

Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Tinley

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

*Third Reading*

Resumed from 12 June.

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [4.07 pm]: I rise to make a few remarks on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and the budget that the government handed down a few weeks ago. A number of things characterise this budget. Firstly, despite being portrayed as a budget to get Western Australia's finances back on track, in a single financial year—the coming financial year—there will be a \$2.9 billion increase in debt. That is nearly the equivalent of the entire debt of the state in 2008. In one year, that is how much debt will go up by. The second thing that characterises this budget is the massive cost-of-living increases on top of huge tax increases—so, taxes and the cost of living. When the government argues it has to put up the cost of living to more accurately reflect the cost to provide services, that is an argument it can run, but when it puts up taxes on ordinary Western Australians and on businesses, that shows more accurately that the government has not managed the finances of Western Australia properly.

Let us look at the various tax increases being put in place. There will be a 10 per cent increase in land tax. That is on top of a 12.5 per cent increase last year. An increase in stamp duty will attack first home buyers—those people trying to get into the housing market for the first time. Roughly 30 or 40 per cent of those people will lose the stamp duty exemption that was provided by the Labor government in 2007 for first home buyers. It is a very sensitive area of the market. It is very sensitive to cost pressures. That part of the market and the building industry will lose much activity out of that change. On top of that, there will be a significant increase in the landfill levy. Money is being siphoned away from efforts to recycle and put into general government revenue. On top of that, there is a big increase in the Perth parking levy. On top of that, there is nearly \$1 billion across the forward estimates in increases in royalties—the government's own mining tax!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza)**: Excuse me, members. The conversations are getting a little too loud. If you need to have them, you need to go outside.

**Mr M. McGOWAN**: On top of the very significant royalty increases, we have the big increase in cost-of-living pressures, as I outlined before, with an average increase of \$342 per family in Western Australia in one year. This government and this budget are hurting ordinary people and ordinary families in Western Australia. That is what is going on here—ordinary people and ordinary families in Western Australia are being hurt.

However, I want to talk about the other shocks. Remember, the state budget was handed down on the Thursday and the federal budget came down on the following Tuesday. The state government deliberately released its budget before the federal budget. We saw in the federal budget a big threat to the state's finances, with big cuts in commonwealth grants for health and education programs, particularly health programs, and the ripping up of the national agreement on pensioner and senior concessions. That will have another impact on the state budget. We learnt today—I did not know it before now—that there will be an attack on the provision of resources for Indigenous communities in Western Australia. This will have another impact on our budget. We already have massively growing debt. We already have a thin surplus of \$175 million, followed by \$5 million in the following year. Now the commonwealth Liberal government is ripping away health and other supports for the state. The commonwealth government says that it is to assist its budget. It is a false saving, because at a state level there will be either tax increases, cuts to very important programs or an increase in debt. The commonwealth is undoing at least a 40-year arrangement—in fact, it stretches back to the Second World War, but at least since the early 1970s—between the commonwealth and the states in which the financial responsibility for health, education and some other programs has been shared between the two levels of government. With those changes by the Abbott government, we are seeing another threat to the state's finances that was not taken account of in the state's budget. By implementing the state budget five days before the commonwealth budget, this government has left itself with a big hole in the state's finances, so a further set of cuts will need to be adjusted for or there will need to be an increase in state debt. I think the government knew something like this was coming; otherwise, it would have scheduled the state budget to be handed down after the federal budget so that it could take account of and adjust for whatever changes were put in place by the commonwealth government.

Since the state budget was handed down, many of the financial projections have unravelled because of the iron ore price. Much of the state budget—around \$6 billion—is taken up by royalties, and around 90 per cent of that are the iron ore figures. The estimate of the iron ore price in the state budget, which is a massive component of the state's finances at 22 per cent or thereabouts, is based upon a free on board figure of \$US111.30 a tonne. That is what was assumed for the coming financial year for the budget, yet the actual price today is \$US89. That

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is a \$22 differential in the iron ore price. According to budget paper No 3, there is a \$45 million difference in the receipts to the state every time the iron ore price drops by \$1. Currently, the price is \$22 or thereabouts below the government's estimate in the budget. If that continues, according to my rudimentary maths, that will mean a \$900 million hit to the state budget. The government put into the budget an estimate of the iron ore price that now appears to be hopelessly optimistic. The government will have a surplus of \$175 million, there will be cuts in excess of \$100 million to commonwealth grants for health programs, and the iron ore price is now \$22 below the government's estimate. It has a big problem in its budget before the start of the financial year to which these issues will apply. The financial year does not start for another two weeks, yet the government's estimate of the iron ore price—I think any objective observer would say that this is a very significant threat to the state budget—is shown to be most probably significantly incorrect to the state's detriment, not to the state's advantage. The commonwealth budget has cut resourcing to the state in at least one area—that is, services for Aboriginal communities—which, according to the Premier, the state will have to make up. Then, as I said, there are cuts to commonwealth programs—health programs in particular—that the state will have to make up. Before the financial year begins, many of the parameters upon which the government has based its budget are either already very shaky or gone.

The reason this is such a problem is that the government now has very small surpluses, as opposed to the big surpluses that it inherited, and with a very small surplus, it will have great difficulty in making up for these issues, some of which it did not create. It did not create the federal issues, although it would be nice if the government stood up to the federal government about it. Gee whiz, it would be nice if the Premier could say a critical word about the federal government and stand up for the state. It would be refreshing, because he has not done it since October last year. It would be lovely if he said a critical word of Tony Abbott. The New South Wales Premier wrote a letter to the Prime Minister that was publicly released and signed by all sorts of interest groups and some of his ministers. Our Premier says, "It's all a done deal; I can't possibly say anything about that. No matter what I say, there won't be any consequence." He is the most senior Premier in Australia; he is the most senior head of government in Australia and he has completely gone to water when dealing with the commonwealth government. When Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard were Prime Minister, he would scream the house down every day. Now he is a mouse on commonwealth-state financial relations. It is pretty clear to me that the Premier will not stand up to Tony Abbott no matter what happens. As I said recently, he would rather stand up for his mate than his state, and that is what question time today showed.

Our view is that the iron ore price and cuts to commonwealth programs mean that there will be a significant problem in the budget, with a \$175 million surplus in the coming financial year. That is a very big problem. If the iron ore price continues as it is, that will mean a roughly \$900 million hole in the budget for the next financial year, and we can add on at least \$100 million in health cuts and other cuts from the commonwealth that it appears are being identified. That is a billion-dollar hole in the budget and the government has a \$175 million surplus. The following year has a \$5 million surplus, and guess what the Premier said today: there will be more cuts from the commonwealth. A \$5 million surplus is how the government will manage a decline in the iron ore price and further cuts from the commonwealth that the state will have to make up. This is a problem because over the past six budgets, the government, despite massive revenue growth and receipts, has progressively run down the size of the finances. The government has not kept the buffer of the surplus that it inherited. I remember the member for Pilbara whining as though surpluses were somehow put in a pocket and could be put in a locked room somewhere. They are a buffer against bad times and they allow us to run a significant capital program without running up debt. For some people it does not sink in. Some people simply cannot seem to get that. The government inherited that surplus, yet now we are in a diabolical position of the government's making. That is the truth of it. When the history is written, that will be the legacy of this Premier and this government. It has constrained the capacity of future governments to do things and it has left a burden of debt for the next two generations that will be incredibly hard to pay off. That will be the legacy, and it is a very, very poor legacy. That is the state of the finances. Let us watch the iron ore price and the future cuts of commonwealth grants to the state, because I think the situation will get much, much worse. There are only three people to blame for it—the Premier, the bloke standing there who will not stand up to Tony Abbott; Tony Abbott, who is doing it; and the Treasurer, who made hopelessly optimistic assessments of the iron ore price.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan)** [4.23 pm]: In my contribution to the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014, I will continue from where the Leader of the Opposition left off and discuss the structure of the budget.

Throughout the estimates process and through the second reading debate many comments were made in this place, but I want to focus primarily on what this government has done to the operational structure of the recurrent side of the budget. As the Leader of the Opposition outlined, the previous Labor Treasurer,

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Hon Eric Ripper, delivered significant surpluses, which allowed the state to undertake a significant capital works program and control debt at the same time. When the Labor government lost power in 2008, the structure of the budget was very sound. Net debt was at an all-time low. Structurally, the operating side was as strong as it had ever been. Of course, from a general government net debt perspective, the government was owed money and did not owe money. We could not find a stronger set of books in the nation as it stood then or in the state's history. That is the key point. We were the envy of the nation because we not only grew a strong economy, but also ensured that the government balance sheet was strong. That is very, very important because in troubled times we want a structurally sound set of books.

I have outlined this before but I want to go through it in a bit more detail. This government has unwound all that work and now not only is the economy directly impacted by changes in the resources area, but also the budget and the state's finances have become increasingly vulnerable to the ups and downs of our resources sector. We have outlined that a bigger share of the state budget is now exposed to changes in the amount of royalties it receives. A number of factors external to government decisions can change the return to the state on any given day—primarily, the change in the iron ore price and the change in the Australian dollar. I think back in 2000–01 five per cent of the state's revenue base was represented by royalties. That has increased to over 25 per cent. The budget is extremely vulnerable to a very volatile revenue base. It is important to note that one of the key reasons for that was a deliberate decision made by the Barnett government early on when it announced that it would increase royalty rates and it collected hundreds of millions of dollars, and now potentially collects billions of dollars. At the time the state budget outlined that as a result of this increase in royalty rates, approximately 70 per cent of that royalties revenue would be redistributed under the GST mechanism. The government knew that, but it made the soft decision, which increased its revenue base in the short term but changed the structure of our budget. The Treasurer is saying that we are very vulnerable to the volatility of royalties revenue, but that is the result of a deliberate decision of this government.

Another key point is the impact of net debt. The Premier likes to think of net debt as a figure in a budget paper that is sometimes embarrassing but nothing to worry about. That is how I think he sees it, and I do not think he loses sleep over the net debt issue. However, it is now an embarrassment to the state. Economists from the eastern states are asking how Western Australia lost its AAA credit rating after a period of significant growth and are wondering what we have to show for it. It is more than a line in a budget paper; it is impacting upon what can be done on an everyday basis, and it feeds off itself. The important point to know in delivering a budget is that about the first \$400 million we get in revenue in the general government sector has to feed our net interest payment. The first \$400 million does not supply funds to ensure that we have adequate housing or schools or teachers and nurses. The first \$400 million is there to pay interest. I do not want to go into this in too much detail, but let us think about what our surplus would be in 2014–15 if we did not have to pay that \$400 million in interest. We would have a surplus of \$600 million or \$700 million and the government would not have to borrow that much. In a sense, we have created a debt monster that we have to feed every year before we can feed the everyday outgoings of the general government sector. The total public sector net interest repayment is around \$960 million. All these tax increases that this Liberal–National government has introduced, basically, had to be introduced to feed the interest payments that this government has created.

The budget is structurally unsound and weak and leaves us vulnerable. As I have said, the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that state final demand fell in the year ending in the March quarter. The state budget forecasts state final demand as zero in the next financial year. The economy is quite vulnerable to fluctuations in the resources sector and now the budget is equally as vulnerable because of the decisions made by this government. We have no economic or financial plan for WA's future.

We would think that the issue of rising unemployment would register with the senior ministers of this cabinet. We would think that the Minister for Training and Workforce Development would possibly turn his mind to this issue. If there is any subcommittee that one wanted to create at this particular time in our economic cycle, we would think that the Minister for Training and Workforce Development would look at the thousands of young people losing their jobs who are unemployed and what could be done in the WA economy to diversify its base and create jobs in the future. We would think that would be focus of the committee given to the Deputy Premier. That type of committee would be developed for the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. However, we again saw today the contempt shown by this government for the people of Western Australia as it has no economic or financial plan. I know members representing electorates like the member for Belmont would see some of the significant problems emerging in the WA economy, and would be proud of a government that took this issue seriously rather than create a subcommittee to give its minister a pleasant thing to do, rather than look after all of those nasty portfolios he is in charge of. That is basically what this government has done. The government has done this so the minister can go on the trips to the Abrolhos Islands or Coral Bay that he has

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missed out on since left the tourism portfolio as a pleasant thing because he has all this other stuff to do. It is absolutely incredible at a time when, really, a Deputy Premier and a minister with that portfolio should be turning his mind to those other issues.

I want to keep going to the structure of this budget because, again, a number of things have emerged over recent years that question its sustainability. Another key point is these funds. A number of funds are created as special-purpose accounts through the budget system, and those accounts are to collect money for specific purposes and are to be spent on those specific purposes. It is possible that they are hypothecated by legislation, but they are actually special-purpose accounts. There is a list of them—whether it be the Perth parking levy, the royalties for regions fund, the road trauma trust fund or the metropolitan region improvement fund. On top of all this other financial mismanagement, the government is banking money in these funds as a way of trying to hide debt for a year or two. We have seen the emergence of balances in these accounts. The key point is that the funds raised for these specific purposes should be spent on those specific purposes in that financial year. There can be no clearer example of that than the metropolitan region improvement tax, which is a tax paid by those who pay land tax in the metropolitan area to a fund—and the whole purpose of that fund is to provide funding for public purposes or improvements for public areas. For example, if the government wants to build a railway, the purchase of land to build the railway on is funded from that fund. If a significant road is to be built, again, the money can be for that purpose. For example, it might be a mechanism to fund regional playing fields. This government is putting that money into the fund and not using it for the purpose it is meant for. I did an analysis of the tax collected under the previous Labor administration and the amount of land acquisition undertaken over that term. More land was acquired than tax was collected. I did the same analysis over the period of this government and found that only about 50 per cent of the tax has been used for land acquisition. That means that a number of landowners are sitting on land reserved and no-one is buying it, so the government has landowners in limbo and is not preparing for the future. That is simply due to the bad financial management of this government. The same thing can be said for a number of those other accounts.

The last point I want to make today about the recurrent side of the budget is the recurrent impact of the new Perth Stadium on the state budget. Again, this will structurally change this budget by embedding, I think, up to hundreds of millions of dollars in it for an ongoing payment to the consortia. It is not in the budget yet, even though we understand that the stadium is meant to be operating in early 2018 for the 2018 football season. What has never been explained to the public and what this government continues to hide is the true cost of the stadium. We know that just the infrastructure will cost around \$1.2 billion. However, we have not heard what the interest impact of this stadium will be, given that all the state money has to be borrowed. What annual payments will go to the consortia for the 40 per cent financing part of the equation? What will maintenance expenditure be? What will be the interest costs for the public transport section? What subsidies will be given in relation to public transport usage? Serious questions have to be answered about the stadium, and this government has tried to hide these answers for as long as it can. It has tried to have artist's impressions of this stadium done without actually telling people how much it will cost. I truly believe that people will be shocked when they realise the long-term impact it will have on our budget. Not only will there be this massive interest to pay each year but we will now have this financing payment for the stadium. As I said, it will be significant. Again, what does that mean? It means more tax will need to be raised just to pay for it.

The government is continually making this budget structurally weaker, and that will impact upon Parliament, the public and governments over the next 20 years as we need to structurally get the balance right once again—because, simply, what this government is doing is unaffordable. As I said, this government laughs at the economic and financial predicament it has put us in; it laughs, and I am not sure why.

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle)** [4.38 pm]: I would like to take the opportunity to speak in the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. The matters I would like to raise relate specifically to my electorate. I could raise any number of issues about the state as a whole, but there are also issues that are specific to the Fremantle area, and they are the ones I will concentrate on.

I have discussed in the house a number of times the frustration that the wider community in Fremantle has about the state of high schools in the area. Particularly frustrating has been the way the state government has handled the process following an announcement—really an utterance—by the Premier last August in the estimates committee process, just after that state budget was handed down, that there would be amalgamations of high schools in the Fremantle area. That there might be amalgamations was no particular surprise, because the numbers at South Fremantle Senior High School and Hamilton Senior High School are lower than they could be, but what has been of concern is the way that the government has handled the process of change in an area that is of such deep concern to families in the Fremantle area—that is, the state of high schools. The Premier made an

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announcement in August, and there was an agreement by the education minister that, yes, Fremantle high schools would be looked at. Then there was pretty well a lull in information—there was no information except that a couple of months ago the government commenced an online questionnaire to ask people what they thought. As a member of the community, I filled out that questionnaire to see how it read, and I think people were pretty concerned about the number of motherhood statements contained within that questionnaire. The final part of the consultation process was a public meeting held recently in the Fremantle Town Hall, which was attended by about 200 community members from the broader Fremantle area. People were concerned—if they were not concerned before, they were after the meeting—about the way the government has handled this exercise and whether, in fact, a decision has already been made and the process of consultation was applied retrospectively or retrofitted into the process. There was an extensive report on the online questionnaire but, really, people were no more enlightened about the key issues for the community, what elements of a successful school needed to be addressed and whether or not there is a key difference between those with primary school children and high school children.

People are frustrated that the government has failed to take up the opportunity to provide some meaningful alternatives and a framework for consultation so that there can be real discussion in the community about what is on the table. It is one thing to talk about broad aspirations for what we would like in a school, but we need to know practically what is on the table and what is possible with the high school amalgamation process. The reason I raise this during this bill is that the Premier attended the public consultation at Fremantle Town Hall and conceded that the amalgamation process was not a cost-neutral exercise. He estimated that, at the very least, the amalgamation process would cost between \$30 million and \$40 million. If after the consultation the government decided that a new school would be required, one would expect the cost to be around \$70 million. Let us say that in this process we are talking about between \$30 million and \$40 million. Not a penny has been allocated in the budget for Fremantle high school amalgamations, despite the fact that the issue was raised after the state budget of August 2013. There has been much discussion in the community with some broad, what I would consider platitudes, by the government—an online questionnaire, which people have been frustrated by, and a public meeting, about which people were pretty disappointed.

I had an opportunity at the public meeting to ask the Premier how much the process would cost and why no money has been allocated in the budget for high school amalgamations in Fremantle. He said that the money would come out of the recurrent budget and from planned asset sales. He said that any money required for Fremantle high school amalgamations would be taken from asset sales. The list of items that will be taken care of with asset sales, when the government gets around to them, appears to be growing longer every day. For example, when asked where the state government's contribution of \$260 million to the Perth freight rail link would come from, the Premier said that it would come from asset sales. How will the state pay down some of its debt? The state has a record \$30 billion worth of debt—that is what is expected to be racked up by the end of the term of this government—but the government has told us not to worry because it will sell some assets. The Fremantle high schools issue shows not only that the government has patronised the community in how it consulted with it, but also a lack of foresight in financial commitments and of what is needed in investment.

There is some very good and sophisticated thinking by the school communities in the Fremantle area, but they do not all agree. They are very passionate about the issue, which is a good thing. There is a proposal, for instance, that the amalgamated schools have an academically gifted program to ensure that that cohort comes into the amalgamated school to give the numbers for university entrance subjects, an area that has been challenging for South Fremantle High School and Hamilton High School. They manage to offer a good range of subjects, but because of low numbers, they are not always able to offer them on their own campuses. There has been a lot of discussion about this issue. There is a lot of debate about what should happen with John Curtin College of the Arts; indeed, people are talking about it every week. However, this government has not engaged in any meaningful way and, certainly, when the rubber hits the road, this amalgamation exercise will require resources to make it successful. I wonder where that money will come from. It is little wonder that the state government finances are in the state that they are in given the Premier's response to larger projects, such as the Fremantle schools issue. It is very disappointing but, perhaps, illuminating.

The second issue is investment in Fremantle. In the middle of 2012 the then Minister for Finance, Hon Simon O'Brien, announced that a number of departments would be taken from the central business district and placed in suburban areas. In one particular announcement it was stated that the Department of Housing would be relocated to Fremantle, the Department of Commerce would be relocated to Stirling and some police functions would be relocated to Murdoch. There has since been an admission that the relocation of Commerce to Stirling will not go ahead. I imagine that is a disappointment for the City of Stirling and its community.

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Two years after the announcement, we are still none the wiser about what the government intends to do about the relocation of the Department of Housing, a major government department. I have raised this issue a number of times in this chamber with the Treasurer when he was the Minister for Finance and with the new Minister for Finance. We are still none the wiser. During estimates in the Legislative Assembly, the Minister for Finance was questioned about what is happening. He conceded that the department did not want to move. He said it might still look at the business case, but it had not been persuaded that it would be a wise move. We can only take him at his word, because there has been absolutely no transparency in the process. We do not know what business case it is looking at or how long it will take, which has put the business community and the people in Fremantle who have an interest in this in a difficult position. Members might be aware of the vacated Myer building that is owned by Sirona Capital. It wants to use the opportunity that would be afforded by the relocation of the Department of Housing to secure the development of Kings Square. The whole development would deliver new council chambers and would be a major injection of capital development for the Fremantle central business district. I am sure the other economic benefits that would flow from having, as I understand it, between 900 and 1 000 employees working in the Fremantle area are obvious. There would be added economic benefits from being located in Fremantle. I dare say that it would be fantastic for Department of Housing employees to work in Fremantle. I cannot think of a better place to work. There are a lot of benefits. I understand that there are changes in the CBD commercial rental market, but one would hope that two years ago the state government had an understanding of the ebbs and flows in that market and had done proper forecasting about what would occur. No conditions were placed on that announcement two years ago. I hope that I am wrong in saying that the government has squibbed on that promise to relocate the department, but all the signs look to be there. When I campaigned in 2013, I went to the election saying that the state government had a plan to relocate the Department of Housing and that Labor supported that plan; it was a good plan for Fremantle and for those workers.

I raise a number of other issues in relation to this budget. When the budget was handed down, we found that no money had been allocated to Roe 8. In fact, the Premier said that he thought Roe 8 was a good plan, but it would not occur during the life of this state government. A week after the state budget was handed down, the federal budget was handed down and it referred to a \$1.6 billion allocation for the Perth freight link plan, and lo and behold Roe 8 is contained within that plan as an element of the continuation of the Roe Highway. In fact, the Perth freight link plan relies on a significant injection of funds from the state government, but it has made no allocation in the state budget and there is no indication from the state government where that money will come from. I am opposed to the Roe 8 extension, and it is no surprise that Labor is concerned on a number of different fronts about that proposal; in particular, it makes no sense in terms of traffic flow, economic modelling or environmentally—in fact, there are no environmental approvals—and the community is concerned about the proposal to drive a swathe of highway through the centre of the community. We had a major announcement by the federal government, and there is no doubt the state government was caught wrong-footed with that announcement. The state government had made no contingency plan, and it will be interesting to see if it ever delivers on its promise on the massive upgrade to High Street and Stirling Highway. I will certainly add my efforts to stop the proposal to build the Roe 8 section of the Roe Highway that, in respect to the Stirling Highway–High Street upgrade, will require three times the amount of money currently allocated for that section of road. The community has been consulted over a number of years on the plan for the High Street–Stirling Highway upgrade and the federal government comes in and says it will spend three times that amount, yet we are none the wiser about the details of that proposal.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [4.52 pm]: I rise to speak about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. When the people of Gosnells first heard about this budget, their natural inclination was to wonder what it would do for the most important aspect of their community, namely, safety. We have had a spate of car accidents and hooning incidents in which people have crashed into houses. Hooning seems to be unique to Perth, and common in Perth, but it is a particular problem in my area. I am afraid that this budget has done nothing to give confidence to people in my area that the government is taking action and is funding our police in such a way that they will be able to tackle the source of this problem of people driving cars at ridiculous speeds, losing control and crashing into houses and walls, and ending up in the lounge rooms or swimming pools of houses causing all sorts of upset and tragedy as well. We have seen deaths in the past fortnight.

The people of Gosnells also expected to see in the budget some relief from cost-of-living pressures. I am afraid these things do not appear in this budget, hence the dismay of people in Gosnells when they hear about a budget that foreshadows further difficult budgetary times. We know that many people in the state are doing particularly

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well and making many dollars in their chosen pursuit, but that is not the case for a large percentage of the population who are missing out.

I will turn to my portfolio area and consider some of the revelations that came out through the budget estimates process, particularly questions around facts and figures relating to the environment portfolio. I was very concerned to find that the Minister for Environment and his senior advisers were ill at ease with questions about facts and figures to do with the environment portfolio. I will give members a couple of examples. One is the inability of the minister or his senior advisers to clearly state what Western Australia's greenhouse gas emissions are. Surely the Minister for Environment would know that and would have that in the forefront of his mind. It is a major environmental issue that the minister has to be working towards improving and that he would be looking constantly to assess, consider proposals and be part of a policy discussion that is looking to drive the amount down. Through the supplementary information process, the minister was able to ask the commonwealth government what the figure was and it turns out it is about 68 million tonnes a year, but it is rising. There are leakages from that figure, with areas that are not properly covered by it and proposals that may have exceeded their original allowance. I would have expected the minister to get back to me with the detail on those issues, which is understandable, but for the minister not to have at the forefront of his mind a clear understanding of the gravity of the situation, and how our per capita emissions relate to the rest of Australia and the rest of the world, shows that he is not taking this aspect of his portfolio seriously. That is very serious. Whatever the minister's views on the means by which we go about reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and whether he endorses the carbon pricing system, as I think those opposite do, or believes in some direct action method, surely he still wants to know where Western Australia is now and how it is reducing that amount. Surely that is a bread-and-butter issue for an environment minister. Unfortunately, we found the minister and his senior advisers wanting in that area and incapable of giving a clear answer.

I will turn to another example in which I found that the minister and his senior advisers were incapable of providing a clear picture; that is, biodiversity loss and our commitments towards the protection of habitat, which are fundamental. For species that are under threat or on a threatened species list as endangered or vulnerable, habitat loss is one of the major causes of that particular conservation status, yet the minister was unable to tell us the rate of biodiversity loss. Perhaps it is a happier story and we have had an improvement in a habitat area in Western Australia. That sort of statistic is readily produced by an analysis of satellite imagery. We can do that scan of the state and then assess region by region where there is a decline of vegetation and habitat loss and then determine the actual figure. By doing that, the minister could also detect where there is illegal activity, which should be of particular interest to the Department of Environment Regulation, and also the effectiveness of the current regulatory regime. I have raised on several occasions the weakening of environmental regulations to do with land clearing where there are exemptions and people do not need to apply for a permit for certain amounts of clearing. The minister needs to have a check in the system, and that is where he would use the analysis of satellite imagery. Unfortunately, the minister has not done that. What we were able to see through the budget papers was that the government had increased quite dramatically the funding going to the native vegetation clearing permit system. We have seen that funding increase from \$700 000 to \$1.2 million over the forward estimates. On the one hand, the government has loosened the system, presumably to reduce the number of permit applications coming into the system, because people do not need to apply to destroy an area up to five hectares, and it has increased the funding to that part of the agency that is going to look at the permits. We have increased the funding for a net loss of more vegetation. That does not make sense at all. That is a real area of concern and shows a serious inconsistency in the way the environment portfolio is dealt with by this government. We hear the government talk about its interest in environmental matters but when it comes to down to it and we scratch the surface and ask for the figures, we find there is in fact a serious problem.

This morning I was at a black cockatoo symposium at Perry Lakes put on by BirdLife Australia. Mr Ron Johnson, who is an expert in black cockatoos—including Carnaby's, Baudin's and forest red-tailed black-cockatoos—gave an excellent presentation describing the destruction of their habitat and how the bird populations have had to move to a different part of the state. They have moved, generally speaking, southwards and westwards because they are desperate to find an appropriate habitat. In the wheatbelt, for instance, the destruction of their habitat has been dramatic. That is where Carnaby's black-cockatoos were originally found in great numbers, but they have had to move to other areas. They have managed to adapt to a certain extent but we do not know how successfully because we do not know whether there are breeding populations or if indeed the birds are beyond their reproductive age. The analysis, especially by the Department of Environment Regulation, revealed some serious flaws in the manner in which that area of government business is administered. It is a grave disappointment.

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I will touch on the water portfolio, which is an incredibly important area of government business. Our water resources are very important. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth and our water supplies are precious. I was amazed to learn through the estimates process—indeed, it was revealed in answer to a question asked by the member for North West Central—that one category of licence issued to people for water extraction has already gone over 100 per cent allocation of the groundwater resource. Many thousands of these licences have been issued, yet we are still processing more. It could be seen in the budget papers that the government intends to consider more applications this year even though the licence is clearly for a place in which the allocation has gone beyond 100 per cent. It is beyond me why the department would not automatically issue a refusal when it is clear that 100 per cent of the allocation has already been reached. We asked for more detail about that through supplementary information and the Minister for Water was very reasonable in agreeing with requests for supplementary information. That is understandable, as the minister is relatively new to the water portfolio. However, when I looked at the supplementary information, I was disappointed to find that the figures have not been provided. It is clearly in *Hansard* that there was an agreement to provide that information, but it has not arrived. That happens sometimes. If the bureaucracy finds it difficult to respond to a question, it is sometimes just left aside. Other useful information was provided through supplementary information, and I am thankful for that. The information on the relative cost to supply a kilolitre of water to various country towns is very interesting. In the north west, there is a big range in the cost to provide water to different towns. For example, it costs \$17.56 to deliver a kilolitre of water to Onslow compared with \$3.24 a kilolitre for Port Hedland. That indicates not only how complex and difficult it is, but also how expensive it is to provide water in some places.

It is significant that the Minister for Water was unclear on how the water licence process actually works, even though adverts are placed in, I believe, the Monday edition of *The West Australian*. I am not sure how seriously the department takes the process of advertising licences. The department invites people to make submissions against the application, should they wish to. I am not sure whether the department receives many submissions in response to those applications. That question was raised but it was not clearly responded to in the supplementary information provided.

The budget represents a disappointment. There are other areas that I would like to discuss of a capital nature but I shall discuss those when we come back to issues of capital expenditure in the next stage of our budget consideration.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [5.07 pm]: I take great pleasure in making my brief contribution to the third reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. The health budget is in some respects a bit like the frog in the boiling water. If a frog is placed in cold water and the temperature of that water is slowly raised, the frog will continue to adapt to the rising temperature. The frog is not aware of the temperature; it continues to survive in this new environment in which it finds itself. In some respects it is a similar case for the Department of Health—slowly but surely the temperature in the health department and its budget is continuing to rise. The problems that beset this department have been growing year after year throughout successive governments. We must surely come to a point when push comes to shove and a way is found to arrest the situation.

Earlier, the Minister for Health bragged about how the health budget has grown from 25 per cent of the state's budget to 28 per cent. That would normally be a great opportunity for shadow ministers and ministers alike to stand in applause. Unfortunately, the background that sits within this particular debate is of significant concern. I will spend some time this afternoon laying that out for members. What sits in the background of the health budget is the cuts to the federal health budget. That will result in significant hardship felt by health services in Western Australia. In particular, we will see the federal government walk away from a range of national healthcare agreements as part of the national partnership agreement process. In the first instance I will talk about the four closing-the-gap agreements; I think two expire this month. The commonwealth will walk away from what is a generational commitment to raise the health standards of Indigenous people in Australia. Governments right across this nation came together to try to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous people and this federal government has cruelly stepped away from that process. State governments continue to struggle with the extraordinary cost burden and with the logistical difficulties associated with improving the health outcomes of Indigenous people. You of all people, Madam Deputy Speaker, would be familiar with a lot of the environmental issues that impact upon those communities that are now multi-generational and put us in this most disturbing situation.

I start by congratulating the government for continuing our state's contribution to that national partnership agreement process—should it still exist. Our previous contribution was about \$32 million per annum; this year it will remain around that same value, albeit on an annual basis, because there is no indication that that will



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continue across the forward estimates. Although, obviously, the government enjoys bipartisan support for that funding, we would dearly love to see that allocation continue to be maintained or grow. It is disappointing that the federal government is walking away from that. There are troubles in the future about the federal government's contribution towards hospital growth and funding to state governments for health in particular. But this is the cruellest cut of all; that is, we were making some progress in relation to Indigenous health and it is very sad that the federal government has walked away from that commitment.

There are some very important concepts around the cost of delivering health care in Western Australia. As members would be aware, we have introduced activity-based funding in Western Australia, which allows us to really focus upon the cost of what is called a weighted average unit; that is, an average diagnostic situation for each patient. It allows the state to very clearly articulate what is the cost of health care. For instance, in 2013–14 the weighted average unit cost for delivering hospital services to a patient was \$5 319 per patient. We have an allocation that we can measure: we have inputs, which is the funding for it, and we have outputs, which is the delivery of patient services. We know that for our efforts we get \$5 319 per patient in 2013–14.

Under the activity-based funding model we also have an indication from the federal government of what the national efficient price should be for funding of hospitals. The national efficient price for 2013–14 is essentially \$5 486. There is a difference of \$167 between the cost of funding a patient in Western Australia and the national efficient price. In the last budget, the Department of Health announced that it had reached a deal with the Departments of Treasury and Finance. Essentially, it said, "Here is the cost of us doing business in Western Australia. Here is the national efficient price, which is lower than the state price." The Department of Health said to the Departments of Treasury and Finance that it will try to get that state price down to the national efficient price. In the last budget this was termed the "state transitioning price" of health in Western Australia.

We were anticipating this budget to see what progress the state government had made in reducing the cost per patient for delivering health care in Western Australia. Disappointingly, we find that the government is actually going in the other direction. The cost of delivering health care to a patient in Western Australia has gone from \$5 319 in the last budget to \$5 540 per patient now. What then becomes of the deal with the Departments of Treasury and Finance to fill that gap, which the department calls the community service subsidy? What happens to the community service subsidy in this context? The community service subsidy has to grow. Although in the 2013–14 budget the subsidy was predicted to be \$387 million over four years, in 2014–15 it will be \$320 million alone. That is exacerbated by the fact that the national Independent Hospital Pricing Authority has lowered the national efficient price. Therefore, the gap between the state price and the national efficient price is continuing to grow.

At some point we are going to have to reconcile ourselves to these differences. Either the feds will have to recognise that the cost of delivering health care in Western Australia is inherently more expensive than they already currently allow for or we are going to have to find a way to reduce those healthcare costs. Essentially, the cost of doing health is about 70 per cent human cost; that is, the labour cost of doing health. Although the government brags about paying nurses an extra 14 per cent over three years and brags about paying doctors 12 per cent over three years—all the best and good luck to them because they are incredible people who provide an extraordinary service on behalf of our community and I wish them all the best in getting whatever they can in the bargaining process—there is a price to be paid. That price is the cost of doing health care in Western Australia.

That the federal government should propose a co-payment on general practitioner services is absolutely outrageous. That the Barnett government should propose that we need to claw back some of the cost of doing health care in Western Australia through a co-payment on our emergency departments is extraordinary. I do not think it is achievable. For one, it will require legislation, and we will be very keen to see whether all members of Parliament put up their hands when we see legislation coming through this place that essentially gets rid of universal or free health care for people attending emergency departments. As a mechanism for retrieving some of the costs of providing health care, it will be a very clumsy, very expensive and very inefficient way to fund our health system.

The government has a problem. It can continue to pay doctors and nurses more—for the sake of the doctors and nurses, good luck; I hope that is the case—but the party is over. We cannot continue to spend our way out of these issues. The Departments of Treasury and Finance were quizzed in the other place about what will happen because the community service subsidy will continue to grow. The Departments of Treasury and Finance could only shrug their shoulders and say that Health will have to do something about it. I wonder whether it will do something about it.

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I am drawn to the comments Hon Alyssa Hayden made in the other place. She essentially said that there is no way we will ever get to the national efficient price. At some point we have to reconcile ourselves to the issues associated with the national efficient price and the state's price of doing health. Are we going to continue to see that gap widen and therefore continue to see the community service subsidy grow? Or is the minister, as he said in 2013–14, going to actually manage the department and ensure that the cost of doing health care in Western Australia reduces, thereby meeting the obligations of the deal that his department has done with the Departments of Treasury and Finance, and make sure that the glide path between the national efficient price and the weighted average unit price in Western Australia meet in 2017–18 as he said they would? I do not know how he can maintain that argument while the gap continues to grow. While every other state is continuing to improve its performance in emergency departments, while every other state is continuing to cut the price of doing health care, we, on the other hand, are continuing to grow the price of doing health care in Western Australia and continuing to see our emergency departments perform worse than in previous years.

So, as I said, the party is over; we have to meet this dilemma before it becomes a crisis. We are like frogs swimming in the water with the temperature continuing to rise. At some point, we have to come to terms with the fact, but this government has not come to terms with that fact. It is clear from the budget papers that it is continuing to try to spend its way out of the health care problems rather than meet the challenges. It continues to try to push those problems out to tomorrow rather than confront those problems today. A number of speakers, including the Leader of the Opposition, have spoken about the government's mismanagement of the state's finances and the fact that we are confronting such large levels of debt. The performance of the government in relation to the Department of Health and the ongoing expansion of the cost of doing health in this state is one of the very real reasons we have such a debacle in the state's public finances.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [5.20 pm]: I would like to talk to the third reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. The cost of living is a huge issue for most people in our electorates, no matter which side of the house members sit on. The cost of living is really biting for not only the normal family, but also seniors. A lot of people are really struggling, especially in my electorate. Albany always seems to survive. We have gone through lots of things. The whaling station closed and the spinning mills closed. A lot of other things happened that most other towns would die from, but Albany keeps going. I can tell members that Albany is really struggling at the moment with the cost of living from the double barrel of the state and federal budgets. It is all right for us to say that these things have to happen, but try to explain that to a senior who says that they cannot keep their power on after a certain time at night so they go to bed early, that they cannot afford to keep their electric blanket on all night, and that they do not go out as much because they do not have the money. I think that is very important for seniors, especially as they get older. I have a lot of seniors in my electorate. They want to do things because it keeps their mind and body going. I just do not think they have the right attitude now with the way they keep getting hit from all directions. They really want to get out and do stuff but they have to stay home. When I doorknock—most members would have had the same experience—all they want is for me to come in and talk to them for half an hour. They will not turn on the heater, but they will make me a cup of tea and give me a cake. Our seniors are from a tough era. They do not generally complain. I have been in this job for 14 years and they have always said, "We'll be right." But now they are saying that they are not right; they are really struggling. This is something that not only the government, but also the opposition has to look at. These people have paid taxes all their lives and now they are really struggling to survive—and I mean survive. It is something that we as a Parliament have to look at. I know there have to be costs somewhere, but it seems that our seniors are taking the biggest hit. Something has to be done. I do not think there was anything in the state or federal budgets that could help them. That is the biggest issue in my electorate at the moment.

Another issue is the health system. Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to read a letter from one of my constituents about their health issues and experience at Albany Hospital.

[Leave granted.]

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** It states —

On Monday evening 10 March 2014, I started to feel discomfort in my lower back region. By 2am it was very painful and by 6am it had become extremely painful. At this stage, I thought I had just hurt myself somehow and started taking pain killers. As I am not the sort of person to run off to a doctor at every whim and I have an extremely high pain threshold, I put off seeing a doctor until Thursday. By Thursday the pain was excruciating.

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On Thursday 13 March 2014 I attended the Albany Regional Hospital ED ... and could hardly walk. I told the doctor about the chronic pain, and that I had not had an accident or fallen off my mountain bike ...

The doctor did some mobility tests and despite my protest about wanting an x-ray or blood tests, he just gave me script for pain killers and sent me home saying that as far as he was concerned I had hurt my back somehow and that they do not initially x-ray people with back pain.

...

After the consultation, I was left sitting alone on the side of the bed in intense pain without anyone asking if I needed some assistance to put my shoes on or to walk to the door. As I made a slow and painful walk to the front door I passed the doctor who just carried on talking on the phone. An assistant doctor did look at me with some concern and looked at the head doctor, but they let me go past without another thought.

Once outside, several people rushed to my assistance seeing that I was in intense pain.

...

Around midnight Thursday evening 13 March ... I tried to get out of bed to go to the bathroom. I managed to get onto my feet but could not move. I was crying with the pain. My wife immediately rang for an ambulance. The treatment by the ambulance officers was first class. They did some preliminary tests, gave me sedation, got me into a wheelchair and took me to the Albany Regional Hospital.

I was admitted to hospital and seen by ...

A doctor —

and I told him the same story that I had told the doctor at ED. I was given pain killers and anti-inflammatory tablets which helped a little bit.

...

I was in chronic pain, had a fever and had a blood test result which showed a serious infection with very high inflammatory markers ...

...

Despite the fever and a seriously high blood count, my treatment remained the same. Upon my assistance, I was given a CT scan which showed some degeneration of the spine in keeping with my age but showed nothing which would cause the intensity of pain I was experiencing. Each time ...

The doctor —

did his routine visit, I insisted that the fever and the high blood count indicated I had nothing mechanical wrong with me, but that fell on deaf ears. **The alarmingly high blood test result should have raised concerns that maybe the pain in the back was caused by an infection.**

I was pleading for something to be done and after my insistence was given cortisone injections which did give me some relief ...

On the second day I could see that ...

The doctor —

had no idea what was wrong with me and I asked to be sent to Perth by the Flying Doctor. This request was ignored. I was given oxycontin pain killers which have serious side effects for people who have experienced trauma. After a few tablets, I was off the planet, hallucinating and reliving all the awful things that I had experienced during the Vietnam War. This was very traumatic for me. All the nursing staff who were on duty that night experienced my episodes but I was not offered alternative pain relief.

**I was sent home after one week with no diagnosis, still in crippling pain, still with an infection and still with a fever and with the same medication.**

...

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Although the nursing staff were largely efficient in the administration of medication and routine blood pressure tests, I would say that “CARING” is not part of the nursing culture at the Albany Hospital.

...

... Even though I had a fever and could not walk to the bathroom for a shower, not one nurse offered to bathe me during the 3 days I was immobile.

... Each time the nurses came to take my blood pressure, they would move the table with my water and essential things to the other side of room and leave it there.

... I asked for a walking frame and was left sitting on the side of my bed for almost an hour before either the frame or someone came to my aide.

... Each time they did this, they also moved the emergency bell out of reach ...

... The nurses witnessed my reaction to the drug oxycontin, and although I could hear them talking about what went on the night before, either they did not report it to the doctor or if they did, nothing was done.

... After I left the hospital, my daughter came to see me and was told by nursing staff ... I had gone home ‘Thank god’

...

On my return home I just had to endure the pain. My GP was on holidays, my friend who is a GP was also on holidays and we could not get an appointment with my wife’s GP. The pain got worse and I was reluctant to return to the Albany Regional Hospital. I saw a physio and a chiropractor in a desperate attempt to get some relief, but of course they could not help. My wife and I were growing increasingly distressed and were planning to ring Hollywood Hospital and see if they could do anything for me. Just in time the week before Easter, my friend a GP arrived home from holidays. He took one look at me and could see that I could hardly walk. He immediately requested a blood test. The results showed an infection. I told him that I actually had a blood test in hospital and he then requested a copy of those test results. He was alarmed at those test results because they indicated a serious infection. He suspected that the infection was in the spine where the pain was and started me on ... antibiotics and almost immediately the pain started to ease ...

...

The GP sent me to a specialist at St John of God for further tests. The GP suspected an infection in the spine but without an MRI scan and further tests this could not be confirmed. These tests confirmed that I had an infection in my disc and vertebrae. My specialist told me that without proper treatment I could have lost the use of my lower limbs and if this had continued without proper treatment there is a mortality rate of 25%. It was also shown by comparing the scans done at the Albany Hospital and at St John of God, there had been disc degeneration due to the infection not being treated asap. This delay in treatment may lead to some restriction in my mobility in the future.

After further testing at St John of God by a specialist and an immunologist, they made a decision to insert a PICC line and administer large doses of meropenem and vancomycin.

I was in hospital at St John of God for 15 days returning to Albany on 13 May 2014. The doctors in Perth are watching me closely through routine blood tests and phone calls and they have put me on strong oral antibiotics ...

This person plays a lot of sport. He is a Vietnam vet and he always keeps fit. What would have happened if he had not gone to Perth and he had stayed in Albany and done what the hospital had told him? Without proper treatment there is a 25 per cent mortality rate and he could have lost the use of his lower legs. These sorts of things have to be brought out in the open. I know that a letter has been sent to the Minister for Health and I hope something will be done. I took one of my staff to the emergency centre a couple of months ago and we were provided a very good service. They looked after us very well. An incident such as this, involving a 25 per cent mortality rate, is very, very serious. I hope that the Minister for Health is listening and does something about this.

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I had a very interesting conversation the other day with a rehabilitated ex-prisoner I met who had been in and out of jail for 20 years. He had some very interesting stories to tell about inside and outside the prison, but my concern is that after being in and out of prison for 20 years he was released in Albany and given \$200. He was very, very lucky that his parents lived in Albany, because he could stay there and they could look after him. However, if he had wanted to go to Perth, it would have cost him almost \$200 just to go on the bus, let alone pay for accommodation or anything else. They give prisoners \$200 when they are released and their first night's accommodation in Albany would probably be \$250 unless they stayed at the backpackers' hostel. This guy realises that he is not the top person in the community. He was taking drugs in prison through needles and was on a methadone program. The doctors had wanted him put on Suboxone when he came out of prison but he was on 20 millilitres of methadone and when he came out he had to miss one day of methadone. The prison officers took six pictures and told him to take them to a chemist so that straightaway he would be able to get Suboxone. He turned up at the doctor's surgery and was told that the pictures were no good because they were in black and white, so he had to get the photos done again. Instead of having his appointment at 10 o'clock in the morning, he did not get an appointment until four o'clock in the afternoon. He said that for 50 bucks of that \$200 he could have gone out and got a shot of heroin, which he said he could get anywhere in Albany at any time. However, his parents took him down to get the photos done. He could not stand up and he was sweating; he had all the withdrawal symptoms. The prison gave him these photos that were not any good and \$200 and they put him out on the street and they thought that he would be all right. If his parents had not been there, he would have taken a shot; he probably would have got into a fight and gone back to prison, and we would have to pay so much a day for the next 20 or 30 years.

We rehabilitate people in jail. This person, as he said, was probably one of the low-lives of society, but he got his act together. He wanted to get out of prison and do something well. He had the opportunity, but it could have gone either way. His mum and dad, who are really good friends of mine, stood by him the whole time as he has gone through this crisis in his life. His rehabilitation happened over 20 years, but it could have been gone just like that. We must look at this system in which people who are incarcerated for more than 20 years are all of a sudden told that they are rehabilitated, put out on the street and given \$200. There must be a better system. We could give them an accommodation or food voucher and a bit of money. People in jail learn all the bad things; they learn how to get money quickly. If someone has only \$200, they will think it is not enough and instead will try to get a hit. With that amount of money, they cannot get food or anything like that. I am calling on the Minister for Corrective Services to look at these sorts of issues, otherwise these people will come back into the system. Congratulations to him; I cannot mention his name but he is really trying and I really hope that he succeeds.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [5.36 pm]: This opportunity to contribute to the third reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 allows me but to come back to the motion I moved in private members' business last week. After an hour and a half I clearly did not get to some of the points that I wanted to make. These 15 minutes allow me to continue on from where I left off last week.

I told the Minister for Housing that I would raise this issue and perhaps he should not have left the chamber given the number of dorothy dixer questions that have arisen from the issue that I raised last week in my private member's motion; maybe he wants to write another one. He said that he would be listening to the TV. If the member for Nedlands is listening to this on TV, he will hear that I am about to refer to the income threshold test for Department of Housing tenants. I have raised this issue in the media and in this house. The income threshold test for Homeswest tenants is \$430 a week and it has not been changed since 2006. Despite numerous attempts by opposition members in both houses to plead with the government to change the threshold, it has not happened.

I made a grievance to the then Minister for Housing, Minister Buswell, to lift the income threshold limit for Homeswest tenants, but despite those pleas nothing has changed since 2006. The income level for the Department of Housing tenants is \$430 a week. For a 38-hour week that translates to \$11.31 an hour. The Deputy Speaker is probably aware that the minimum wage was increased two weeks ago as a result of the national wage case before the Fair Work Commission. Prior to the decision of the Fair Work Commission, the minimum wage in Australia for all industry awards was \$622.40, or \$16.37 an hour. That was increased as a result of the decision by the Fair Work Commission to \$640 a week, or \$16.84 an hour. A Homeswest tenant can earn a maximum of \$430 a week and the minimum wage across Australia for all industry awards is \$640 a week. Therefore, a Homeswest tenant who wishes to work to provide an income level can work only 25.5 hours a week. At the minimum rate of pay that a person must be paid in Australia, regardless of what industry they work

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in, they could only work for 25.5 hours a week and retain their Homeswest tenancy, because after that they are beyond the \$430-a-week threshold and they would then be subject to eviction. It is not that they could be possibly subject to eviction, they will be subject to eviction, and many, many people have been evicted from Homeswest houses over the last four years as a result of going beyond the \$430-a-week income threshold test—many people in my electorate have been evicted as a result of that. What are we doing? What is the government doing? Is the government honestly saying that if a person wants a Homeswest home, they must live in poverty? They are condemned to a cycle of poverty—is that the government’s policy position? Does a person who wants a Homeswest home and who wants the state to provide them with good, acceptable, but low-rent, accommodation have to stay in poverty in exchange for that? That is what is actually happening on the ground. I have letters here. One is from Norman Fletcher, and I am sure Mr Fletcher will not mind me referring to him and where he lives. He lives in Doubleview and he wrote to the former minister Troy Buswell and talked about his situation as a Homeswest tenant in Doubleview where he has lived for the past 10 years. I quote —

The allowable income for a couple with a single income —

These are the people over and above the single person on \$430 a week —

is \$580.00. and with a dual income \$670.00. gross per week. On a Disability Support Pension the allowable income for a single person is \$540 per week gross. A couple on a DSP is \$725.00 gross per week.

Mr Fletcher goes on to say —

In my opinion, by increasing the allowable earning threshold for occupants of Homeswest will give more incentive for some tenants to get out and find work without the fear of losing their homes and also give them the opportunity to keep up with the cost of living.

It does not matter whether a person is a single-income earner, whether they are part of a couple with dual incomes or they are on the disability support pension, their threshold is below the minimum wage of \$640 a week. Whether someone is single, married or on the disability support pension, their income threshold to be a Homeswest tenant is still under the minimum wage. That means that the government is clearly forcing people who are Homeswest tenants into a cycle of poverty that they cannot get out of, because if they earn more than the figures I have just read out—from \$430 up to the disability support pension of \$540—they are evicted.

I was also contacted by Cheryl Pratt, who is a counsellor at Fresh Start Recovery Programme, a Subiaco-based organisation helping families with addiction and people on disability support programs. Her letter states —

I work as a counsellor at Fresh Start Recovery Programme in Subiaco and in that capacity I hear numerous accounts of individuals being trapped within a cycle of poverty which seems to be enforced by the Department of Housing. For example, a person who had been on a waitlist for public housing for several years was finally allocated a place but was then told he wasn’t eligible as he had a casual job earning \$180 a week on top of the Disability Support Pension. This made him **ineligible** for the accommodation ...

That would be the case on the figures I have just read—that is, that \$180 a week would make him ineligible. Ms Pratt then refers to another example —

Another example—one person had a part time job earning \$200 a week on top of their DSP ... and received a letter from DHW —

The Department of Housing and Works —

saying they had exceeded acceptable income limits and therefore had to leave their accommodation where they were paying \$100 a week. The person then tried to find alternative accommodation but when they realised they would be paying up to \$340 a week for the same kind of accommodation in their area, they decided it was better to throw in the job in order to retain their DHW unit.

She goes on to say —

Why is a person on DSP permitted to earn only \$347 a fortnight on top of their pension ...

People are being trapped into a cycle of poverty. In my own electorate a young single man in his mid to late 30s with a young child is a teacher’s support assistant. He was asked to do overtime and come in on other days to the school where he was working, and because he did that, he went beyond the income threshold for a single person supporting a child in his small Homeswest unit in Spearwood. He was faced with a choice: trying to find another unit at a much higher price by leaving Homeswest and then trying to get full-time work or cutting back on the

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number of hours he was working as a teachers' assistant. Ultimately, even though I tried to steer him in the direction of Keystart or SharedStart to try to help the poor chap break out of the cycle he found himself in, he still do not earn enough money to qualify for those programs. Therefore, he was trapped and ultimately he cut back on the number of hours he was working and ended up with a lesser level of income. That is how people in Homeswest homes are trapped into a cycle of poverty caused by the outright refusal of this government to increase the income threshold limit for Homeswest tenants. It is absolutely unacceptable and a scandal that the government of Western Australia forces its own tenants into poverty simply because it refuses to look at the income threshold limit, particularly as that income threshold limit has not been changed at all for the last seven years. This is ridiculous; this is a scandal and this has to be addressed by the government. We cannot allow a situation to continue in which the largest provider of housing in the state—that is, the state government of Western Australia—deliberately has a policy of forcing its own tenants into poverty by refusing to change the income threshold limit. This is disgraceful. It has been raised in this house before and, as I say, successive housing ministers—the member for Vasse, the member for Warren–Blackwood and the member for Nedlands—have all refused this request. Why would the government retain such a hard line in a situation when it should not do so—on something we would think would not have a major impact on its policy and certainly not on its income levels, and that would not cost the government anything? Why would the government retain such a hard line on the income threshold limit? It is a way of keeping the housing waitlist at current levels. If the government increased the income threshold limit, more people possibly would put up their hand for a Homeswest home because they would be eligible on the basis of their work. It is a way of controlling the number of people who are on the housing waitlist. From a technical point of view, I understand why the government is doing that; obviously, it is trying to control the number of people eligible for housing and, thereby, not be swamped. But from a moral and ethical point of view, it is disgraceful, because the government is forcing its tenants into poverty and leaving them in poverty.

**MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka)** [5.53 pm]: I also rise to participate in the third reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. In my second reading contribution I referred to the adverse impact of the budget on those who could least afford it. I also raised that issue during a private member's motion on cost-of-living increases. In his response to my arguments, on 14 May the member for Churchlands outlined his defence of increased costs of living by remonstrating with the opposition that residents in Western Australia are better off than their eastern states counterparts in terms of utilities, transport et cetera. He said —

Relative to the rest of this country, we are offering the best opportunities to Australians who want to reside in Western Australia

That is much like what the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering said today when he talked about not making up the federal government's cuts to senior entitlements. The member for Churchlands continued —

That is the point that needs to be understood.

Basically, that point is that we are better off than the poor buggers in the other states. He continues —

... not, as the member for Mirrabooka likes to refer to—I heard her the other day talking about a Gini coefficient—the classic, age-old chestnut of Labor Party rhetoric of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

Although I acknowledge in good humour the great work of the folk singer Faith Petric who sang *Ain't done nothin if you ain't been called a red*, let us remind ourselves that this budget has delivered to Western Australia a state debt that is expected to blow out to nearly \$30 billion in the long term and that it has slugged families with a massive \$1.1 billion in additional tax and levies. Just for the record, I am not a red under the bed, but I acknowledge the great song by the great folk singer Faith Petric, who recently died. I can send members a link to her song. She put it on record that if you ain't been defending education and health and those sort of things, you really done nothin'! I am happy to defend those things. Although I found it highly amusing that the member for Churchlands tried to belittle my argument that those who can least afford the cuts in our communities are those who are being burdened by them, the facts seem to speak differently. For example, we heard today that the state government will not support pensioners maintaining their income, which is unlike what has happened in Queensland and New South Wales. This government has now taxed parking at train stations, which is an added cost for those who use public transport to what was in the budget.

I will drill down into the derision that is served on those of us who argue that a smaller gap between income levels in our community would deliver the social cohesive policies that all of us in this place applaud—namely, better health, higher education attainment and a safer and more respectful community. It is my very strong view

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that a smaller gap—there is evidence to show this—between incomes delivers better outcomes. In particular, I give thanks to Shane Wright, the economic editor of *The West Australian* and his article on Monday, 9 June entitled “To have or not to have”. It is pertinent that the Premier is here, because Shane Wright used Cottesloe and Balga to illustrate his point—with Cottesloe obviously being in the Premier’s electorate and with Balga being one of the suburbs in the Mirrabooka electorate—about the issues that we talk about regarding income gaps. He illustrated the valid concern of the social impact as a result of a large difference between those in our community who have wealth and those who lack wealth. He summarised quite well the work of Thomas Piketty, a French economist who has been applauded and who is building on the work of economist Simon Kuznets, who was famed for his ideology of growing the economic pie that we can all share and of building the influential middle class that drove the United States economy until recently. Although I read a lot of articles about Thomas Piketty in the lead-up to preparing for this contribution, I could not quite manage the huge 500-page tome that is full of economic models. I always found economic modelling one of the difficulties when doing my economics degree. I have been reading Elizabeth Warren’s *A Fighting Chance*. She is a former professor of Harvard Law School and is a Massachusetts Senator who is currently championing the government payment of student fees in the US. She argues in her book that the America she grew up in, which invested in kids like her and her brothers and helped them build a future in which they could flourish, is no longer.

We share that issue globally. It is clear that the income gap in global communities is a serious concern. As was noted by Mr Wright in his article in *The West Australian*, the argument about the income gap is not exclusive to the left. Mark Carney, the chairman of the Bank of England, has spoken about the demonstrable increase in inequity across the world. In Mark Carney’s speech “Inclusive capitalism: Creating a sense of the systemic” to the Conference on Inclusive Capitalism, the Bank of England chairman argued his opposition to inequity and advanced that distributive justice, social equity and intergeneration equity resulted in a thriving society. At this point, I remind members that the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre’s “Sharing the boom, the distribution of income and wealth in WA” established that 65 per cent of extra wealth created in WA by the boom went to the wealthiest 20 per cent of households. It would therefore be negligent of us as policymakers to dismiss the lack of equity in Western Australian society as simply red raggers.

As Shane Wright illustrated in his article that compared the taxable incomes of those in Cottesloe with those in Balga—a suburb that I am very proud to represent in his place—his analysis used a similar methodology that Piketty used worldwide when he looked at America, some countries in Europe and, as I understand, Australia. Shane Wright looked at taxable incomes and found that the mean taxable income in Cottesloe has increased by 167 per cent to \$180 000 over the past 11 years, whereas the mean taxable income in Balga has increased by 94 per cent to \$54 781 in the same period. Mr Wright argues that despite the occupational differences, the marked difference cannot account for such large diversions in income growth between the suburbs. He made it clear that we cannot look at it as a result of the mining boom and the different occupations. He illustrates that the difference is based not on what they earn in the nine-to-five grind, but on the non-salaried income of those who live in Cottesloe, which is \$141 000 per person in contrast to \$14 000 per person in Balga. He states —

Net capital gains for Cottesloe residents grew almost 400 per cent between 2000–01 and 2011–12.

In the same period, Balga capital gains grew by 135 per cent. He is somewhat critical of the apparent transfer of wealth to children in Cottesloe. He noted that although 20 children under the age of 18 in Balga earned about \$19 000 each, the same number of children in Cottesloe earned a startling \$42 800 each. The point to this is that when returns on capital exceed the rate of economic growth, the distribution of income grows the inequity gap in our society. That is the point of Piketty’s thesis that people are debating at the moment. As the 1987 Nobel Economics Prize winner, Professor Robert M. Solow, pointed out, as long as the rate of return exceeds the rate of growth—particularly in wages growth, which most people rely on—inequity will perpetuate in our society. Shane Wright concludes *The West Australian* article with some sage advice to policymakers such as ourselves, that the failure to share economic growth through equitable distribution is a failure to all those we represent. I assume that members know why income inequity is a problem for civil society, but, in case it is questioned, I note the report on income inequality in the federal Treasury’s *Economic Roundup: Issue 2, 2013*. It noted that the World Economic Forum declared that inequality was a top economic risk. The report noted that although labour inequality has been on the decline, overall income inequality in Australia has been rising since the mid-1990s.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** When we broke for dinner, I was establishing that, despite the derision by the member for Churchlands of my speech on the cost of living, income equality is important and a major concern for all sides of



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politics and policymakers. I would like to continue. I noted prior to the break that the World Economic Forum declared that inequality was a top economic risk. I referred to the Australian Treasury's *Economic Roundup: Issue 2, 2013*. I acknowledge that the federal Treasury paper seemed to downplay the impact of the growing gap, because it argued that wage income was increasing at the same time and that income testing targeted benefits to low-income earners, but, from my perspective, this argument now seems to be undermined by the state and federal budgets' attack on low-income households.

We are aware that much of the commentary about the federal budget, in particular, has illustrated that the federal budget has attacked those who can least afford it with the cuts. In fact, John Hewson, a past leader of the Liberal Party, said in a recent press release in regard to a report that he was involved in, titled "Advance Australia Fair? What to do about growing inequality in Australia", which was released only a week or so ago, as follows —

"The budget proposed in simple terms a cut of some 12% to 15% in the disposable income of the lower-income groups, single-income families, families with children, but only less than 1% cut in disposable incomes for those on higher incomes.

The Treasury paper in 2013 relied on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's conclusion that we needed to ensure equal access for the population to high-quality public services such as public education, health and family care. Treasury said that that would help reduce inequality so that we did not have to worry about the income gap, because Treasury's argument was that these services would provide equal opportunities for personal professional development for all citizens. Although we all applaud and welcome these services, it is clear that those things are being undermined currently by this state government in its latest round of budget cuts and taxes, and it has increased debt for people in the future. However, it is also clear that that is a Liberal government agenda across both the state and federal spheres. For me, the capacity to have equal access is the point; the government is not delivering on equal access and opportunities, which is what I outlined in my previous speech. Despite its promises to the electorate in the 2013 election campaign, it is not delivering affordable housing and it is undermining the quality of education in the local schools. Its greatest betrayal of the people of Mirrabooka is its failure to deliver the Metro Area Express light rail in the time lines it promised in the election.

In the estimates hearings, the Minister for Transport stated that the Forresterfield airport link and the MAX light rail were very similar as far as cost-benefit ratios go, but that Forresterfield had opportunities for future housing development. That is just neglectful of the future housing opportunities in the Mirrabooka area, which I have talked about in this place. It includes not only the land in Mirrabooka, which is 7.5 hectares of Department of Housing land that the government has access to, but also the Channel Seven site in Dianella, and very many sites along the route. To suddenly say that we are without this housing opportunity is false, and I think it was a fallacy to suggest that that was the reason. It was simply constructed because this state government will not honour its commitments to the people of Mirrabooka out of spite because it was not successful in that electorate in the election.

I want to briefly talk about the Australia 21: Shaping the Future "Advance Australia Fair? What to do about growing inequality in Australia" report that was released recently. It refers to the reason why that income gap is extraordinarily important in terms of lessening inequality and making sure that people do have those opportunities in our community, because that is a major indicator. Despite the fact that the member for Churchlands may say that the Gini coefficient is something that he does not have to take any notice of, it is a ratio used by economists. Some time ago when I saw Father Frank Brennan, he was talking about the studies that showed that with a greater coefficient, we had greater infant mortality, greater health problems and greater education problems. The executive summary of the Shaping the Future report states —

A number of policy levers are available to arrest the trend towards greater inequality and, at the same time, remedy the current deficit in government revenue. One prime lever is inclusive job creation policies. A second is long term investment in human capital through improving early childhood development and education and training.

Why, then, has this government undermined education and training? Why has it made people who want to go to TAFE pay the sorts of fees that exclude them? When I had an article in the paper, a gentleman rang me to talk about the fact that he was a pharmacist in India, but he could not get that recognised here. When he came here, he worked in the aged care area. He wanted to increase his capacity to become an enrolled nurse. He enrolled at TAFE, but because of the increases in TAFE fees, he is not financially able to afford that.

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland)** [7.07 pm]: I rise to talk about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. The more we delve into this budget, the more we find out through the

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Assembly estimates process and, only yesterday, through the Council estimates process, for police in particular, but for other portfolios last week. We are finding out more and more of the bad news in this budget. Very little is of any benefit or good news for the people of Western Australia, certainly not for people in my electorate of Midland. In fact, most of what we seem to unravel is just further bad news. It is the result of now over six years of mismanagement by the Liberal–National government.

The other thing that becomes very readily apparent is that many of the promises made at the last election were false promises. Many of them had no chance of being delivered. It is nothing short of scandalous that the Premier and the then Treasurer were fully aware of the finances of the state, yet they went out and made unfunded promise after unfunded promise. They advertised it and put a special little seal on it saying “fully funded, fully costed”. Nothing could be further from the truth, because many of the things that were promised still have not been fully funded and, potentially, not fully costed either, for that matter. When we drill down and look at some of those promises, we find that they are, at best, illusory.

Firstly, I will quickly turn to a couple of ongoing matters in my electorate. The Premier promised \$22 million for a university in Midland. He said that that would be for Curtin University of Technology to establish a medical school there. Now I see that this is somehow in progress. I am not sure what progress the Premier has made. I do know that the \$22 million is not in the state budget. For the second year in a row it is not there. Budgets list what governments plan to spend in the next few years as well as part of the out years. Nothing is listed in the out years. The government and the Treasurer clearly do not anticipate that they have to put \$22 million aside next year or the year after to be able to deliver on that promise. Really, it is a promise that was made on a couple of maybes and a couple of ifs. If Curtin University is successful in getting a medical school and if it chooses to put it at Midland, the government will then give \$22 million. At this stage there seems to be little likelihood of the federal Liberal government providing Curtin University with a medical school. Doctors are apparently saying that there are not enough clinical places for trained medical graduates in Western Australia and that there is no need for a medical school at Curtin University. As I understand it, the Australian Medical Association is not calling for this medical school. Curtin University would like to have it, and the question has been put to Curtin University: if you were to manage to get this medical school, which is currently showing no signs of being approved by the federal Liberal government and is not supported by doctors in this state, would you locate it at Midland if you were given a site there and a \$22 million incentive? The answer from Curtin University is that it would think about it. From what I have seen of universities around Australia and the world, at the moment there is a trend towards amalgamations, doing more things online and containing themselves within existing sites, so this is just a little promise made by the Premier on the never-never as some kind of sop to the people of Midland, and he clearly has zero intention of delivering on it. The \$22 million is not on budget this year or listed for any of the out years.

The Premier also said during the last election campaign that the Midland train station was a disgrace. In fact, it has been widely acknowledged that the Midland train station would benefit from being moved closer to the new hospital when it is built, and plans have been drawn up for that. However, again, there is no money in the budget for that purpose. There are also a couple of promises that overlap between my electorate and the shadow police portfolio for which I have responsibility in the area of community safety. We drilled down during the estimates process to find out whether the government is making good on those community safety promises, and I can tell members that it is not. I want to draw members’ attention to a Liberal Party press release headed, “Hoons face even tougher penalties”. It states, in part —

- **Liberals’ tough measures to crack down on suburban area hoon drivers**
- **Hoon vehicles can be confiscated for a first offence in built-up areas if offence affects other people or damages property**
- **More resourcing for police and new covert CCTV cameras to catch hoons**

Some members may have seen in the news a few weeks ago the government saying that it was to allocate \$170 000 towards putting some covert cameras in place to catch hoons. However, it did not say anything about the \$1.6 million that it actually promised before the election, because this press release goes on to state —

Police Minister Liza Harvey said police had received more than 7,200 complaints about anti-social behaviour on our roads last year.

“That’s more than 138 complaints to police every week, and those complaints are particularly prevalent in the outer suburbs of Perth between 4pm and 7pm when families are preparing for or sitting down to dinner,” Mrs Harvey said.

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“In recent years, an emerging problem in these areas has related to hoon behaviour by riders of unlicensed trail bikes. People are sick and tired of this behaviour, and we will implement legislative and practical measures to ensure police can tackle this problem.”

That has not occurred. The following paragraph states —

In addition, a Liberal Government will provide \$1.6million over four years to fund anti-hoon police activities in the suburbs, including campaigns to encourage the public to “dob-in-a-hoon”.

A question on this matter was yesterday put to senior police during the estimates hearings in the Legislative Council chamber, and the advice was that that \$1.6 million was not on budget and had not been given to police, and it is not in next year’s budget or in the out years; it is nowhere to be seen. Here we have another totally unfunded promise.

The shame of this is that it is clearly an issue that the government knew would be popular with the community; something that the Minister for Police has acknowledged in her press release as being a very real issue for people living in the community and putting up with hoons. This is an issue that the community wants to see some action on; the community wants to see police catch and punish the hoons involved in these activities. The Minister for Police promised not only \$170 000 for the cameras, which is mentioned in this press release, but also an additional \$1.6 million to provide police with the time and capacity to go out and apprehend the hoons involved. This is illusory; it is just plain not there.

Similarly—I have raised this matter previously in second reading debates—a single Liberal Party press release went out in a lot of electorates, and I happen to have handy the member for Morley’s copy and that of my Liberal opponent in the electorate of Midland. It talks about how the Liberal Party was to build a better CCTV network in—insert name of electorate. Copies of this Liberal Party press release went out simultaneously to several electorates; the one from Ian Britza, MLA, member for Morley, talks about building a better CCTV network in Morley; providing \$13.5 million for more CCTV cameras; the establishment of a state CCTV strategic plan; and on it goes. The press release for Daniel Parasiliti, the Liberal candidate for Midland at the last election, has exactly the same heading and was released on the same date, 7 February 2013. It also refers to \$13.5 million for more CCTV cameras and establishment of a state CCTV strategic plan; I am sure members get the gist. It goes on to talk about particular suburbs in that electorate and how, somehow, there will be all this money available to put CCTV cameras in crime hotspots.

Well, guess what? Last year we pointed out that there was no money in the budget for that at all. This year it is not even \$13.5 million but only \$1.3 million in the budget. I put it to members that \$1.3 million is a long way short of what was promised; it is not even 10 per cent of the money promised that was supposedly fully funded and fully costed. That is to be split between all the electorates in this state; even if it were to be split between only the metropolitan electorates, it would provide precious little in terms of CCTV coverage in crime hotspots. I expect we will have yet another announcement from the Liberal Party on this sometime in 2016, ahead of the 2017 election; having not delivered on either of these promises in this term, it will probably promise to do so in its next term.

There were also promises about police numbers, and this is also simply a con. The Minister for Police has admitted that the government is currently down on police officer numbers or strength, as it is often referred to, and one of the reasons is something that was not promised before the last election: the redundancy program put in place for the public sector. No-one for a moment imagined that this would be something offered to police, but it was, and nearly 200 officers had left the service as of just a couple of months ago. It will be impossible to backfill those 200 positions with new recruits; the process would have had to have been started about a year ago. It takes time to select new recruits, and six months to train them at the academy and get them out there. Clearly, we are going to be at least 200 officers short for some time.

I highlighted during the budget estimates process that the government has not yet delivered on a promise from the 2008 election in respect of police numbers. The government went into the 2013 election 170 officers short and, as I understand it, it is still 100 officers short. The minister says that this shortfall will somehow be met because the government is going to recruit 100 officers in June this year—this month. Maybe it has started already; apparently they are recruiting the final 100 this month. The fact of the matter is that if 100 officers are recruited this month, they will not be out working on the street as fully fledged police officers until December or January. That is presumably when the government is going to deliver on its 2008 promise.

It was a bit of a joke when I read the letter written by the Minister for Police to the Police Union of Workers during the course of the election, in which she outlines police numbers. It states, in part —

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It is fully funded so that it can be delivered within the next four years and so that the additional recruitment can commence in 2013/14;

I will tell members what has happened in 2013–14: in the very last month of the financial year, the government is still recruiting the last 100 of its 2008 promise.

This minister, who just keeps changing and moving the goalposts, says that is what we promised in 2008. No, it was not; the government matched Labor's promise in 2008. That is not what was promised. Those police should have been on the street fully operational a full 12 months ago but they are not. The government has not delivered on the provision of the final 100 police promised at the 2008 election, let alone any that were promised as part of the new numbers. Certainly, it was a clear promise.

I could do with another half an hour to talk about road safety. In the estimates process I referred to the independent Road Safety Council and the minister corrected me and said that it is not independent and that only the chair is independent; it comprises people from various government departments. I well know that. If the minister does not like me calling it independent, in future I will call it the expert Road Safety Council. The expert Road Safety Council made recommendations about spending money from the road trauma trust account. Those recommendations have been, in large part, overridden by cabinet in a grossly political way. I intend to get further into that issue in the future, because I am not satisfied with cabinet and the government ignoring road recommendations from road safety experts that would see more lives saved than would spending the money on the government's own road safety choices.

**MR P.T. MILES (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary)** [7.22 pm]: I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and respond to comments made in this house on 15 May by the McGowan Labor opposition spokesperson for multicultural interests, the member for Girrawheen. In her speech, the member made reference to a highly publicised joint police operation at the Carabooda market gardens in the member for Butler's electorate, which resulted in charges being laid against members of the Le family. During the course of the police operation a large number of illegal workers were discovered. Charges were subsequently laid and are now before the courts. The member for Girrawheen recalled seeing an article in the *North Coast Times* in 2010.

*Point of Order*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I understand that this is the third reading debate for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 and I am yet to see any connection between that bill and what the member for Wanneroo is saying. He is talking about a matter involving some of his constituents at a market garden and what I consider is maybe a police or a law and order matter. I do not know whether the matters he is raising are sub judice in any way but I do not think this is a topic that could be in any way canvassed as part of a third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I have sat here and listened to members opposite go off on all sorts tangents, because this is a wideranging debate. I have been told it is the most wideranging debate to occur in this house. I would like to hear the member for Wanneroo finish his statement.

**The SPEAKER:** Third reading debates are generally more confined than second reading debates, but I will give the member for Wanneroo some latitude to lead in to what he wants to say on the budget.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I did get some clarification from the Clerk on what could be said. This issue was raised in the member for Girrawheen's speech during the debate on this bill on 15 May and it relates to the budget process because 30 agencies were used in this investigation. The member for Midland is aware of the 30 agencies and that clearly budget funds were used for that investigation. The member for Girrawheen made accusations in this house during the debate on this bill and called on me to correct the allegations, and that is what I am doing.

During the course of the police operation a large number of illegals were found. The member for Girrawheen recalled seeing an article in the *North Coast Times* in 2010 concerning the need for seasonal fruit pickers. She said that the article featured a photograph and went on to say in *Hansard* —

... featuring a photo of Mr Thang Le, now deceased, who was allegedly the principal of the Carabooda operation prior to his death.

The member for Girrawheen pointed out that the photograph also featured the then Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, John Castrilli, and myself, the member for Wanneroo. Using the protection of parliamentary privilege she went on to wonder —

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... how much due diligence the member for Wanneroo undertook before advancing the case to import more 457 visa workers on behalf of Mr Le.

*Point of Order*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The only connection the member for Wanneroo seems to have drawn to the budget is that there were some government agencies involved and those government agencies spend money. Further, he seems to feel that he has been goaded into doing this by the member for Girrawheen. What I am hearing sounds very much like a personal explanation rather than a third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014, which it already has been pointed out to the member is a more restrained debate. I know the Speaker offered the member some latitude, but I do not think he has made any attempt to bring his speech into order.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Wanneroo, if you can relate what you are saying to financial items in the budget, that is the way to go.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.T. MILES:** I thank the Speaker for his guidance.

The member for Girrawheen was very happy to stand in this place as a cowards castle to impugn residents in my electorate from the Vietnamese community specifically and me. The member for Girrawheen was very happy to do that then, but she is now hiding behind her factional friends to try to prevent a reply in this house. The gutless wonders on the other side are only too happy to have their say.

**The SPEAKER:** I am going to bring you back, member for Wanneroo. The third reading debate is a much more focused debate than the second reading debate and it has to be related to budget items. I understand that things have been said about you in the house, but, please, bring it back to a budget item.

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The police operation was at not only Carabooda but also Neerabup. It involved agencies such as the Building Commission, which is part of the Department of Commerce, and also agencies from local government and the federal government.

The allegation that the Le family that I met with is the same Le family in the Carabooda area is totally false. In actual fact, members of the Vietnamese Le family in my electorate are all alive and well. I have a photo taken only two weeks ago to prove it. Mr Le is very much alive and very happy. He is not very happy with the member for Girrawheen or the Labor Party, because the member for Girrawheen is the opposition spokesperson for multicultural interests, who in the past prided herself on looking after the Vietnamese community. They are not very happy with the member or the Leader of the Opposition right now.

*Point of Order*

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I am mindful of the Speaker's ruling a few minutes ago, which apparently the member for Wanneroo seems to be ignoring.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The member for Wanneroo received three sets of instructions from the Speaker and he has ignored all three sets of guidance and is continuing with more of the same.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Member for Wanneroo, I remind you that you need to talk about a budget item. Perhaps you could refer to the budget item that you are connecting with, so that you can clarify that for the house, otherwise I will have to call you to order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.T. MILES:** I am talking about Multicultural Interests referred to in the budget papers; also, the Police referred to in the budget papers. I am also talking about the Building Commission and its use of the location raised by the member for Girrawheen. Several other agencies were also funded to make sure that the Vietnamese community are protected. I am very happy to come into this house to protect them on behalf of the member for Girrawheen. The member for Girrawheen needs to be aware that hiding in this house protecting herself will not make this matter go away at all.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P.T. MILES:** The Le family whom I represent in Badgerup Road —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Have you ever had a donation from them?

Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Tinley

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**Mr P.T. MILES:** No. Has the member for Midland had a donation from her Vietnamese community? I have not had any at all. I think there are two issues here.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Midland!

**Mr P.T. MILES:** As I said before, my constituent Mr Thang Le of Gngara is alive and well, as I showed from the photograph. He has got nothing to do with the Le family of Carabooda or the Le family in Neerabup. They are not even part of the same Vietnamese community or group. The Vietnamese refugee association is also extremely unhappy about what is being done in this house by the member for Midland.

*Point of Order*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Mr Acting Speaker, I have to ask you: do the standing orders in this place count for anything anymore? Somebody has now been advised four or five times that what he is doing is inappropriate and that it has nothing to do with the budget. He has failed to say what the connection is other than, "Oh, there's some government agencies involved and those government agencies spend money." It is ludicrous, it is an embarrassment and he should not be allowed to continue.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Member for Wanneroo, I remind you of the focus for the third reading debate; it has to focus on some of the detail of the debate that took place, particularly in the consideration in detail stage. I draw you to the point, otherwise I will have to require you to resume your seat and not stand up again.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. It is an important issue and I will keep bringing it up from time to time forever because I think members in this place should not hide behind parliamentary privilege, like the member for Girrawheen is doing. She should also resign as opposition spokesperson and/or the Leader of the Opposition should sack her.

Jobs are very important in my electorate and the Department of Commerce, through innovation, effectively funds quite a few programs that are being done through small businesses and others in the Wangara area. These jobs are being created and looked after by this government; again, it is a Liberal government that is looking after the little person, unlike the member for Girrawheen who cannot stand anybody getting on in life. She impugns a member of the community who has spent 30 years in this country and who has done very well to get diplomas and further educate himself. The member for Girrawheen has actually accused him of being part of some sort of corrupt syndicate.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mr P.T. MILES:** That is what she has done, and I will have some more to say about this later. The member for Girrawheen should resign from her portfolio. If she does not, I think the Leader of the Opposition should make it very clear that she should resign or he should stand her down.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Mr Acting Speaker, this has no relevance to the third reading debate. The standing orders are very clear in this stage of the debate. This has nothing to do with the budget, and I call on you to sit the member down. You warned him before that you would sit him down, and he is still doing it. He is disregarding the Chair.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** There is no point of order because he has moved on to a totally different issue. It was about a Mr Le and all of that; he has moved on to some other matter, so there is no point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.T. MILES:** I have finished.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah)** [7.35 pm]: I would like to make a contribution on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. That was a very bizarre contribution from the member for Wanneroo. I have never seen anything like that before, but he can go back into his cave now.

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I would like to make some comments in my third reading contribution about the budget, specifically relating to the regional development portfolio, and more specifically about the royalties for regions program. Members would be very aware that I have been intensely critical of the share of funding that has been received and dealt to the Peel region since the inception of the royalties for regions program. Consistently, over five years, every single year, the Peel region has been the recipient of the lowest contribution from the royalties for regions program. During a previous estimates hearing, I was actually thrown out of estimates because I got so angry with the former Minister for Regional Development when I asked him why he was discriminating against the Peel region and he simply said to me that he was not being discriminatory. He did not see anything wrong with the fact that the Peel region—the second largest region by population—had been such a pitiful beneficiary of funding from the royalties for regions program.

I want to highlight the blueprint. I am glad the Minister for Regional Development is here because the blueprint process is currently underway and I will be taking an active interest in it, as I have always taken an interest in regional planning, given it is where I live. I know that the Peel Regional Leaders Forum has written to the minister recently, as have a number of other local government authorities in the region, highlighting the obvious—the Peel is poorly funded by the program that the minister administers. I want to see some balance returned, particularly given our population. I will highlight the population statistics from the draft Peel regional blueprint. In the period 2005–10, the Peel region experienced a 24 per cent growth in population. No other region has experienced growth of that nature. The closest in that period was the south west, namely, some 16.7 per cent. These population increases for the Peel have been consistently occurring over the past 10 to 15 years, and we have been discriminated against. I am happy to accept that five years have passed, but I am not happy to accept that we continue to be dealt a poor showing in future funding rounds.

The minister will say to me that we have the southern region initiative, which is \$600 million over four years, but as I see in the budget and from answers arising from questions to the minister about it, the bulk of that funding does not actually even come into play until years three and four. In the next two financial years, the minister had better make sure that the Peel region is at the top for funding because I am tired of standing in this place highlighting the issues impacting on my community—not only its population growth, but a range of social and economic issues that impact on the health and wellbeing of the population of the people who call the Peel home. By 2031, the Peel region will, according to the statistical data that we use, have a population of around 188 000 people, second only to the south west, which will have just a few thousand above that.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, no; I have only 15 minutes. So the fact of the matter is that the minister has consistently not funded the two most populated regions of Western Australia. When we look at the funding of the royalties for regions program over the past five years, it is the Peel and the south west, the two most —

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, the two most —

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I do not want any interjections from the minister, because he has devalued our community! I do not want to take them! I am not taking them from him.

I tell you this: in comparison to the other regions, you have consistently defunded the two most populated regions. That is a fact. It ain't made up! It is factual. In the next two years, before the Southern Inland Health Initiative funding comes into play, which is significant, do not starve us, as you have done for the last five.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Mandurah to speak through the Chair and not address the Minister for Regional Development directly.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, but he has upset me.

I will now mention a couple of key projects. One of the key problems is that the Minister for Regional Development and other ministers in his cabinet have not realised that growth has occurred in all parts of the Mandurah region. We have just had a briefing from a couple of people in the Serpentine–Jarrahdale community in the Peel region on some very important issues who highlighted the need for sporting recreational space in the Serpentine–Jarrahdale municipality. The government is providing no significant regional recreational space in that area. The community has been the key agitator to develop that. Land has been identified at Whitby Falls—land under the carriage of the Minister for Health—that could provide the key district recreational space for

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people of the growing south eastern corridor of the metropolitan area and the Peel region. Over the past four years those people have been doing everything to get this project up, but they keep being stonewalled. I think I know a reason for that. I think it has something to do with the form of this government in local government, particularly the cards it wants to deal to the people of Serpentine–Jarrahdale. The Minister for Local Government’s proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board intends to slice Serpentine–Jarrahdale in half, sending the southern portion south of Mundijong Road into the Shire of Murray and the northern portion of Serpentine–Jarrahdale into the City of Armadale. The land that the community group has identified as a major recreational space—some 70 hectares—is a key area for future recreation for the growing populations of that shire. As has been highlighted, the Peel population has exploded not just because of Mandurah’s growth, but because of the growth in Byford, Mundijong and that part of the Peel that is in Serpentine–Jarrahdale. The fact of the matter is that right now some major priorities need to be, and should be, funded through the royalties for regions program, but the current and previous ministers for regional development have had their foot on the hose and trickle-fed some dollars through that program. The Peel region has not received even a portion of what some other regions have received—I am not having a go at the other regions; good luck to them for what they have been funded—and it has not received its fair share consistently for five years, yet there are key projects that deserve to be funded through that program, and the Serpentine–Jarrahdale district recreational space is only one of them.

The blueprint for Peel includes, and indeed needs, transport infrastructure. I have stood in this place on many occasions previously and said that Mandurah, as the terminus of the southern suburbs railway, has only one station to service 80 000 people in Mandurah and the greater population that spreads into the hinterland of the Shires of Murray, Waroona and Boddington. The fact is that Mandurah has only one railway station, access to which is now absolutely chockers. I have also said in this place previously that the Mandurah train station still does not have appropriate, adequate and frequent bus services that link in from all the suburbs and localities of the suburbs of Mandurah; therefore people cannot rely on frequent and good bus services. I remind members that some suburbs of Mandurah have no service on a Saturday or Sunday, and, if they do, have only one bus every two hours. There are no proper linkages, particularly on weekends or after-hours, after 7.00 pm, to the train station. The minister has to fix the buses up.

People are also parking their cars on the verges of streets in and around the Mandurah train terminus because there is not enough parking at the Mandurah rail station. One idea proposed is to put some stacked parking on the site. I am not opposed to that; however, we have to challenge the Public Transport Authority’s thinking about new stations. The planners keep telling us in Mandurah that we cannot have a new station unless there is a catchment of 30 000 people. That comment was made at a meeting in Lakelands a couple of years back by Peter Martinovich, for whom I have a great deal of respect. The fact of the matter is if a station such as the one proposed at Lakelands was put in place through royalties for regions or through the transport budget, it would not have to have the bells and whistles that the PTA seems to be fixated on; it could simply be not a basic station but a minimalist station. I refer to similar stations to those on the Fremantle, Armadale and Midland lines. They are not bells and whistles stations; they are stations that allow people to walk on and off and have Kiss ‘n’ Ride via buses. That is what is needed at Lakelands. It would provide a second station to take pressure off the Mandurah terminus and a station for the people living in the northern suburbs of Mandurah, including Lakelands, Madora Bay, San Remo and the northern part of Silver Sands, to get to. If it had the proper connections, it could be a viable station providing state-of-the-art Kiss ‘n’ Ride. There is no need for much parking, because there is not enough space, but that option should be seriously considered. The view of some in the PTA that every station built on the railway line must cater for a population of 30 000 or more must be challenged.

Also included in this issue is the safety of people. I highlighted in a grievance to the Minister for Transport only two weeks ago the concerns of the people of Lakelands. It is not the fault of the people of Lakelands that there is only one key road in and out of their locality, yet there has been no commitment by the government, Main Roads or the Minister for Transport to provide safe access to the train station. There are no traffic lights onto Mandurah Road into and out of Lakelands and people take their lives into their hands every day near the two schools on Catalina Drive, which are key places for parents picking up and dropping off children and students who are driving to the Mandurah Baptist College. I have asked that these types of projects—the treatment of access points like Catalina Drive and Mandurah Road and the extension of Banksiadale Gate to the north and Madora Beach Road—be funded by royalties for regions or directly by government, but each time I raise that matter, I am told that it is not a priority or there have not been enough crashes. Why are crashes used as an indicator of whether we should treat a problem? The fact is that the problem exists. I do not want to have to come to this place and lambast the minister or anyone in government when something disastrous happens and



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people lose their lives or suffer serious injury and it then triggers a response by the minister and/or Main Roads to provide safe access. Those are the sorts of projects that should be delivered through the royalties for regions program.

The final point that I want to make relates to the rumour that we are consistently hearing about the government's intentions for Keralup, formerly Amarillo. Is the government considering scrapping that project and using that land as an offset? I would certainly be interested in the Minister for Housing's response to what I am hearing from many sectors is a consideration by this government. I do not want to berate the Minister for Regional Development in this place or in estimates in the other place. Fund us as we deserve.

**MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean)** [7.51 pm]: I am happy to rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. As opposition spokesperson for Fisheries, I want to talk about the shark cull that the government is undertaking. Today the government released the report that it has been talking about for many weeks now. Many questions have been asked about the effectiveness of this program and the amount of money that the government is spending on it. The government has been telling us for many weeks that a report would be released in June that would reveal all. Today the government released that report. As much as the government tries to present the program in a positive light, the report really does not assist its case at all. It is a report that it has done on itself. The report was written by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That is the department that was running the program, so there is no degree of independence at all in this report. The department tried to put a positive spin on this program, yet some of the facts in it are really quite damning. Last summer \$13 000 a day was spent on this program—a total of nearly \$1.3 million. If we take similar costs into next summer—next summer will be a longer program, from November to April—that means that the state government will be spending approximately \$2 million on this program. That is an extraordinary amount of money from a state budget. The state government is taking money from individual schools and not meeting its other election commitments. The government might say that that is money well spent if it can demonstrate that it will save lives. Of course nothing in this report shows that this program will save lives.

The report clearly identifies that in the past 10 years all the fatal shark attacks in Western Australia have been attributed to great white sharks. Last summer this program did not catch a single great white shark. On the government's own benchmarks—the great white sharks are the sharks responsible for the attacks that we have seen in Western Australia—we would assume that it would measure the success of the program by whether it will catch great white sharks. Clearly, not a single great white shark was caught last summer. What is more, there will probably be none caught next summer either because the report acknowledges that the drum lines are in place at a time least likely to catch great white sharks. Last summer the drum lines were in place from January to April—a time when great white sharks are not at their most common off our coast. The report acknowledges that. If that is what the government was trying to do, one would think it would adjust the times to when great white sharks were more common, but it will not do that. It will extend the program back to November but, again, that is still at a time when great white sharks are not prevalent off our coast.

The report says that no great white sharks attributable to the fatal shark attacks have been caught. Based on the fact that the government admitted that the drum lines were in place at a time least likely to catch this species of shark, it is unlikely that the program that it plans for next summer will be, in its own terms, successful. We have to ask why the government has this program in place. The program is killing a significant number of tiger sharks; some 50 tiger sharks over three metres in length were killed last summer. A number of the tiger sharks caught were less than three metres in length. Even though they were supposed to be released, they died anyway. As I have indicated, none of the fatal shark attacks in the past decade in Western Australia have been attributed to tiger sharks. The government might have a view that tiger sharks are dangerous, but it is simply not the case that killing tiger sharks is a sensible response to the fatal shark attacks that have occurred in Western Australia in the past decade.

We get back to the question: why would the government implement such a program? It is very expensive, it is not killing the species of sharks that have been attributed to the spate of attacks that we have seen recently, and it is not likely to kill significant numbers any time soon. The only conclusion we can make is that the government is running this program to be seen to be doing something. That is one of the worst reasons a government can expend public money. It should be expending money on programs if it thinks they will make a difference. This government is expending a significant amount of public money to be seen to be doing something rather than seriously addressing this issue.

WA Labor believes that the government could be doing many other things to address this issue if it is serious about fixing it. We certainly do not support the drum line policy. We do not support killing a species of shark simply because we do not believe it will make our beaches safer. That should be the key benchmark in this

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policy area. The Premier may have thought he would look good being tough on sharks. He had a photo taken holding a big shark hook. I think he completely misjudged the public mood on this issue. I say to the Premier and the government that opposition to this program will not go away. As more details come out, people are seeing this program more and more as a monumental waste of public money because it does not actually make our beaches safer. In an environment in which finances are tight, I urge the government to reconsider this program.

One of the other issues in this budget that I wanted to address is services to youth. The issue of what we do with young people in our society obviously concerns many of us. We need to ensure that young people have the best start in life that they can so they can grow into young adults and mature members of our community and contribute. I am greatly concerned that the commitments that we have made to young people in this budget will be compromised by a number of the changes made by the federal Liberal government. The changes that it has made in its budget will mean that more young people will require services from the state, and the services that the state has funded in this budget will be stretched beyond their limits. One change that I want to draw to the attention of Parliament is the federal government's decision to de-fund Youth Connections.

Youth Connections is a program that attempts to ensure that young people maintain their connection to study, employment or training. The Youth Affairs Council of WA has described the decision to de-fund Youth Connections in Western Australia as a decision that will have a devastating impact on our community. Youth Connections is a program that operates in not just the metropolitan area but also the Gascoyne, the Kimberley, the Pilbara, the wheatbelt and the great southern. It currently assists approximately 1 500 young people to maintain a connection with training, study or work. The Youth Affairs Council's concern is that the withdrawal of this funding from the federal government will result in not only losing that program, but also jeopardising the long-term sustainability of a number of youth service providers that receive the rest of their funding from the state government. Many people on both sides of this Parliament should be raising their voice to the federal government and asking it to reconsider this decision. This decision will not only affect services in the metropolitan area. Members who claim to represent the regions should also be raising this issue with the federal government. I have not heard the state government, and certainly not the Premier or the Minister for Youth, raise this issue publicly, and I urge them to do so.

A range of issues currently affecting young people go across the state and federal budgets. The increase in TAFE fees will make it increasingly difficult for young people to access education, as will the appalling decision of the federal government to remove financial assistance to unemployed people for six months out of every 12. I cannot believe that any government of any persuasion would expect a young person under the age of 30 years who is unemployed to survive in our community with no financial assistance whatsoever, but that is what this federal government is doing. When those young people become homeless and cannot afford proper health care, where will they go? They will come to the state to seek assistance. Whether that be assistance with health care or with homelessness, those people will come to the state. We must ensure that the young people of Western Australia have a better start in life rather than having to confront a range of punitive measures from both this government and the federal government, and I urge the state government to raise its voice on this issue.

I also raise a couple of other issues. There is one local issue in my electorate that I have written about to the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Planning. I have raised with them the current state of erosion on Ashfield Flats. It is a part of the Swan River, obviously in my electorate, where the shoreline is owned by the Western Australian Planning Commission. There are some fabulous trees along that part of the Swan River that have been planted and maintained by local community groups. Those trees are in danger very soon of toppling into the Swan River. There is one row of trees that stands between the river and a walkway. Some of the benches on that walkway have already been removed for fear that they will fall into the Swan River. The Minister for Planning may want to pay some attention to this. This is his land on the shoreline in the electorate of Bassendean. One row of mature trees has been there for at least 20 to 30 years. The trees are falling one by one into the Swan River as the erosion takes away the ground from under them. The budget has allocated some money to Belmont and Bayswater to deal with erosion. The two community groups, the Bassendean Preservation Group and AshfieldCAN both do really good work revegetating that area of the Swan. The Bassendean Preservation Group can plant up to 4 000 trees a year, but the work that it is doing is rapidly being undermined by the lack of an erosion plan for that bit of the Swan River.

**Mr J.H.D. Day:** I'll get that investigated.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I ask the Minister for Planning as a matter of urgency to do something before that last line of trees disappears into the river.

Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Tinley

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**Mrs G.J. Godfrey:** The council should be applying for it.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The council is doing its bit, but this bit of the Swan River is on land owned by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is the owner and it should take primary responsibility. I am glad that the minister has given me a commitment to investigate it and I will await a response.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [8.05 pm]: I was going to start off the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 by talking about the TAB, but a far more urgent issue has come up in the community of Collie. It is an environmental issue about the measurement of particulate fallout that was highlighted recently in *The Sunday Times*. It has caused confusion and worries within the community, yet this government sits in this place silent. This government has reduced the funding for development of the coal industry from \$1.3 million to \$844 000, yet at the same time it refuses to answer questions or to give any help to the community of Collie to understand which particulates are coming out there. From the measurements reported, we can see that the increase is remarkable. But there is another side to the story. It would be great if the government got off its butt once in its life and put people who are against the coal industry back in their place, but the government has not done that.

Reports from the Department of Environment Regulation indicate that the fallout from Bluewaters power station increased from 12 000 kilograms to 540 000 kilograms—with no change whatsoever reported. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum did make a very brief statement saying, “Oh, they must have changed the measuring.” That is all he said. He has not come back and refuted any of these figures. A letter from DER states —

DER has requested Bluewaters Power Station recalculate and resubmit NPI emissions data for reporting years 2008–09, 2009–10, 2010–11 and 2011–12. Any corrections to the facility’s reports will be published on the NPI website in August 2014.

That is still a long way away when, from the department’s own admission, there is something wrong with the measurements. I think it is incumbent on this government to give the people of Collie some confidence about what is going on there. There has been no change in the number of power stations over that time, yet all of a sudden the figure has gone from 12 000 to 540 000 kilograms over a year. The letter states —

... (from 12,000kg to 540,000 kg) and particulate matter  $\leq 2.5 \mu\text{m}$  (from 590 kg to 240,000 kg).

It is just implausible that it could happen when there has been no change and no new power station, unless everyone pulled their bag filters out. We know that they work quite well unless there is a rip in them, which happens from time to time. We know that works. What about the damage to the community? What about the damage to the confidence of business people in the community? People are saying to me, “What’s happening? We want to know. What about our children?” Remember when people did not pick up the ball when Esperance had its lead problem? What happened then? That was a huge problem that is still being repaired. That is what I am saying to this government. It has been quite interesting to watch the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. When he wants to put out a good spin down Collie way, he is out at the front, but when I ask him questions on notice, he handballs them to the Minister for Environment. That says it all: “Let’s keep this issue going around and around and not give any answers.” This government should be on the front foot on this issue and it should let the people know what is happening. Are the emissions in accordance with any standards or public health guidelines? On my understanding they are well below those standards. The biggest problem in the last study in Collie on particulate fallout was wood smoke from wood fires in the community, because we do not have gas or reticulation and we are in an inversion. Certainly on some mornings it is 10 o’clock or 11 o’clock before the smoke blows away. Why has this government not come out and said something? Is there something to hide? That is what people want to know. People are saying, “Is our health at risk?” When they ask the government, there is no response.

There are different areas. Not only the Minister for Mines is responsible; certainly the Department of Health has a role to play as much as does the Department of Environment Regulation. We want to know whether the emission levels are in accordance with public health guidelines. People have asked me: Where are the emissions recordings taken? Are they taken in the middle of town? From memory, the power stations are 10 or 12 kays away from the town; it is quite some distance. They have also asked whether the pollutants come from diesel trucks in the area. We do not know the cause or what the particulates are made of. They may contain some lead from fuel-based machines, and that is normal. To my knowledge, there is not a great deal of lead in Collie coal, although there is some sulfur. Please let that study be done and get people down there now on the ground giving that community the confidence it needs at this moment.

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I know what this government thinks about Collie coal. It would rather not see it used in Western Australia. Since way back, it has tried time and again to move away from using Collie coal. I can tell members—everyone in this room should know if they do not know—that the power that comes from that area is by far the cheapest in the state, so let us support it, or shut it down and see how much the government would have to raise the price of power from the gas-powered stations. Let us have another Varanus Island situation and see what happens. We have already lost a couple of billion dollars because we could not supply gas down that line. One more of those incidents would not be healthy for the poor budget we have now. Where are the recordings being done and what are the health implications of increased fine particle pollution for the Collie community as well as for the workers on the job? Sometimes on a still day we can see steam and at other times some particulate matter rising, but it comes straight back down again right where the workers are. The steam does not move far away on a still day, especially in the spring when there is more moisture in the air. It goes up and comes back down. What concerns should the people in those jobs have? We do not know. When I was in the mining industry for probably 12 years, I was subjected to yearly health tests. They were stopped because there was no change in the health of the people who worked in the coal industry. We want to know whether there are changes to the emissions once the coal has been burnt. I think we have the technology to monitor that. We certainly have a responsibility to make sure the people of Collie are in a safe environment and can go about their business safely.

Someone intending to buy a house down there might have picked up *The Sunday Times* last weekend and seen the full-page spread containing a colour photo showing a smoky, hazy scene. Why? The local government was burning its green waste in the town on a very still day. That is not a lie. I checked it myself. Once the fog has lifted, the smoke stays because there is no wind and that creates a smoke haze in the valley. Please, Minister for Mines and Petroleum, come out and give the Collie community some sort of guarantee that there are no problems there.

The other question is: if there are problems there, what will the government do about it? Again, we have to be on the front foot to let people know our plan. If someone was planning to invest in Collie had seen that paper last Sunday, would they buy a house there if that is the sort of rubbish going into the atmosphere? People have put a green spin on it. The Conservation Commission has picked up the abnormal reading but has not asked anyone why it occurred. Instead it has made grand statements, and that has damaged the community's confidence. However, that has not stopped a lot of people from travelling many miles to work there because of the pay and conditions that they have fought for over many years. I ask the minister and the Premier to please have a very good look at what is going on down there so that we can tell a positive story and get us back on the rails.

When this issue came up at a recent health meeting, where some people were making some noises about the coal industry and the emissions, I asked them whether the readings of the rates of cancers and lung function in the Collie community were abnormal. I was told that they align with the average readings in the state; nevertheless, we need the government to say that. I sound like the lone piper down there, and people ask: how do we know? We need the Department of Health, the Department of Environment Regulation and the Department of Mines and Petroleum to put out a joint press release advising that there has been a mistake in the calculations. If the pollution levels are higher, what is that doing to our health? My understanding from reading the latest Department of Health records is that the emissions are still within the acceptable level. It is very important to understand that. It is no good saying the emissions have gone up because someone has misread the monitoring. If the government had been on the job, it should have picked that up. I have a problem with self-regulation. For example, when Alcoa was in my electorate, people were fudging the figures. When they were eventually exposed, Alcoa had to admit the figures were being fudged to suit the industry. I hope that is not the case in Collie. By gee—if it is, someone should have their rear end well and truly kicked and be dragged out and made to apologise to the people of Collie.

To the minister and the Premier, here is the challenge: go down there within the week to let the people of Collie and of Western Australia know there are no pollution problems for people who live in Collie. We do not want to see an exodus out of our town; we love it to death. We are probably sometimes too parochial. The government has a chance to show some support for the Collie community by saying that these figures have been distorted because the previous figures were read wrongly; they are below World Health Organization readings. Let us get something done and make sure our community can go about their business with all the confidence they should have, as does any other community in Western Australia.

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler)** [8.17 pm]: The first issue I wish to raise in this debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 is that of law and order in the electorate of Butler. We are a challenged community out there. During the estimates committee hearings, the Commissioner of Police was in this chamber and he put the high incidence of property offences down to the challenges that families in

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Ridgewood, Merriwa, Clarkson and the like face with youth unemployment, single-income families battling out there, single parent families and issues with substance abuse. Of course, we all know that that is code for, unfortunately, creeping amphetamine abuse and all that that entails. Three years ago such was the crime in my electorate of Butler that public meetings and demonstrations were held about the inadequacy of the policing effort there. As a direct response to the public meetings that we were having in the middle of the day in Clarkson, senior police hierarchy attended because these meetings were being attended by members of the local media, the *North Coast Times* and the *Yanchep Sun City News*. The police announced that police numbers at the Clarkson Police Station would nearly double by moving out to Clarkson some 12 detectives to provide a real criminal investigation effort in my electorate. This announcement was made two and a half years ago, and it seemed to reassure the community that the police were going to have an increased focus on crime and antisocial behaviour throughout the electorate of Butler.

These police did not arrive in a hurry; in fact it was a year and a half to two years before they could actually be deployed to Clarkson Police Station because it did not have the office accommodation to house 12 detectives. Detectives from Joondalup Police Station were told that they would be concentrating on the suburbs in my electorate while stationed at Joondalup. We did not notice, out in Butler, a great impact from this effort; indeed, the Minister for Police stood in this chamber and bizarrely started pointing at me and raising her voice, saying, “Do you know how many break and enter and property offences there were in your electorate to the end of 2012?” I was sitting here flabbergasted because it was during question time and I could not respond to the minister. She quite correctly pointed out that there were 1 800 burglaries in my electorate and asked what I was going to do about it. As you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton), well know, we are in opposition; we cannot solve the problem. It is up to the minister and the government to solve the law and order problem in the electorate of Butler.

The figures the minister was talking about were figures taken before the reassignment of 12 police officers to the Clarkson station. We expect that in the financial year that will finish in a week or so—although they do it on annual figures; I accept that—there will be a reduction because there has been an increased police effort with the movement of 12 police, albeit detectives, but that is good, into the electorate of Butler. Members should bear in mind that Butler, as I have pointed out, is not an electorate that people drive through on the way to somewhere else, so there are not many police in transit through the electorate; it is the end of the line. Police had to build accommodation for 12 extra detectives, and that task was undertaken over the past 12 months or so at Clarkson Police Station at a cost of approximately \$600 000. That was to create a building on the Clarkson Police Station site that would house 12 detectives. That task was completed in about September or October last year, so that the police had the right assets to be able to move the detectives, which they did. Since the estimates hearings and since the commissioner appeared in this chamber to correctly point out the causes of crime in the Butler area—that is, unemployment and youth unemployment because there are no local employers in the electorate—only last week WA Police announced that it is now going to withdraw all those extra police from Clarkson Police Station and send them back to Joondalup, after spending \$600 000 to increase the size of the police station. I can see the Treasurer over there frowning, and he should well frown too. The state has spent \$600 000, Mr Treasurer, on increasing the size of the police station to house these extra 12 police in the electorate of Butler, but eight months after it was completed and the police have moved in there, WA Police say, “Back to the drawing board; we’re changing our mind. We’re pulling the police out and we’re sending them back to Joondalup.” What a disgrace!

Might I remind members that Joondalup is 26 kilometres north of Perth, Yanchep is a further 27 kilometres beyond that, and Two Rocks, which is the end of the electorate, is 61 kilometres from Perth. That would be like proposing to house the police to police Joondalup in the Perth CBD. In fact, the police in the Perth CBD are closer to Joondalup than the police in Joondalup will be to Yanchep and Two Rocks; it is disgraceful. It is also disgraceful that WA Police spent \$600 000 of taxpayers’ money to build the asset to house these police in and had them there for only 30 weeks before it announced it was pulling them out again.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** What a disgrace!

Some of these backbench members of the government on slim margins shout slogans; that is all they are—slogans. “Liberals are tougher on law and order than Labor; always have been and always will be.” I think you can remember that statement being made in this chamber. I am telling you, Mr Acting Speaker, that the problem that all these Liberal backbenchers have is the chart or graph drawn up by the audit of government services. What does this chart drawn up by the Productivity Commission reveal? It reveals, as the police minister confessed and owned up to—although she tried to use semantics—that until 2008 the clearance rate for crime in

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Western Australia in the metropolitan area was approximately 22.5 per cent. Approximately one-quarter of the people who committed offences would front up to court for punishment. Members might think that is not enough. Members might think that the Liberal government got elected and welshed on its promises to the people of Western Australia to increase the police force immediately by 500 officers and then came with its doublespeak—“Oh, that was a promise for two Parliaments. We have not started yet, but we will get it going in the thirty-eighth Parliament; we can’t deal with it in the thirty-seventh.” Once the government welshed on police numbers in this state, what happened to the clearance rate? According to the figures published by the Productivity Commission’s audit of public service in Western Australia, the clearance rate plummeted to 8.3 per cent in the metropolitan area. That is the chart that will be delivered to the letterbox of every voter in every Liberal marginal seat. Slogans will not be enough to counter this—“We’re always tougher on law and order.” It is coming, members for Belmont, Balcatta and Forrestfield; it is coming. The chart shows it level on about 22.5 to 23 per cent, and then as soon as the government welshed on police numbers it plummeted, as the police minister confessed in this chamber, to 8.3 per cent. What a disgrace! Fewer than one in 10 people who break into homes actually front up in court! What a disgrace! Is it any wonder? The police minister hissed across the chamber, “Do you know, member, there are 1 800 home burglaries in your electorate?” I just say, “Duh!” Of course there is a growing crime problem in my electorate because the government pulled the wretched police out! I did not mean to say “wretched” police; I take that back. I am just so frustrated. The government has pulled police from Clarkson and sent them south to Joondalup. As I have explained in this chamber, Joondalup is further from Yanchep and Two Rocks than Perth is from Joondalup. The Liberal member for Joondalup would go off his top if the government pulled police from Joondalup and sent them to central and said that that was its new model. The news of pulling 12 police from Clarkson Police Station was broken straight after the Commissioner of Police announced the shrinking of district offices from seven to four. This is part of that whole plan. This is just about some toff up in the ivory tower down the end of Adelaide Terrace wondering how he can push these diminishing pieces on the chessboard around to look as though there are a few pieces left, enough to fight crime. The morning after, on the Geoff Hutchison program, I heard the vice president of the WA Police Union, Brandon Shortland, during a radio interview talking about the reduction of district officers. He said that it can work; the police tried it out in the south east. We all remember them trying it out in the south east. As Mr Shortland pointed out, Armadale was flooded with another 50 police officers! They got crime figures down in the south east by taking police officers from other districts and surging them into Armadale, because the member for Armadale was running such a successful campaign in support of a 24-hour police station. The government could solve the problem in my electorate if it undertook a police surge without retreating like the Iraqi army and giving up the country—give up Butler to the crooks! We need a surge. I am not suggesting 50 officers; rather, I demand that the government reassign 12 police to Clarkson Police Station. Moreover, they should not be detectives; uniformed officers will do just fine! An extra 12 uniformed officers moving around my electorate in marked police cars is nothing less than what the taxpayers of Butler deserve. They do not need the bugle of retreat sounded as the police are pulled from Clarkson Police Station and sent to Joondalup. The poor old Treasurer, who is doing everything he can to save a dollar, has just blown \$600 000.

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee)** [8.33 pm]: It is always good to rise after the member for Butler has spoken to pick up on some of the themes he introduced in the house about his electorate and to bring the members who are so inclined to listen to the south of the city. As a segue into the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014, I note that the Department of Planning said in a statement recently that the metropolitan area of Perth is now 175 kilometres long. That is amazing; indeed, there are suburbs I have never heard of before. We are now bigger than Los Angeles in actual area and that in itself comes with a significant number of problems, not the least of which were those identified by the member for Butler in his very energetic defence of his electorate. This budget and the way the government wants to spend recurrent funding is a very good indicator of what is missing. Opposition members have said time and again that this government lacks vision. It came to power in 2008 with a leader who had one foot in a retirement home while the other one was being hoisted out of the boat by the remaining members of his party. Lo and behold, he became the party leader and then Premier. In 2008 he inherited a campaign slogan aimed at winning government that read, “Decisions not delays”. Members may recall that slogan. Its decisions are now coming home to roost as decisions made in haste. In occupying the ministry offices, Liberal and National members have done so without a clear agenda and vision about what this state would do in at least two terms under a Liberal-National government. They have made rash decisions about things they felt they needed to be strong about, such as the \$550 million being spent on the Perth Waterfront redevelopment, which is wasted taxpayer money, and the \$1.3 billion—as it stands currently—for a sports stadium; and the list goes on and on. The squeeze came in the second term of this government. It has had to slide and slip around about the promises it made during its second go at the polls with fully costed and fully funded promises. We all know the folly of that

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statement because writ large across the electorate is the one thing that every government must have to govern—trust. The trust that this government has now squandered is probably its prized piece of capital. Unfortunately, it is fast eroding because of the difficult hasty decisions it made early in the piece. What has the government done? It has been characterised by and large as being a government that is about the city, not the suburbs. The member for Butler was astute in identifying that the outer edge of this very large city has been left short in the services it should expect from a government, the least of which is security and safety in the community. We are seeing a death by a thousand cuts in the suburbs. Money, attention and effort have been drained from the suburbs to legacy projects; indeed, government members would like to drive past them in their retirement and say, “We built that”, never having to venture to the south or the north of the 175-kilometre long city.

The death of a thousand cuts has resulted in the bleeding of our suburbs in what it is that makes them good and solid societies. The government is starting to strike straight at the heart of what it is to be in service of each other, to have respect for each other and to deliver a harmonious community. I will give examples. I will take an interjection for correction, but we are up to the second or third year of police being withdrawn from police and community youth centres. I am aware that not every suburb has a PCYC. Those that do not are poorer for it, because they are an outstanding outreach program that can be moulded, shifted and adjusted to take account of the particular change in demographical need at any time. The Hilton PCYC in my electorate is outstanding—so outstanding that it attracted some \$8 million worth of federal and state funding to ensure that it was completely revamped. It is a tremendous institution. The police were removed from the PCYC. Indeed, we may as well have dropped the “P” and named them CYCs, because the police are there in name only. It is a whimsy, because no police officers are engaged in the centres themselves. The Minister for Police and other ministers would come in here and say that the police are housed at PCYCs, but they are not. Police have desks at PCYCs, but they are explicitly told not to engage in the programs delivered at the centres. They are responsible for the regional youth engagement plan, but nobody is any the wiser as to what that entails. It is my understanding that the territory of the Fremantle PCYC extends from Fremantle to Rockingham to provide youth services. It has one police officer. We had two outstanding police officers at the Hilton PCYC—Senior Constables Ian Abercrombie and Ian Hill—who were very good at understanding the detail of the youth in the area. They were good at attracting youth to the club and to the diversion programs. Those officers have gone. They were so good that they knew not only individual young people, but also their families, where they lived, the circumstances in which they lived, the levels of dysfunction happening in those families and where there was trouble and strife. They would go out of the centre and around the suburbs and visit these places to ensure the kids were getting well treated and that they were going to school and engaging in worthwhile activities. They have gone. That little fragment of our community has gone as a result of the cuts that this government has perpetrated on the suburbs because it is completely focused on the idea that it knows best, and it will just continue to build monuments and follow folly. What will happen? One of the things that the police and community youth centre in my electorate has is a drop-in centre. The kids who come from school and drop in there get their homework done and are engaged by youth workers. They also had a very good, positive interaction with a police officer. We must not forget that for many of these young people, their first experience with a police officer is a negative interaction, and we have to stop that. We see police officers walking around with mountains of equipment on them and ensconced in vehicles with more technology than an Abrams tank, cruising the suburbs, more and more removed from the very community they are meant to serve, yet we are doing nothing to re-engage the police officers and ensure that we are contributing to the trust between them. If those kids play up when they go to the drop-in centre now, they do not have a very good interaction with a police officer who can put them on the straight and narrow; typically, they are sent away from the club if they start to misbehave, whereas previously it was never a problem. The manager has only so much time and capacity to oversee them, so the response is consequential. They have their computers and so on turned off and they are turned out. That has happened several times this year and it happened several times last year. What do they do? They leave school at three o’clock and go there. Typically, they would go home at about 6.00 or 6.30 pm. Sometimes, if somebody plays up, they shut down the centre. Kids pour onto the street at about four o’clock and wander through the suburbs and, funnily enough, a higher level of petty crime starts to be undertaken. There is vandalism and graffiti around the school and in the community garden, which is just behind the police and community youth club. The very things that were driven out of our suburbs down there around the PCYC are now back, simply because this government does not get what it is like to live in the suburbs and what it is that makes a community. Government members do not get that every time they want to build a legacy in their own image, they are taking out of our community another piece of what it is to be Western Australian.

We see that also at Hamilton Hill Senior High School. I am proud to be the chair of school council. It is a struggling school because it has been underfunded and under-supported, and also subject to a changing

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demographic around it. The school has about only 550 students. It cannot provide two levels of academic Australian tertiary admission rank streaming at years 11 and 12, so it has to go into a school partnership. Kids are getting on buses to go between Melville, South Fremantle and Applecross to pick up the subjects they need. I do not think any parent in this chamber would like the prospect of seeing their kids go to school and show some academic capacity, only to find that if they want to pursue that academic goal of going to university to get a degree, particularly a science degree, they will have to spend about three times the amount of time on public transport or chartered transport than they did previously just to get that education. We are seeing that happen more and more in the country and in the regions, and it is happening in our suburbs right now because this government has seen fit not to fund the school at the level it should be funded. It has also taken some four-plus years to work out what it needs to do to rationalise and invest in the schools in the Fremantle area, because Hamilton Hill Senior High School is not the only school in trouble.

One of the things that caused the greatest concern to us at Hamilton Hill Senior High School was the cuts to the school support programs resources allocation for those who are disadvantaged. I can report to the house now that a bit of that funding was used for truancy, or what was called “student engagement”. That has now been cut because the resources cannot be spread thinly enough. Ten kids who were highly engaged in the program, obviously with high levels of dysfunction and challenges in their home lives, no longer attend Hamilton Hill Senior High School. Ten young people are drifting out there in our community. Where will they pop up again? Ten to one, London to a brick, they will pop up in the justice system. Members opposite know that is true. The government keeps cutting these little pieces and explains them away as some sort of economic rationalist approach. The fact is that this government made poor decisions when it first came to power, and it is time to pay the piper. We are chasing \$30 billion worth of debt. Our capacity to service that debt is now almost entirely tied to the price of the single biggest commodity that this state ships overseas, and that is iron ore. When the government does that, the risk side of this equation becomes extremely difficult. I know the Treasurer is completely alive to the issue about how our state debt is tied to our commodities. Now we are at the whim of the internationalised economy that we are so very much a part of. We have no hedge. There is no capacity for us to weather a modest and unexpected change in international markets, and it is going to affect every suburb, particularly those with the greatest disadvantage and the greatest dysfunctionality.

It is absolutely essential that we, as a state, attend to the idea that this Parliament and this government, whoever should occupy the Treasury bench, need to establish and maintain a vision by which they would set their own benchmark for measurement, not one that is just piecemeal, with the government following its nose decision after decision, without any regard to the future.

**MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen)** [8.47 pm]: I noted the member for Wanneroo’s comments tonight during the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014 that I had mistakenly referred to a person living as “deceased” and that that person was related to persons recently arrested in a major organised criminal operation at Carabooda. To Mr Thang Le, I unequivocally apologise for my error, even though I had made what I considered to be due inquiry prior to making that erroneous connection in Parliament. Those who care to read *Hansard* will see that I was concerned at the exploitation of foreign workers under 457 visas. The member’s assertion that I impugned the Vietnamese community in general is fanciful. I have the greatest respect for the struggles and diligence of the many Vietnamese in the community with whom I come into contact. His assertion that I made racist slurs on the Vietnamese community at large is abhorrent to me and disingenuous.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Treasurer)** [8.48 pm] — in reply: I would like to thank members on the other side for a robust debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–15 Bill 2014. I congratulate the member for Girrawheen for doing the right thing and setting the record straight. I thank everybody for their input on a variety of issues. I might not agree with them, but that is what this place is about—to debate issues of importance robustly, particularly in this case those related to the budget, whether in or out or tangential to it. I thank everybody and commit the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.