not have any bad things to say, and I have not seen anything other than a generational infrastructure build by a state government.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [10.01 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014. I congratulate our Treasurer for handing down what I would call a fair budget. Commentary seems to be coming from the big end of town that the budget was not hard enough; at the same time, comment is coming from the welfare sector that it could have done with more. Since both groups appear to be less than satisfied, I would say that the budget was probably quite fair.

Western Australia's income fluctuations, of course, make budgeting very difficult. A 1c change in the exchange rate can add or subtract \$90 million to the budget bottom line, and \$1 a tonne shift in the iron ore price can result in a \$60 million change in the bottom line. We could be forgiven for thinking of Western Australia as an iron ore mine, a gas field and a farm with a state attached. WA, of course, has had problems with the goods and services tax allocation for a number of years now. I think it would be ambitious to expect a change in the method of the GST allocation on the current range of goods and services at the current rate. Over time, I think the arguments are becoming clearer for the GST base to be widened and the rate to be lifted to, say, 15 per cent. That would enable a number of taxes to be eliminated or reformed, and the methodology of allocation to be changed. I welcome the new federal government's white paper, which, hopefully, will show the way, but it is a pity the process is not faster. As our Treasurer has said, it is important that we contain expenditure growth. Wage growth will probably be able to be reduced with less pressure coming from less heat in the private sector as the economy slows.

A perennial issue in Western Australia at budget time is power prices. The current system of direct subsidy to all consumers is inefficient. I support the Treasurer's intention to change the structure, with a charge to cover connection to the network and a different tariff structure. I have always thought that a structure similar to the way we charge for water—in which the first amount used is charged at a lower rate, moving to a higher rate for subsequent usage—would be much fairer. Of course, systems that allow charges to be varied at times of the day, and an ability to use smart technology to remotely cut load would also make the system more efficient.

I am happy to see the reform of the royalties for regions program. If the excessive funds flowing into the scheme had simply been allocated into normal government expenditure, the value and importance of the program would have been diluted. The aim of the program was always to provide supplementary funds rather than normal expenditure; as such, the scheme has done a lot of amazing things right through the regions. I acknowledge the current member for Pilbara for driving such a successful program through the period of our first government. In my electorate of Geraldton and the wider midwest, the royalties program has provided additional funds for Geraldton Universities Centre, Durack Institute of Technology, John Willcock College, a power station for the Square Kilometre Array, roads, bridges, housing, regional allowances, improved phone services, the Country Age Pension Fuel Card, work in national parks, regional events, the patient assisted travel scheme, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and many more.

The next phase of the royalties program sees additional funds going into the development of agriculture and the adoption of regional blueprints. The midwest sought community input, including from local members of

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Parliament, and from what I have seen of it so far, it is an excellent blueprint for our future. In the midwest we will continue to see allocations from the midwest investment plan, which this year include funds to purchase the land for the Oakajee–Narngulu corridor, which is something that has been intended for 17 years, from memory; once again, it is our government that is doing it. People in the regions should not miss out by living where they do. It is not unreasonable that people who choose to live in the regions and who contribute so much to Western Australia should be able to get services that are as good as possible. That is what the royalties for regions program is all about and I have always been an enthusiastic supporter of it.

We have to thank Minister Hames for the state of Western Australia's health system, which is very good. This is especially clear when we compare the current situation with the problems he inherited in 2008. It is pleasing to see that we have been able to increase expenditure in this area by 5.9 per cent or \$447 million. We have added funds to disability services and mental health. We are rebuilding a large amount of the health system and, as the government is well aware of the need to expand Geraldton Health Campus, I am hopeful that it will soon be committed to.

Education is another priority area for the government. We have been able to increase expenditure by \$188 million and \$812 million over the next four years. I am delighted to see that the air-cooling project for schools will be completed in 2015. I presented a 1 600-signature petition to support this concept not long before it was announced. I also pass on thanks and appreciation to the Premier for recently visiting Geraldton to open Wandina Primary School. It is the first new government primary school in Geraldton since 1979. I have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community about the school.

Next year will be busy with the transition of year 7 students to high school, the new student-centred funding model and the national curriculum. The independent public primary school that I attended and on whose board I now sit, Rangeway Primary School, will get one of the new child and parent centres at the end of this year. I find the job of being a board member at Rangeway quite fascinating. About 60 per cent of Rangeway's 500 students are Aboriginal and student turnover is about 50 per cent a year. I find it hard to express the respect and admiration I have for the school's staff. I serve on the transition group for year 7 to high school at John Willcock College, which is Geraldton's government high school for years 8 and 9. It is soon to cover years 7, 8 and 9, and I am confident that that has been well planned for.

Recently there has been some discussion about the introduction of a toll road in Western Australia for trucks on Roe Highway stage 8. I have always been opposed to toll roads on principle in the same way that I am opposed to the widespread introduction of poker machines. However, I am coming around to the point of view that for essential high-cost major roads, tolls may be inevitable. My views were challenged some time ago by a resident of Macedon in Victoria who uses the toll road from Tullamarine to Melbourne daily. His explanation was that although it cost him \$50 a week to get from home to Crown Casino, where he works part of the week, in 20 minutes, he would rather spend the money and save the time. Western Australia is coming to the end of an era when taxpayers can build major infrastructure out of regular tax receipts. We have to constantly work to make government services more productive and efficient, but to address growing debt we need to reduce spending or increase income.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What about poker machines? Are they inevitable as well?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: No, definitely not. I was interested to hear a criticism of the government when we recently announced the new schools for the next four years; the opposition said that we are not building enough. Every other word from the opposition has been about the government charging too much tax and engaging in too much spending, and the opposition said that we should build more schools. We are building what we can afford to build and now we are being told to build more.

I refer to agriculture. I have previously said that the logical place to headquarter agriculture is Northam, which has the beginnings for a centre of agricultural research and education. Agriculture should be handled in this way as it is in other places, such as Stellenbosch in South Africa's Western Cape or Orange in New South Wales. Agriculture is one industry in which the workers frequently expect to be placed in rural areas, and usually prefer to be in rural areas. I suggest selling the agriculture department's site in South Perth and using the proceeds to move most of its functions to Northam, and locating the functions that need to remain in the metropolitan area in Midland. It is logical that the industry that takes place in the country be run from the country, and locating agriculture at Northam would be a useful first step in decentralising. Country people are constantly told that they can be serviced from the big cities because of better communications. There is absolutely no reason why the reverse cannot be true.

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I am excited about another emerging miner in the midwest, Top Iron Pty Ltd, and positive news about the likelihood of the development of our second major magnetite producer in Asia Iron Australia's Extension Hill project. I am also heartened to hear positive news about the progress of the development of the Oakajee port. As for Western Australia, this raises the prospect of continued population growth in Geraldton and the midwest, with challenges similar to those in the rest of Western Australia in providing the necessary infrastructure. My home town of Geraldton, Western Australia, and, of course, the wider midwest, face a positive future. We continue to lead Australia in many ways, and we will continue to do so.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [10.10 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer for a very responsible budget. He highlighted some of the structural problems that Western Australia faces now and into the future. Our economy, as we know, has been going along at a very good clip and up to now has been growing, but that growth is expected to fall from about 5.1 per cent to 3.75 per cent, so we are looking at a slowdown in our economy; and with that slowdown, some corrective measures need to be taken. I am told that a surplus of \$175 million is expected to be reached by 2014–15, and I think that is a good result given the pressures that we face.

Although our debt is expected to continue to increase for a while, it is worth remembering that a lot of that investment is in much-needed infrastructure that will serve many generations. People need only drive down the freeway and look at the new Fiona Stanley Hospital in Murdoch, drive out past Midland and look at the hospital there, and look at the work that is being done around Perth and in the regions, to know that there is outcome from this debt. It is responsible for that debt to be spread throughout future generations. I am told that prior to this government coming to office, Western Australia had a more modest debt, but it showed the inability to cope with the growth that we have experienced lately. The nature of our economy is such that we have to meet the needs of that expansion; we have to provide the infrastructure—the schools, hospitals and roads—that is necessary to help the economy cope with the growth in not only population, but also business and economic development. With that comes some thought of, as we might say, recycling some of those assets in the future. Obviously, with the development of a major hospital that will replace some of the existing infrastructure, some buildings and sites will be redundant and no doubt their sale will assist with that future debt, as will the sale of some of the other assets that have been pointed to by the Treasurer, such as the Kwinana Bulk Terminal, other facilities that might be considered for sale, and, in the future, some of the power generation assets. I understand that that is not necessarily everyone's idea of where they want to go, but we cannot continue to build up an asset base and hold those assets for many years simply because we have had them in the past. If we have built up the asset and it will function in private hands, maybe it is better to let it go and use that money to build something else for the community.

I know that there are also necessary measures to trim some of the wages growth and that redundancies will be offered to people in the public service, which will assist people who no longer want to be in that position and who might want to find something else to do with their time. That will in turn help in the future to save taxpayers an amount to the tune of about \$800 million, I am told.

This year education funding will increase by 4.3 per cent to \$4.6 billion. Bearing in mind that in 2007–08 it was \$2.8 billion, I believe this shows a great commitment on behalf of the government to the education of our young people.

A matter that has been concerning to me in the past is the charge for 457 visa holders. I note that there has been a further concession on what was being offered before and that from 2015 families will pay for only the first child. I think that will be a very well received concession in areas such as Dalwallinu and Gingin in my electorate, where there are considerable numbers of 457 visa holders. No doubt there are considerable numbers in other electorates also. Incidentally, 457 visa holders are playing a very big part in helping to repopulate and to provide labour in certain areas. It has been increasingly difficult to attract people to the midwest and the wheatbelt, which are not mining areas and are not offering the very high wages. At the moment they do not have all the amenities that some of the cities offer, so it is hard to attract people to those areas to fill those positions. Those 457 visa holders are filling a gap, and it is good to see that the government has made that concession for them. I note also that police numbers will be increased, with the recruitment over the forward estimates of another 550 new officers. I think that step will be welcomed by many in the community who are concerned about law and order in our communities.

It is interesting to note that in the speech the Treasurer gave, he outlined some of the tariff subsidies and concessions for taxpayers to assist them when paying for the services provided by our public utilities, such as power, water and public transport. Over the next four years, my understanding is that those subsidies are

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expected to be about \$8 billion, which is a very considerable amount of money. I appreciated the words of the Treasurer when he noted that consideration needs to be given to the structure of some of the enterprises in a bid, I think, to reduce the necessity to subsidise. That is not because it is something that is in itself wrong. If people are on a fixed income, in a remote area, or if some other circumstance requires a subsidy in equity, that should be given, but if there is a structural problem in the way we do things, we should examine that to see whether we can reduce that impost on the taxpayer.

Having said that, I see that Western Power will again receive further funding. That is very welcome for people in my electorate who suffer, and have suffered in the past, some interruptions to their power supplies. My understanding is that in the current budget, 147 500 power poles will be provided to replace existing poles, and there will be other funding to provide for the replacement of conductors and wires to go with that.

On the outskirts of Perth in my electorate, I am sure that the people of Chittering, Toodyay and Gingin who go to Midland to access a number of services will be very pleased with the development of the new Midland hospital. I see that a further \$104.9 million will be granted to that hospital in the coming year, which will help to reinforce the medical services in that area.

More specifically, in my electorate of Moore, Great Northern Highway is perhaps the largest infrastructure build in the coming years. The state government has now committed \$76.95 million to go with the \$307.8 million of federal funding for the Great Northern Highway Wubin–Muechea section over the next four years. That section is 218 kilometres. The concern about travelling on that section of road has been a longstanding issue with my constituents. It is very welcome indeed to see that expenditure being made in the electorate. Already there has been funding to the tune of about \$40 million for what is known at the Bindi Bindi bends—that was in stage 1 of previous funding.

That work is continuing. However, a tender has been put out for the next stage of works through Batty Bog Road to Walebing. It is a notoriously narrow, windy and heavily vegetated section of road, and is very dangerous. Twenty-one kilometres of that is expected to be upgraded in the next couple of years. That is very welcome indeed. The economic activity and the development of that road will be a very good signal to communities along Great Northern Highway from Bindoon up through Miling and Dalwallinu. They will be very pleased to see that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is there any money in that for a road to bypass New Norcia?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No. The bypass to New Norcia is not in the scope of works at the moment.

The work will be completed. It will connect through to NorthLink, which the member for Swan Hills spoke about. That terminates at Muechea in my electorate. That will be a great improvement as a gateway into Perth. It has long been a bone of contention the fact that Brand Highway and Great Northern Highway come together at traffic lights at Muechea. The rest of the journey takes a considerable amount of time to get into Perth. I left home at Badgingarra at about five o'clock this morning, got to Muechea about 7.00 am and to Midland about 8.00 am. It took half as long to travel about 30 kilometres as the 170 kilometres or so before it. The time spent in the car is a very frustrating period. To see that northern link developed will be a great boon to the people of my electorate, and also the termination of the link. I note that the member for Swan Hills spoke about a potential development at Bullsbrook. There is also great potential around Muechea for further industrial development with that termination. There are already people building transportable units and transport depots et cetera in that area. The livestock sales centre is at that point as well. There is huge potential for a great deal of industrial expansion. It is very exciting for those people who have moved to the Shire of Chittering. It is one of the fastest growing local government areas in Western Australia. There has been growth of 52 per cent over the last 10 years, which is considerable. In the future, those people will be looking for employment in the area. I am sure they would prefer that to commuting into Perth every day

In other road works in my region, the Perenjori–Morawa section of Wubin–Mullewa Road continues to be funded with the allocation of \$9.49 million. That work is going on at the moment. It is my hope that there might be a bit of money left over. I know that my constituents further north of Morawa through to Mullewa are very keen to see improvement on that section of road as well.

This budget has brought about a few changes to royalties for regions. I will touch on those. A cap of \$1 billion has been put on royalties for regions funding. That is not an inconsiderable amount of money. One billion dollars a year will flow into projects in regions throughout WA that, for many years, were completely neglected. I think that is a fantastic outcome. I would think that any state government would be very pleased to see such a project developed in its jurisdiction. There have been attempts in Queensland and Victoria to try to replicate royalties for regions but they have only a fraction of the funding of our scheme. One billion dollars wisely invested into the regions will have an enormous effect on regional Western Australia in the coming years. That is \$1 billion a year

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over the forward estimates—a huge amount of money. The response of the government in the current economic situation, in still allowing \$1 billion a year to flow into our regions, is a very good and generous measure towards the regions.

One of the good outcomes from royalties for regions in the budget is the development of a program to facilitate development in the south, covered by the Peel—member for Mandurah—South West, Great Southern and Wheatbelt Development Commissions. They will share in a fund of \$600 million over the next five years, which will help with revitalisation and economic development projects throughout those four development regions. It is something that has been missing in those areas in recent years. My electorate takes in two development regions—namely, the midwest and the wheatbelt. The midwest, of course, has had significant support over a number of years through the midwest investment plan; the wheatbelt has not. It will be good to see the wheatbelt sharing in this \$600 million.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The wheatbelt hasn't. How much do you reckon the Peel got?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think the Peel will get a lot over the next four years, member. That is rather the point; we look forward, not backwards.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member for Mandurah no doubt knows more about the Peel than I do. However, I know that over the next five years, \$600 million will be available for those four development commissions. It will be up to the Peel Development Commission and members representing that area to put forward a case for investment in their region.

Also over the next five years, \$292 million will be available to help fund some of the initiatives brought about by the regional investment blueprints. Regional investment blueprints will be developed by all nine development commissions, including Peel. Each of those will be eligible to seek support through that program for what the individual development commissions see as priorities. They will not be, I believe, based on a wish list of projects but rather around themes and the types of streams of investment that are important to see those regions develop.

One of the other exciting initiatives in this budget is an additional \$45 million, again supported by royalties for regions, which will be invested in expanding the regional mobile communications program.

Mr P.T. Miles: A good program.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is a great program. In the last program we expected to see 60 or 70 phone towers. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Commerce will know more about the figures than I do. I believe about 117 —

Mr P.T. Miles: One-hundred and thirteen.

Mr R.S. LOVE: One hundred and thirteen towers were funded through that program. It partnered with Telstra, one of the private operators, and helped to solidify some of the business cases it had been developing. Through that partnership, we got a very good bang for the buck in that area. An additional \$45 million will go a long way towards covering all those blackspots that I am sure all regional members constantly hear about and constantly know about because as we drive about, we see the bars drop out on our phones and we cannot get in touch with anyone.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: One of the communities I drive through quite often is the small town of Latham.

Mr D.T. Redman: There are some good golfers there.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There are some very good golfers and some very good bowlers there. Although it is a very small town, it is a vital area for broadacre agriculture. One of the things we must remember about these types of programs is that in the modern world, it is not all about kids calling mum or about businesses in town. Farmers need to be able to communicate with their marketers. They also need to be able to communicate for the physical operation of their farm. If they do not have that ability on the farm, they are very much at a disadvantage. I would dearly like to see some of those broadacre areas covered from an economic development point of view. I think the advantages for the farming community, especially in areas of relatively flat land where there is a good bang for the buck in terms of coverage and where farmers can avail themselves of boosters et cetera, will lead to a very big economic return for the state. I do not think it is always just about roads and communities; sometimes it has to be about assisting some of the businesses out there to go about their business better. So I was very pleased to see that included.

That brings me to another of the government's great initiatives, the Seizing the Opportunity agriculture initiative, which will be funded for the coming year to the tune of \$51 million. It was expected to be funded for

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\$300 million over five years, and \$51 million this year will really get that program up and running. A royalties for regions investment of that sum of money shows a great deal of confidence in agriculture, because agriculture will play a role in this state long after we have run out of iron ore. Agriculture is very necessary to the continuation of the economic wellbeing of Western Australia. Although oil, gas and iron ore are very good and profitable businesses that will, I am sure, continue to flow for many decades to come, it is essential for us to remember that there are other industries that will still be around long after they are gone. I very much congratulate the government for its support of agriculture through that royalties for regions expenditure of \$51 million in that area.

I turn to other matters of note in my electorate. There are so many things I could talk about, but I have only 11 minutes left, so I will have to restrict them. The Southern Inland Health Initiative will be rolled out, not just in my electorate but around the state, to assist many communities from Kalbarri down to Esperance. I think \$146 million will flow from the coffers of state Treasury this year, out of a total of \$475 million for the rest of the budget period going forward. I think it is a \$565 million investment overall. That program has already made a substantial difference in providing emergency telehealth in many communities. It has assisted greatly in emergency situations in which nurses might be on their own without a specialist doctor available, and I am told that probably 98 per cent of the diagnostic ability of a doctor can be achieved through telehealth, so that makes a huge difference to all the isolated nursing posts and small hospitals at which telehealth is available.

The country local government fund, although winding up in some ways, continues to make some investments in regional areas; I think there is \$58.5 million for 2014–15. A number of local governments in my electorate, through the intervention of the Minister for Regional Development, have been made re-eligible, so to speak, for funding that they had been ruled ineligible for in previous years. In my area, Morawa, Mingenew, Dalwallinu and the City of Greater Geraldton are the councils that were previously ruled ineligible for funding. The collective figure for those councils is probably around \$2 million, without adding it up completely accurately, so I thank the minister for that intervention, and the rest of the government for its reconsideration of the situation.

The midwest investment plan, as I have mentioned, is a very important part of the landscape in the 10 eligible shire councils to the north of my electorate, and over the next five years a further \$159 million will flow through that investment plan, of which \$29.2 million is for this year. That will help to fund the Wubin–Mullewa road that I referred to earlier, and some of the projects that the member for Geraldton outlined. Some of those projects are in Geraldton, and I note that the people of the midwest section of my electorate access a lot of their major services in Geraldton, so there is a commonality with those investments into health and education in Geraldton. We are all very supportive and appreciative of that.

I want to mention a couple of little pet projects of mine. One is funding for the wheatbelt men's health initiative, which has actually morphed into the statewide Regional Men's Health Initiative. That funding will continue. It is doing a tremendous amount of good, mainly in the regions that have typically had quite poor outcomes for men's general health and especially mental health at times of stress. This is shaping up to be a pretty good season in the region, I hope, so some of the stresses on farmers in the past couple of years might not manifest themselves in this coming year. The wheatbelt men's health initiative, which initially provided the support for that whole-of-region initiative, has done a tremendous job in taking the important message of men's health not just to men but also to the women and the people in the communities who support those men. I have attended a number of sessions when people in the initiative did pit stops and the like. Also as a father in the area, I know that they have run programs for young boys at school. I had to go along and listen to stories about the virtues of Ford performance vehicles from the director, whose name escapes me just at the moment.

Ms M.J. Davies: Owen Catto?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No, not Owen. Who is the other one?

Ms M.J. Davies: Julian Krieg.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Julian, yes, that is right, with his Ford car. Anyway, where was I?

Another project I want to highlight is the Western Australian state government natural resource management program, which was funded and is expected to expire in 2015. A further allocation of money is in the forward estimates of \$8 million a year for natural resource management under the regional infrastructure and headworks fund. That is a very important contribution from the state to all those community groups out there. There are many groups out there in my electorate, whether they be Landcare, Coastcare or river care groups—you name it—doing a tremendous amount of work in the electorate, tidying up around the place and ensuring that endangered species et cetera are being catered for and cared for. I very much appreciate that investment that has been made by the state.

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The last thing I want to mention is the country age pension card. That will continue.

Ms M.J. Davies: Fuel card.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The Country Age Pension Fuel Card; thank you, minister. That is now indexed so that this year it will go to \$550 to assist those cardholders. The rationale behind it is that there is a certain degree of cost to pensioners living in regional areas and a limitation on the public transport that is available to them. This card therefore goes a long way. I know from speaking to people that this is a greatly treasured and now very necessary card in a lot of pensioner households. They certainly appreciate that investment that has been made under the community support services fund, which in itself will invest the entire \$157 million in 2014–15 from the royalties for regions fund. Not only does it fund the volunteer fuel card, but it also funds the caravan and camping program. It also funds the patient assisted travel scheme, responsible parenting programs, regional arts, community resource centres and regional events—you name it; it is there helping. That program therefore has embedded itself in the lives of communities right throughout regional Western Australia, and probably includes Peel, although I do not know that firsthand. However, I am sure that everywhere else in the regions it is a very important fund and very much appreciated.

In closing I want to congratulate the Treasurer and the state government for this budget and commend them for their efforts.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr C.J. Barnett (Premier)**.

House adjourned at 10.39 pm
