

**PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT BILL 2023**  
**PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 13 September.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie)** [10.08 am]: I rise to continue my remarks on this very important and innovative legislation, the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023. The Perth Parking Management Act has been in effect since 1999, but it is being amended to provide the ability and powers to spend the revenue gathered by the Perth parking levy on a wider area that is contiguous with the City of Perth. This, of course, leads us to a very favourable situation in which that money can be expended on projects that help people walk, wheel, ride and thrive. They can get to their place of work, recreation or their meeting point for social gatherings. They can travel around on a very safe network that has the best infrastructure to enable people to pursue their journeys in the manner that they would expect.

I am obviously a passionate believer in walking, wheeling, riding and thriving; however, there is an aspect that I do not think I have sufficiently highlighted. I have talked about the fitness benefits, the benefits of decongesting the roads and the social benefits. Another benefit that I do not think I have really elaborated on is the sense of connectedness that one has when one is not stuck in a metal box and is actually getting somewhere under one's own steam. This hit me this morning as I was riding along the banks of the Canning River, after the stormy weather we had over the last 24 hours. It was wonderful to see that nature had survived that storm and to see the pelicans and cormorants preening themselves and recovering and relaxing after the stormy weather. There was an important sense of the natural world recovering after the storm had passed. That is something that one can only see and appreciate when one has the opportunity to get somewhere under one's own steam. If one is in their car, one is not able to appreciate and enjoy that change in the natural cycle of things and have a sense of where the world really is at, and the calming effect that that has. One gets a sense of perspective from making that contact with nature, and we are very lucky here in Western Australia, in our commutes around town, that there is that potential to have that sort of engagement with nature. I feel incredibly lucky to be able to enjoy that and I want to share the idea with members that that is an extra benefit that comes from walking, wheeling, riding and thriving. That experience is very much under the banner of “thriving” that one can enjoy this.

In our state, we have a very competent public service that runs a lot of the supporting information—the decision-making is with the government—and the ideas, planning and gathering of priorities. Our public service does a wonderful job, especially the Department of Transport. I want to highlight the work of some of the people who I have the privilege to see on a fairly frequent basis, thanks to the Minister for Transport; Deputy Premier for giving me the task of chairing the bike riding reference group. That group meets on a quarterly basis, and we have wideranging discussions about all things walking, wheeling, riding and thriving, especially in the development of infrastructure. There is always the possibility of spending lots of money on infrastructure, but there is only ever a limited supply of funds for good works, so we have to be very strategic in how we develop things such as the principal shared path network and how we fill in those gaps.

Speaking of gaps, I continue to be absolutely amazed by the quality of the work on the Tonkin Gap project and the rollout of the infrastructure there. Many members will see the road network, but a principal shared path network is already going through there. People are able to go under the Great Eastern Highway and through the magnificent tunnel, which is very safe to use. The bike path on the bridge over the river is brilliantly designed, and all the lead-up paths to it are really well integrated. It will eventually extend through—perhaps it is already the case and the minister might be able to correct me—and allow people to ride all the way from anywhere on the Roe Highway, connecting up with the Tonkin Highway, to Muchea. It is an incredible extension to the network.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** It could be Mandurah to Muchea!

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Mandurah to Muchea—what a ride that would be!

The network will be very useful. People will use it in segments for their daily commutes and they will feel very safe when doing that. That is absolutely brilliant.

I want to especially highlight the work of Justin McKirdy, the executive director, urban mobility, and Michelle Prior, director, active transport and safety at the Department of Transport. They really are the leaders when it comes to all things walking, wheeling, riding and thriving. They have an incredibly enthusiastic team of staff who are passionate about their work and the benefits they are bringing to the state. It is very hard to actually put a number on the benefits that they are bringing to the state, but they are manifold, because it is all about improving people's wellbeing and giving people an alternative to sitting in their car.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 September 2023]

p4649c-4670a

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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The bike riding reference group captures diverse interests, including, more broadly, the whole concept of active travel. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions are represented on the group as is the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and the Department of Education, so we can deal with the dreadful problem of so few youngsters making their own way to their school. Even though they generally live only a couple of kilometres from their school, so few youngsters are actually getting to school under their own steam, and various programs are in place to deal with that. We really want to see some improvement there. We have seen evidence that when we invest in programs such as the Your Move program—again, a Department of Transport initiative, from the government—and see them functioning, there is a dramatic turnaround in the number of students who start to make their own way to school, which has a decongesting effect on the local roads around the school. The roads become safer. The kids are healthier, better adjusted and happier when they come to sit in their classrooms in the morning, and it instils in them a great life skill, a sense of independence and an ability to tackle the world on their own terms. Those are the great things that will come from having that active travel initiative explored further, expanded upon and instilled in our culture. That is where we really want to get to: the Western Australian culture is one that active travel is first and foremost in people’s minds when they think about how they will get from A to B.

Other groups in the bike riding reference group are the RAC, which always has a lot of initiatives, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, WestCycle, WA Police Force, Tourism WA and the Department of Health. The Department of Health sees the enormous benefits that can come from good, preventive health programs. They are absolutely essential. Also on the group are the Road Safety Commission and the Western Australian Local Government Association.

This legislation is an initiative that will ensure that the infrastructure that leads into the Perth central area is of a quality that makes walking, wheeling, riding and thriving a very attractive option for people—one that they can enjoy and feel quite safe doing as they undertake their journeys. This is a great piece of legislation to support and it is something that I welcome. I commend the bill to the house.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition)** [10.19 am]: I rise on behalf of the opposition to make a contribution to the discussion on the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023. I indicate to the Minister for Transport that although some of the aspects of the bills are entirely sensible and supportable, on the whole, we will oppose the bills for some of the reasons that I will outline throughout the discussion.

What we are seeing with the Perth Parking Management Bill is an attempt to change the parameters within which the funds that are collected under the 1999 legislation can be expended. There is a growing amount of levy money in the special purpose account and the government has not been able to keep pace with expenditure on projects that meet the intent of the 1999 legislation. As part of the justification for that, we have this legislation that has been brought forward today. Quite recently, there was some discussion in the media, and later on I will go through some of the expenditure of the funds. There was also an Auditor General’s report into the fund. I will go through those matters a little later on.

We will have a new act that will give the government the power to spend money not on transport-related matters or congestion-busting issues, but on whatever project the government of the day sees fit to do within the management area, and beyond in some circumstances, because, apparently, the bank account is swelling due to the levies that are being collected. The government has failed to ensure that the money has been spent in a timely manner on appropriate projects within the management area. While Western Australians are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, this special purpose account is piling up with money from the payments of motorists who park in the management area. Motorists do not pay the licence fees; organisations and businesses pay the Department of Transport the licence fees, but eventually those fees are recouped through costs to the average Western Australian who parks in the city area. The cumulative effect of that is tens of millions of dollars a year of unspent levy funds at a time when Western Australian households are doing it very tough indeed. Instead of taking the opportunity to examine the need for the levy to continue at that level, the government has thought that it will instead —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Are you going to scrap it?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I would have a pause on it rather than using it on projects that are not —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** That means that you’re scrapping it. Are you scrapping it?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Minister, money has been piling up in that account —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** What do you mean “pause”?

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The minister will have her opportunity to respond to all of us. I can barely hear the Leader of the Opposition for her constant interjections.

**Extract from Hansard**

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**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Please continue, Leader of the Opposition. Thank you, minister.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I would like the opportunity to outline the case without being shouted at from the other side.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Are you not taking interjections, Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** No, I am not.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** You are not? Okay; thank you.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** That's a big election commitment, though—far out!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** No. What I am saying to the minister is that she should have examined the appropriateness of the fee structure —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** — and the cost to Western Australian motorists —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** — because of her inability —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to continue his presentation without constantly being harassed by the minister.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** And might I say that points of order are to be taken in silence, minister. You know this because you are an extremely experienced member of this Parliament.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER** (Ms A.E. Kent): Thank you. Yes, points of order should be taken in silence. Thank you, minister. Please resume, Leader of the Opposition. There is no point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** As I say, we are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis and we have a government that says that it is looking after the interests of Western Australians, yet it cannot find appropriate projects under the current legislation to spend its money on. It could have decided to perhaps re-examine the levy. Perhaps there could be a pause or a reduction in the fee structure for a time until the government can catch up with the planning necessary to find transport projects to spend the money on. I am staggered that the Minister for Transport cannot find projects to fund within the management area that are of the nature that was originally intended.

I was about to discuss the fact that the current fund is full of money that has been collected under the current regime. Money has been collected for a purpose and that purpose has been pretty clear. Now that purpose will be redirected—not just the purpose for which the money will be collected in the future, but also the purpose for which the money that has accumulated in the account will be spent. I will go through some of the figures when I discuss the Auditor General's report into these matters that was handed down earlier this year. A matter of days after that, the government announced that it would change the legislation—surprise, surprise!—because the minister had been found to be spending money outside the requirements.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** That's wrong. That's incorrect.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is certainly what the Auditor General found, and I will quote from the report. The minister can call it incorrect if she likes, but I will read from the Auditor General's report —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** — and leave it to Parliament to make up its mind about whether it believes the Auditor General or the interjections of the minister, who is continuing to interject despite the instruction of the chair.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** If the minister would allow me to continue.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Acting Speaker, if I could be allowed to continue.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you, minister. Leader of the Opposition, please continue.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Thank you.

We know that this is a complete rewrite of the Perth Parking Management Act 1999. As far as I am aware, the act has not had any updates to speak of, except to extend the CAT bus area in 2020. A briefing was provided to the opposition by the minister's office and a number of points that were made at the briefing indicated that all these changes will be of benefit and are to be supported, but, of course, we know that that is a matter of interpretation. I do not necessarily accept that all the changes are, of themselves, necessary, given that there is money sitting in the fund and the government has been unable to find projects that match the intent for which the money was collected. There are a couple of ways that the government could address that. First, it could change the parameters of the spending and then spend the money on whatever glitter projects it wants to do within the area that are completely unrelated to transport or congestion issues or even improving pollution levels in the city. They could be completely unrelated to any of the reasons that the money has been collected for. The government could spend it on things like swimming pools and other matters down the track if that is what it wanted to do. The minister's office sees all that as being an improvement. I would say that that is actually a dereliction of the government's duty to spend the money in the manner and for the purposes for which it was collected.

The changes that were outlined included allowing for the funding of non-transport infrastructure, therefore breaking the nexus between the intent of the collection of the levy as it has always been in the past and where the money will be expended. It will be able to be expended on a much wider range of projects; it will be pretty well down to whatever the minister decides and will not even necessarily have to be in line with the policy. Going back to 1998, when the original Perth Parking Management Bill was introduced, we can see the principal objectives. I quote from the second reading speech of then minister, former member for Warren-Blackwood Paul Omodei, who said that the principal objectives of the Perth Parking Management Bill 1998 and Perth parking policy were —

... to promote a balanced transport system to gain access to central Perth; to limit the growth of traffic congestion and deterioration of air quality in the central area ...

That is pretty clear and straightforward. It should be clear to everybody which projects the money should be expended upon. We are now seeing a government that intends to use that money in the special purpose account, which is collected, I imagine, for a special purpose, for any project that the Minister for Transport; Planning; Treasurer wants to spend it on.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Wrong portfolio!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is why, in the main, given the cost-of-living crisis that Western Australians face at the moment, we have taken the principled position of opposing this bill. It is not because all the changes are inherently wrong. Some aspects of the bill are very supportable and should be supported, but the overall intent of the bill is wrong, because the overall intent of the bill is to spend some \$190-odd million that the Auditor General referred to in her report in a manner for which it was not collected, which is for swimming pools and other projects that are completely unrelated to the principal objectives of the original bill. The original objectives were —

... to promote a balanced transport system to gain access to central Perth; to limit the growth of traffic congestion and deterioration of air quality in the central area ...

That is what the money is being collected for, but the minister wants to spend it on whatever she thinks is a good idea at the time, and that is not acceptable to the opposition.

We also know that the changes in this bill will allow for works and services outside the boundary of the management area, provided that there is some nexus between the completion or connection of the project within the city area. Given the wideranging powers of the minister, I expect that that will be widely interpreted and we could well see funding for projects that are located mainly in other areas but might terminate in the city. A path that might be 30 or 40 kilometres long that terminates in the city could be considered acceptable under this arrangement. There is, perhaps, some merit to some of those proposals. The government has a clear direction of what the money should be spent on but the minister chose to fund a swimming pool with it.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** That is wrong as well.

**Extract from Hansard**

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**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Therefore, there is doubt about the trust we can have in the minister’s judgement of what is a contiguous area.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You’re wrong again.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am wrong and the Auditor General is wrong. Everyone is wrong except you. Okay. The minister can explain what she thinks is wrong with the Auditor General’s conclusions when she has the opportunity.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You got a briefing and you still don’t understand it.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The minister can dispute the Auditor General’s findings. That is entirely up to the minister, but the minister cannot stop me from quoting from the Auditor General. I will quote from the Auditor General’s report and leave it up to the house to determine whether that is correct.

One of the provisions in this bill that is entirely supportable is the provision for the differentiation of fees that will apply across the areas within the management area, depending on the level of services such as transport services and other services available in that area. It is a fairly diverse area and it ranges from areas that are highly serviced with public transport to other areas that are predominantly serviced by pedestrian access and the like, which is not as expensive to provide as other infrastructure. I think there is some merit in that proposal and I can see that being a supportable outcome. There is also provision for the minister to look at different applications for different types of licences, even at the development approval stage of projects. In a changing environment and a changing world, I think we should accept that there will be changes in the future and that different types of licences and situations might need to be considered. There is some merit in allowing some of those matters to be considered in the future. The minister might be able to outline what some of those examples could be in her mind as we go through some of these discussions. We know, too, that the penalties in the bill will increase. That is a graduated penalty system. Like a number of acts that we have seen in this place that have not been reviewed for a number of years, the penalty regimes become out of date due to inflation and changing circumstances. I think that is also supportable in and of itself.

The briefing notes that were supplied to the opposition when we were given the briefing have some interesting points in them, which I will make known to the house. I will ask the minister to provide more detail on where some of those matters are at in her response. The next steps are that the regulations will be required to be rewritten rather than amended. One assumes that there is a whole new set of regulations around the new bill. The previous regulations will not apply and will be rewritten rather than amended. The act itself will not commence until the new regulations are in place. More detailed consultation will occur with the relevant stakeholders on the drafting instructions for the regulations, which will be undertaken later in 2023.

It will be interesting to hear the minister give an update about what stage that consultation is at, such as whether it is complete and with whom that consultation took place. Who are the relevant stakeholders, in her view? Where is the development of those regulations at? I assume that, over time, the drafting instructions have been issued, but I do not know. I ask the minister to let me know what stage of development the new parking policy is at and what consultation will be undertaken with the local governments and other relevant stakeholders and just how the public will ever have any input into any of this. Will there be a process of public consultation throughout the development of the parking policy? At the end of the day, it is the public who will use the transport systems that will be put in place. They will use the various projects that the minister will fund—the swimming pools and others—into the future. It will be good if the public can also be involved in the discussion to develop a new parking policy.

The minister has disputed some of the matters that I have spoken about. The current act restricts the types of projects that the minister can spend money on. She disputed that she spent money on a swimming pool. For the benefit of the house, I will refer to a summary of that matter in a newspaper article and I will read a little bit from the Auditor General’s report itself. The article of 16 February 2023 by Josh Zimmerman is titled “Perth parking levy report: Auditor says Transport Minister Rita Saffioti wanted funding for WACA pool”. The article was written about seven months ago. It states —

Transport Minister Rita Saffioti provided “conditional approval” for \$580,000 to be spent on an “aquatic centre” as part of the WACA development.

It also states that Rita Saffioti signed off on plans —

... to spend more than half a million dollars from the Perth Parking Levy on a WACA pool—despite the project falling squarely outside the scope of the tax on CBD businesses and motorists.

It goes on to quote the Auditor General and to precis the findings —

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The audit findings come two days after Ms Saffioti announced on Tuesday that she planned to change the rules governing the levy, which currently dictate the money can only be spent on transport-related projects within the area that the tax applies.

It goes on to state —

When unveiling the changes—which will allow levy money to be spent on “any initiative or project that delivers positive social and economic outcomes and that activate the Perth central area”—Ms Saffioti confirmed they would allow funding to be assigned to a CBD swimming pool.

The Auditor General’s report found a lack of planning had allowed the levy balance to balloon by \$150 million over the last five years ...

Who has been in charge of that situation for the last five years? The same minister loudly interjecting throughout my speech. She allowed the funding to accumulate —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** Well, you are goading her.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Pardon?

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You are referring to me by name.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am referring to the article. If I am not allowed to quote from the article, then I will take that instruction from the chair. However, I am actually reading from an article.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I asked whether you were prepared to take interjections and you said no. I am just cautioning you about continuing to goad the minister. If you are not willing to take interjections, then please stop goading the minister.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** Are you willing to take interjections?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Well, no.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Okay. Please continue.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Now I have lost where I was at. I will go back a bit. The article continues —

The Auditor General’s report found a lack of planning had allowed the levy balance to balloon by \$150 million over the last five years, reaching a current total of around \$190 million.

That is a lovely pot of money. That is not what the Auditor General said. I have said that. It is my little bit. The article continues —

“Funds should not be raised unnecessarily from the people and businesses that contribute,” Ms Spencer wrote.

That goes back to the argument about the cost of living. The Auditor General quite clearly said —

“Funds should not be raised unnecessarily from the people and businesses that contribute,” ...

The article continues —

She also found the Department of Transport had failed to consult with the City of Perth—as required by the Act—before seeking ministerial approval for eight of the 13 projects approved for funding through the levy over the past five years.

That is an article from the newspaper. Of course, it is based on the Auditor General’s fourteenth report, which looked at these matters. It is quite good background on the Perth parking levy, its history, purpose and the Auditor General’s investigation into it. The Auditor General has been looking into special purpose accounts more generally. I am sure that the minister, as the current Treasurer, will be very interested in keeping abreast of all the reports that the Auditor General has done on special purpose accounts. At the time this fourteenth report was released, on 16 February 2023, we knew that the state’s special purpose accounts had over \$14 billion allocated. We know from the previous Treasurer’s last budget—which I think has only just progressed through the other place—even more money has gone into those special purpose accounts. There is a huge amount of money sitting in those special purpose accounts.

They are special purpose accounts because the money has been collected or allocated for a special purpose. However, we have now seen that the special purpose is no longer special; it is any purpose that the minister wants to spend the money on. I will quote from the overview from the Auditor General’s report. It states —

Levy funds are held in a special purpose account (SPA) administered by the Department of Transport (Department). It is important to properly plan to spend these public funds so projects and services achieve maximum value in line with the SPA’s stated purpose. Funds should not be raised unnecessarily from the people and businesses that contribute.

**Extract from Hansard**

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The Auditor General talks about the reasons why some of the funding has been piling up. She states —

However, the absence of a specific plan, agreed across government, to spend the collected levy has contributed to the account balance increasing by about \$30 million a year over the last five years to over \$190 million. A lack of consistent consultation with the City of Perth, as required by legislation, and public reporting, further contributes to community speculation about why some projects are funded and others are not.

That report is not saying that that money is well managed and being spent on the purposes for which it was collected. The \$190 million that she referred to was collected for some purposes that were outlined by former minister Paul Omodei back in 1998, when the 1999 bill was first debated. It was all about transport, congestion and the air quality in the central business district. It was not about swimming pools at the WACA. She went on to state —

There remains uncertainty among stakeholders about what future projects, such as the Perth City Deal, might be funded from the increasing account balance.

I think that report should be alarming. It found that the money was authorised by the minister for purposes that were outside of the intent for which it had been collected.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, you will get your opportunity.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is what the Auditor General found in this report. It is a report from an officer of the Parliament. It has been tabled in the house. Everybody would have had the opportunity to read it back in February when it was put down. It is not my supposition; it is what the Auditor General said.

I will explain to the house the background in the executive summary, because probably not everybody is au fait with the Perth parking levy. Some people come from areas where it is not as well known. The report states —

The fee, known as the Perth Parking Levy ... is a tax set by the State Government to support the provision of an efficient and balanced transport network to, from and in the city centre to manage congestion.

That is from the Perth parking policy 2014. It goes on to state —

The Act requires all spending from the account to be approved by the Minister for Transport ... after consultation with the City of Perth ...

Sometimes. Out of the projects, eight out of 13 did not have that consultation. It continues —

The Perth Parking Policy 2014 ... a joint initiative between the State Government and the City, guides the exercise of powers under the Act.

...

The revenue cannot be used for any purpose other than those outlined in the Act and policy. In addition to the Central Area Transit (CAT) bus system, the policy requires money from the account to be spent on initiatives within the city centre that:

- improve public transport access
- enhance the pedestrian environment
- support bicycle access
- support a balanced transport system.

That is pretty straightforward. That is what the money was collected for. It has been piling up over the last five years because the minister has not actually found projects that fit the initial conditions to spend the money on. Previous to introducing this legislation, she sought to widen the ambit by spending money on the WACA swimming pool, which is clearly outside of the guidelines as mentioned by the Auditor General. She now has this legislation ready at hand to support that kind of expenditure into the future. That will apply not just to money raised from future collected licences, but it will also spend the money that was collected for those specific purposes. We will not see that money being spent for the purposes under which it was collected. I think that is not a good way for the government to act. It is not acting in good faith with Western Australians when it does something like that.

If it could have looked at the cost of living a while ago whilst collecting \$30 million a year that it could not spend, the money could have been used to put relief in the pockets of motorists in Western Australia. Although the people who have the parking bays are paying the actual funds, that is of course being charged back to the motorists. Part of that fee structure is to make sure that they can cover the cost that they have to pay into the levy fund. That is actually a cost-of-living hit on everybody going into the city because of work or because they want to visit and use its amenities. They are being hit very hard in the pocket by this government. The government has admitted that it actually cannot spend that money for the purpose for which it was intended. It wants to widen the purpose so that it can spend

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the money on any project that the minister sees fit, both within and outside the management area, so those are very wide purposes indeed.

I will finish with another quote from the conclusion of the Auditor General's report. It states —

The Department's administration of the Perth Parking Levy is only partly effective. The absence of a plan that specifies how the account funds will be used has contributed to a significant increase in the levy account balance from \$54 million to \$192 million over the past five years. The account balance will continue to increase by about \$30 million a year without new spending commitments or a reduction in the levy.

Why has the minister not considered a reduction of the levy? Why has the minister not brought to the house a reduction in the fees that people pay? Why has the minister instead chosen to find new and innovative ways for her to spend that money, including the \$190 million that was collected under the old regime? She is seeking to spend that money on projects that will no doubt lead to lovely ribbon-cutting opportunities for the minister down the track, but will not actually assist motorists who are being hit by rising costs of living, rising fuel prices, interest rate increases and a whole heap of other cost-of-living matters. The minister presides over an account that unnecessarily accumulates \$30 million a year, as has quite clearly been outlined in the Auditor General's report. Relief could easily be provided for those licence fees.

Just for the interest of the house, the minister's office provided me with a breakdown of the licence fees. Each of the short-stay public parking bays serving shoppers and visitors, including on-street public bays, have an annual fee of \$1 091. That \$1 091 is repaid by people putting money into the ticket machines. It is not paid by anyone else; it is paid by motorists. Long-stay public parking bays serving commuters are \$1 187 per bay, and parking bays for the use of employees, non-residential building tenants and their visitors, \$1 240. Those fees are charged to the provider of the bays, but they are actually being paid for by the motorists who use the bays throughout the year. The government is unnecessarily collecting \$30 million a year, and money is being spent on purposes for which it was not collected. Because of that, the opposition cannot support the legislation.

There are supportable aspects of the legislation. I want to make it quite clear that there are some aspects of the legislation that we support, but overall it is a flawed attempt to justify decisions that the minister has made without the required consultation and outside what was allowed under the original conditions of that money being collected. This will open the floodgates to yet another funding pool for the minister, who no doubt has the 2025 election in mind. She will have a few lovely little projects that will, in her mind, entice voters to consider supporting her government in 2025. However, I point people looking at those projects in the direction of the cost-of-living crisis that people are facing across our state. This government has ignored its opportunity to reduce the hit on motorists who have to go into the CBD for work, shopping or any other activity. The government has missed that opportunity to help Western Australians who are suffering through the cost-of-living crisis. I am sure the minister and others in this house are not suffering as a result of the crisis, but I can assure her that many people in the state of Western Australia are struggling at the moment. They would have appreciated that \$30 million of excess money that the government collects being distributed back to the motorists of Western Australia.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Do you have a plan to scrap it? Is that what you've done today?

**Mr R.S. Love:** I've finished.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** The member for Nedlands.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, the member for Nedlands is on her feet.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I cannot hear the member for Nedlands.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** She has not started yet!

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, thank you. You will have your opportunity. Member for Nedlands, please continue.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Madam Acting Speaker, the minister is treating you with absolute contempt.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I think I will decide that, thank you, member for Cottesloe. Minister, please let the member for Nedlands speak. She is on her feet and I am interested to hear what she has to say. Thank you.

*Debate Resumed*

**DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands)** [10.55 am]: I would actually like to talk about one of the very impactful ways in which the Perth parking levy is being used in my electorate by more than 100 000 people on a monthly basis; I refer to the purple CAT bus. The minister and I saw the purple CAT off on its inaugural journey in 2021, along with the member for Perth, John Carey. I rise to speak in support of the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023, legislation that is designed to modernise an act that has not been updated since it was introduced 25 years ago. I thank the minister for her leadership in updating and modernising an act that has, as I said, not been modernised since it was introduced a quarter of a century ago.

The new provisions introduced by the legislation come in response to extensive stakeholder feedback and have been adapted in response to that feedback. The stakeholders included the City of Perth, which is obviously a major stakeholder, and the Property Council of Western Australia. We will see as a result of this legislation changes that will allow for greater flexibility in how the Perth parking levy is administered, providing diverse opportunities for the levy to be used to enliven the City of Perth and make it an attractive place for people to work, rest, shop and play. It will also provide opportunities to make the City of Perth an accessible place for people to engage in those activities. The changes will also support businesses in the CBD in two ways: firstly, by cutting red tape and secondly, by reducing the ambiguities and uncertainties that can create risks for development in the CBD.

I will start by talking about the original purpose of the act and the levy when they were introduced in 1999. It was to help reduce congestion in the city by discouraging people from driving into the city centre. We know that traffic congestion and the resulting competition for unaffordable parking—as was particularly the case at that time—can discourage people from visiting the city. One of the strategies for discouraging driving in the city is the creation of public transport infrastructure. Importantly, this has meant building and developing a public transport system for the CBD that is highly accessible, affordable and reliable, and takes people to key points in the city. This policy has seen a reduction in trips to the city by car; only 45 per cent of trips to the CBD are now being made by car, compared with a previous high of 66 per cent of all visits. At the same time, the percentage of people using public transport to travel into the CBD has increased from 30 per cent to 45 per cent.

One of the fantastic ways in which people can use public transport within the City of Perth is, of course, the purple CAT bus, which is supported by the Perth parking levy. The City of Perth, however, is more than just the CBD; it also encompasses the University of Western Australia campus, the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and suburbs in my electorate, including Crawley and parts of Nedlands. The purple CAT bus also serves some key locations within those boundaries and in my electorate. The route of the purple CAT runs through the city to the Elizabeth Quay busport, past Parliament House, through the QEII campus where it joins some 72 other buses every hour, and on to the University of Western Australia. In fact, if you were to hop on the purple CAT and stay on it for its entire route, you would get a wonderful tour of my electorate and some of its key highlights!

**Ms J.L. Hanns** interjected.

**Dr K. STRATTON:** Exactly. The member for Collie–Preston is very welcome. University of Western Australia students are some of the key users of the purple CAT bus. One of the reasons for that is that the purple CAT covers the entirety of the UWA campus. Most other buses that go to the UWA campus go to just the front of the campus, the main entrance on Stirling Highway. Staff and students at the business school, for example, or people taking children to the on-campus childcare centre, which is about two-thirds the way back into the campus, can find themselves with a long walk. For those with accessibility requirements, including people wrangling young children and taking them to the childcare centre, this presents a very real challenge to using the UWA campus to its full potential. The fact that the purple CAT does the entire circumference of the Crawley campus of UWA makes the campus much more accessible and is one of the reasons UWA students make such great use of the purple CAT.

The purple CAT runs along Hampden Road and crosses the path of my office front door every five minutes—one on each side of the street. I use the purple CAT routinely to go to meetings at UWA or Perth Children’s Hospital, especially when the weather is bad, and to get here to Parliament House or into the city. My SmartRider is now woefully faded and out of date because, of course, the purple CAT is a free service, which is one of the things that makes it so accessible to use and, of course, is one of the reasons for its popularity. Its popularity is not just known by those of us who watch the CAT bus go by and see how full it is; it is shown in the numbers. Patronage on the purple CAT has been monitored using automated people counters since the service was introduced, which is the same method used for other Perth CAT services.

When the purple CAT first started just over two years ago there were an average of 2 000 boardings a weekday. Just last month, that climbed to 5 000 boardings a weekday. That is a lot of people! There were nearly one million boardings—959 480—on the purple CAT in the 2022–23 financial year. That shows how well integrated the purple CAT has become in just two years to the City of Perth and the people in my electorate, including those who live in Nedlands and Crawley and access the hospital and the UWA campus. There were 124 628 boardings on the purple

CAT just in August, building on over 103 000 boardings in July. It is hard to say that the Perth parking levy is not being used to good effect. Nearly one million people last year would have something different to say.

As a passenger and as somebody who sits in their office and sees the purple CAT bus go by every five minutes, my observation is that a great variety of people use the CAT bus for a great variety of reasons. The member for Collie–Preston indicated that her daughter uses the CAT bus every day to get to the UWA campus. Despite living a seven-minute walk from UWA, my son goes to Curtin University and he uses it to get to the Elizabeth Quay busport to then catch the train to uni. As I said, I like many others use it for work, to get to Parliament House and to other meetings at other sites in the City of Perth. My daughter and I have used it on weekends to get in and out of the city where we like to go for lunch and to do a bit of shopping, and I always use it to get to and from the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre and avoid the parking lottery there.

Another major site at which people use the purple CAT is the QEII Medical Centre. What makes the CAT bus so useful is that it is free and it comes along every 10 minutes, so it is ideal for patients and visitors who, let us face it, are juggling many other concerns and deadlines navigating the hospital system, their appointments and the site. It is an important public service that links people with health care and education. Some local older residents use it to get around the neighbourhood, particularly to the shops at Broadway Fair Shopping Centre. I note that as the purple CAT traverses Broadway Fair and Hampden Road, part of its route is already outside the boundaries of the City of Perth because it runs along roads within the City of Nedlands.

This bus service allows people to access health care and education, to attend to their activities of daily living, such as shopping, to access recreation along the riverfront and, of course, to travel in and out of the city in their role as workers, residents, shoppers and diners. Having borne witness and heard the feedback about this diverse range of users and seeing the ever-climbing numbers of people who use the purple CAT, I know that people use it in a variety of roles and I have been talking to Subiaco locals about the potential of a CAT bus for Subiaco. The City of Subiaco is adjacent to the City of Perth and many residents in Subiaco similarly use the City of Perth and CBD for work and recreation. My team and I have doorknocked or phoned thousands of local residents in Subiaco and Shenton Park. Local residents are the most important stakeholders when considering changes or additions to public transport systems as they will ultimately be the users and beneficiaries of any such service. Over 90 per cent of the people we spoke to gave their enthusiastic support for a CAT bus, indicating that they would use it to connect Subiaco with the City of Perth.

There are key reasons people would like to see a CAT bus for Subiaco. Similar to the benefits of the purple CAT for local residents, the first is the ease of getting around the community for senior citizens. Those familiar with the layout of Subiaco and its services, hospitality and retail would know that it is a series of long strips, including Rokeby Road, Nicholson Road and Subi Square adjacent to the train station. Many senior citizens have told us that they would like a CAT bus to enable them to better access those local shopping and retail opportunities and to get themselves around their community.

Secondly, the City of Subiaco has two major public high schools—Perth Modern School and Bob Hawke College. As we heard earlier this week from the Minister for Education, along with the minister, the Premier and I attended the opening of the second stage of Bob Hawke College, an inner city high school. The opening of the second stage will see it get to its capacity of 2 000 students. Perth Modern School is a similar size. That is a lot of young people to get in and out of a precinct at the beginning and end of the day. Many of those students rely on public transport. They are currently limited to paid bus and train services. That is an important consideration because many of those students, particularly those from Perth Modern, cross the very busy Thomas Street to access the free yellow CAT bus that leaves from the other side of Thomas Street to their school.

A CAT bus for Subiaco would provide greater safety for those students, and the board of Perth Modern School has given its full support for that initiative. It is worth pointing out that the local intake area for Bob Hawke College includes suburbs within the City of Perth, such as West Perth and some areas of West Leederville, so any Subiaco CAT bus would directly benefit the residents of the City of Perth, their families and young people, and would keep young people safe on our roads.

However, the primary reason the Subiaco residents we have spoken to would like to see a local CAT bus is to improve their connectivity to the CBD. Subiaco is already on the doorstep of the CBD and Subi residents have told us that they could use the CAT to get to their place of work in the city and to access hospitality venues, particularly after hours. We heard particularly from young people that being able to access the city and Northbridge by a CAT bus for hospitality after dark was seen as a safe, reliable and affordable option. We encourage them to access the city for this reason as well. When the new ECU city campus opens, I think it is safe to assume that residents in the City of Subiaco will use a CAT bus to access the campus. Like the purple CAT bus, we see people utilising the service in all their different roles—workers, residents, shoppers, diners, theatregoers, patients and university students. I have heard about the cost of living and I acknowledge the importance of an affordable bus service for Subiaco.

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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There is significant social housing in the City of Subiaco, including high-density housing, and many senior citizens, therefore affordability is an important issue.

People want to use a Subiaco CAT bus. There is a lot of enthusiasm for public transport for pragmatic purposes, but also for its environmental impact. Of course, the Subiaco CAT bus will need a colour—perhaps either the maroon or gold of the Lions—the Subiaco Football Club.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Maroon.

**Dr K. STRATTON:** Maroon, yes. Quite a few Subiaco residents have offered maroon as their preferred colour—the maroon CAT—without being asked. I have had someone suggest that it is perhaps time for a rainbow CAT bus.

**Mr D.A.E. Scaife:** Rainbow bridge.

**Dr K. STRATTON:** Just like the rainbow bridge—that is right. That is a really nice synergy, member for Cockburn, thank you very much. It was pointed out to me that it is always Labor governments that progress the rights of LGBTQIA+ communities, and public transport, so why not bring those two progressive activities together and have a rainbow CAT bus for Subiaco. I look forward to the *Post* picking that idea up.

I emphasise again that the state government has consulted and engaged with community stakeholders, including both the Property Council and the City of Perth. We imagine they are, of course, committed to seeing the best outcome for their own stakeholders and ensuring that the city continues to be and become a vibrant, safe and attractive place to work, live, spend money and to play. Providing other ways for people to access the city for those purposes is one way that the levy could be utilised.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr K. STRATTON:** The changes that would allow this include the ability for levy funds to be invested on a wider range of projects and initiatives that directly affect and benefit CBD businesses and residents. This may include a rainbow or maroon CAT bus that brings neighbours in from the City of Subiaco, which will experience significant population growth in the next few years with the Subi East and the 1909 developments. We assume that many of those residents will choose to live there because of its proximity to the city and, more than likely, their workplaces. That brings a whole new neighbourhood into the CBD to work, shop and play.

The amendments suggested in the bills before us will connect those areas, with the ability to declare ancillary areas to ensure that projects that expand beyond the Perth parking management area can be funded from the levy. It is important to note that ancillary areas can only be in local governments that are contiguous to the Perth parking management area, such as the City of Subiaco, and only for projects that are primarily located within and to the benefit of CBD businesses and residents. Ancillary areas will be declared for projects like completing cyclepaths, intersection upgrades and other projects that land just outside the Perth parking management area. This has been drafted to be as restrictive as possible. Like any other successful initiatives, it will of course require and involve stakeholder consultation and consideration of the costs and benefits and how those are shared across neighbouring local government areas.

By allowing a wider range of projects to be funded, we can provide more amenities in the inner city, provide greater access to the CBD for CBD residents, but also for neighbouring residents. It will further reduce car usage by inner-city residents. This will benefit our environment and the city itself by making it a space that is both easy, safe and more affordable to access. For those reasons I commend this bill to the house.

**DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe)** [11.15 am]: As indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, we do not support this bill and I will outline why. There are many laudable aspects of this bill. I think there are many parts of this bill which are sensible changes that the government is seeking to make. I will indicate those and then I will indicate why I think there is a fatal flaw in this bill and why the bill should not be supported. In the minister's second reading speech, she outlined the reason that this levy was established. It was introduced in 1999 to help manage parking and related growth of traffic congestion in the city centre and surrounding network. I think, sensibly, we do not want half the city filled with car parking bays and the other half shops. We want this valuable real estate in the city to be used for commercial purposes, for shops and the like, as much as possible, so we have an attractive city centre. The minister alluded to that in her comments. She pointed out that the funds raised by the levy are directly reinvested in improving transport in the Perth central area with initiatives such as the central area transit bus service and a free transit service in the CBD. Of course, members would know that money has been used for a significant improvement in pedestrian access and for cycle access into the city. There is a large number of people who access the city by bicycle. With the advent of e-cycles and e-scooters, that network is getting more use. That means less pressure, with fewer vehicles going into the city.

I will touch on a couple of areas. The majority of the member of Nedlands' speech talked about money used by Labor for the original purpose. That was to improve transport into the city and the related areas and the CAT buses. Again, I think that —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** We had to move the map. You know that, don't you?

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Acting Speaker, please.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne):** Member for Cottesloe, could you resume your seat for a few moments. Thank you. A note to members, from my position. I prefer to keep this particular seat a no standing zone at the moment, regarding parking signs, so interjections are not being taken. I will enforce that. I would rather keep this a no standing zone. As far as I can see, the member for Cottesloe is still within his 20-minute parking limit and I am quite prepared to ensure that the 20-minute parking limit is maintained. Member for Cottesloe, if you would like to continue, thank you. I presume you are not taking interjections.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** No. Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. I thank you for your humour and the clarity of your direction.

As I said, I support the majority of the aspects in this bill. I will go through that in detail to indicate, very clearly, those areas that I think are sensible and those that are not. This bill seeks to expand the direction. When it refers to the application of moneys in the bill, it sensibly says that not everything is necessarily in the immediate CBD but that feeder activities can enhance traffic flow or at least reduce the requirement for people to use their cars in the CBD and the moneys could be used for that. For example, the moneys could potentially be used for parking outside the immediate CBD. It would allow people then to use CAT buses or e-scooters. A lot of those devices are freely available. Whenever I drive away from Parliament at night, I see about half a dozen purple e-scooters at the end of Kings Park Road, which people can use to tour Kings Park, for example. They can catch the bus into the city, hop on a hired e-scooter and go into the city or tour Kings Park. Those things are sensible and I am 100 per cent in favour of them. I think they are very sensible uses. As I said, I thought the great majority of the member for Nedlands' speech was a valuable contribution about the original purpose that these moneys were intended for. At the end, she tried to give us justification for the expansion into things other than those related to transport, but as I said, I thought the great majority of her speech was a valuable contribution in the sense that I supported the great majority of what she had to talk about.

I will follow the structure of the minister's second reading speech, because it is a reasonable structure. The minister talks about supporting businesses and landowners. There is the idea of supporting differential rates. I will go through the new initiatives to support businesses. I think the differential rates make sense. There are obviously prime parking areas and areas that are less congested, where parking is not such a problem. The ability to have differential rates make sense. The minister clearly outlines a logic and reason in her second reading speech. On fee waivers, the minister discussed the issue of the COVID pandemic and a range of issues at that time, including ways that government tried to activate the city centre. I vividly remember, at a selfish level, that during COVID I could drive from Parliament House to Government House in about three minutes. There was an enormous dearth of traffic in the city. Businesses suffered enormously. The government indicates it would have preferred the opportunity to waive that levy to encourage people to come back into the city. Again, that make sense, minister. I think that is a sensible part of the bill.

On certainty for developers, I understand that section of the bill has to do with the fact that when developers are making a development, deciding on the number of parking bays needed and the like, they do not want the goalposts to change. Developments typically take many years to get going. We do not want to change the goalposts once the development is approved and going through that process. Developers need some certainty. That is a sensible component of the bill. For special events and temporary parking, again that is a sensible provision. I have no issue with that. On the penalties, modifying the penalties is something that should be done from time to time. Obviously, increasing transparency so everyone has greater clarity in the annual report and the like, again is a sensible thing. One of the things we constantly ask this government is that it is transparent in what it does. We hope to see more transparency from this government because there are many times that we do not. The improved administration of the licensing scheme and helping to streamline business practices and reduce red tape for property owners, developers and other stakeholders will be a sensible change to the levy. However, I have an issue with the expansion of the focus of the levy, as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. That is the only reason I oppose the bill, otherwise it would have had my wholehearted support. I want to go through that and explain my position in a little bit of detail.

I can see the logic of the original levy. The purpose was to constrain the growth of non-residential parking. As I have already pointed out, consuming large parts of the CBD simply with parking does not make sense. It is very valuable land and there are better uses for the real estate. It is important to discourage congestion in the CBD. We know that if we have less congestion, it is a better environment for people to shop in and for commuters and workers alike. It makes it a nicer place. If it is just a place where cars are rushing to and fro all the time, that is an undesirable

outcome. It also improves the air quality in the CBD, which is also important. We know that vehicles deteriorate air quality not just through emissions but even if they are electric vehicles, through carbon, brake material and the like. Having a concentration of traffic in the city is a bigger issue. Part of the reason for the levy was to discourage people by making it a bit more expensive and a bit harder for people to come in to the area. It was to discourage people from using vehicles in the city unless they had to.

There was a pay-off for people who brought their vehicles to the city in the sense that, sensibly I think, the collective moneys were to remove the need for people to come into the city by car. Whether they were commuters, workers or people coming into the city to shop, those moneys were used for other purposes so that people would not have to use their cars. It was not just saying, “If you use your car, you’re going to be hit over the head and you’re a bad person so we’re going to make it more expensive for you to use your vehicle if you bring it to the city.” It was to reduce the requirement for people to use their vehicles to come into the city. The government put on CAT buses and improved cyclepaths and the like. The government said it was going to improve the general amenities in the city to lessen the requirement for vehicles with the use of that money. In effect, that money went to benefit the people who were paying the levy and reduce the requirement for doing so. It was a balance. It was a carrot and stick approach between hitting people with a levy to discourage them using their vehicles and also saying, “We’re not just going to do that. We’re going to make it easier for you not to have to use your vehicle to come into the city.”

What we have heard, as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, is that the levy has been accumulating during the term of this government. There has been a massive accumulation in that levy during the term of this government. Why has that happened? Is it the minister? Is the department simply out of ideas? Has everyone in the department gone, “You know what, minister? We are bereft of ideas of ways to significantly reduce the need for people to bring their vehicles into the city. We no longer have any thoughts in our minds about how we could do that”? Is that it? I cannot believe it. As I have pointed out in this place before, the minister has a strong academic pedigree. She is a pretty good thinker and I am sure she could come up with ideas. If they are out of ideas, is it that the levy is too high? Is the levy collecting too much if there is nothing else that can be done to improve transport within the city and the precincts? As I said, I have no objection to the suggestion in the bill of expanding the boundary and looking at ways we can improve services that feed into the city to lessen the requirement for vehicles. That makes a lot of sense to me. Was there another reason for the levy not being spent? Has the fund been accumulated because, in the minister’s mind, it is a fund that will be used for other purposes? I hope that is not the case. When this was introduced, I thought the reasoning behind it was very sound. I thought the trade-off between the two sides—discouraging people and enhancing transport options in the city so people did not have to drive their vehicles—was a very sensible outcome.

We have heard the government mention various projects it thinks should be done to enhance the CBD. I am not sure that I agree with all of them, but most sound like pretty laudable ideas. The Edith Cowan University campus is coming to the north of the city, and that will bring a lot more people back into the city. One of the big problems with the City of Perth is a lack of foot traffic and a lack of people in the area. More people will help to improve the amenity of the city. There are other projects—the WACA project and various other projects—but I will not go into the background of those; the Leader of the Opposition has done that. These all sound like laudable things to do, but I cannot understand why they should be paid for by people who have no choice but to bring their cars into the city.

Let us be very clear: when I come into the city, I do not bring my car in because it is cheap. Parking is expensive. Sometimes, I have to come in for a short purpose and then have to go do something else. I end up paying about \$20 when I am in the city for a very short period. Part of that is the parking fee, but a significant component of the fee is the levy.

Why do people use their cars? They do it because they have complex lives. If I go back to when I was a boy, once they reached parenting age, most women—at that stage it was most—were at home looking after the kids and the household. Predominantly men came into the city. Now, overwhelmingly, both partners in a family work. People are busy. Members might say it is a retrograde thing, but most people now choose to drive their children to school because they are concerned about safety, and then they come to work. I know that schools have seen an explosion in after-school activities. When I was a child, we went home when school ended. These days, children have a range of activities, such as school activities, sports, theatre and music, that they have to go to. People are not using their cars on a whim or because they do not care; they have complex lives. One of the intrinsic reasons public transport is struggling to see any significant patronage growth and people use their cars is —

[Member’s time extended.]

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** One partner does not simply come into Perth and go home while the other partner is at home doing all the important things that are required to run a family and a household. People who drive their cars do it because they do not have a simple choice in their lives.

The major reason they do it is the cost-of-living crisis, and that is real. Many members see the data coming out. If we look at the data for the overall Australian economy in real terms, people's spending power is, in fact, going backwards. Across Australia, our economy is growing, but our economy is only growing because of net migration into the country. On average, everyone is worse off. We might focus on a few fat cats, but members would know many people in their electorates who are really struggling. Why should people who happen to have to drive into the city, whether it is for shopping or because they work in the city, pay for those projects?

Let us be clear about those projects. The projects will overwhelmingly support the larger population of the state. Most of the state lives in metropolitan Perth. People come into the city for major events, such as going to the football, the museum or the theatre. These facilities, the sporting ovals and the WACA benefit the greater population of the state. Yes, the minister has outlined some laudable projects that need to be done to further improve the attractiveness and amenity of the CBD, but they should be paid for by the broader community. The projects should be coming through the government's normal —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** So regional people should be funding these projects?

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** They do anyway, do they not?

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Is that what the member is arguing?

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Look, I grew up in the bush, as the minister knows. I can say that —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** No, let me answer the question. I am happy to answer it. Even as a small child in the bush, I used to come up to the city, and I enjoyed the city's amenities. As a little boy, I used to go to the museum. I lived out in the deep dark bush in very humble circumstances. I think people accept that, but they also expect a reasonable amount to be spent in the regions. Regional people see that as a balance.

CBDs will always get a disproportionate share compared with other areas. Why? It is because the CBD is the centre for not just metropolitan Perth, but also the whole state. We still have a family farm in Cranbrook, and I know a good number of people who love coming up to the footy stadium and are really happy to do it. I think they see that.

I do not think people who use their cars do it on a whim. Most people use their vehicles because they lead complex lives. Life is vastly more complex now than when I was a child. I look at members around this place. When they leave here today, a number of members will be rushing off to pick up their kids and take them to sporting activities and the like.

That is what I see as the fatal flaw; I would support it if it were not for the broadening of the use to just a general fund. I am not concerned about the top end of town. If BHP and Rio Tinto are paying, and their chief executives are coming into Perth in their flash BMWs, parking downstairs and not having to walk in the rain from the bus or whatever, they can afford it. I am concerned. The minister would know that the great majority of people in the city are not fat cats on big salaries. They are ordinary small businesspeople who are really doing it tough, with all the cost increases they have had. The general spread of our community comes into the city because that is where they have to do their shopping and the like.

I do not think this should become a slush fund—I use the pejorative term—or a fund that is available to the minister. I can understand the attractiveness of it to the minister, who might think it is great that she has a big pool of money and another fund she can go to for all those projects. That is a very attractive thing. I have seen lots of photos of the minister out there with the fluoro vest and the hard hat, and it always makes for good publicity. I can understand the attractiveness of it, and I can even understand why the Lord Mayor of Perth thinks he can influence this a bit and maybe get other projects that he is interested in. For that matter, any future Lord Mayor might do that. I think it is intrinsically unfair that people who have no choice but to use their vehicles to come into the city should fund these broader projects.

I am not saying it as a form of words. I know that the minister has a very good mind, and I am certain that the department is full of people with very good ideas of ways to use this money to further reduce the requirement for people to bring their vehicles into the city and to make it more flexible. That is what this money should be used for. It should not be used for general development purposes in the city; that should be coming out of recurrent expenditure.

**MR G. BAKER (South Perth)** [11.39 am]: I wish to speak on the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023. To properly understand the bills—I think we have just had a good example of this—we need to understand the bad transport decisions that governments have made in the past. There has been an over-reliance on cars and the abandonment of residential housing in the CBD. We need to get away from that model and move to something else. It is a western model of urban cities that was led by American cities, the convenience of the car and the development of freeways in the 1950s. This model emphasised the separation of

the CBD from residences and a vision of the CBD that served only a commercial purpose and was not a place for people to live in. The CBD was fed by good roads, with the basic assumption that almost everyone would have a car and space to keep one at their house. These things are not all true, but for a city of a few hundred thousand people, as Perth was in the 1950s and 1960s, this was a practical and attractive ideal for a city. However, in our city of two million people, which stretches for 120 kilometres from Two Rocks to Mandurah, this ideal is being sorely challenged and is well past its use-by date.

First, in such huge numbers over such long distances, the car loses its efficiency. Longer commutes, larger traffic jams and a slow choke of all users of the road are produced if there is only a car-based city. Perth is experiencing worsening road congestion. The 2019 Australian infrastructure audit estimated that congestion in Perth will cost \$3.1 billion per annum in 2031. This problem is going to get only worse unless we find solutions.

This model also leads to a CBD that is completely absent of life and basically shuts down after 5.00 pm. We have only to ask a tourist or visitor to Perth who is bewildered by the lack of life on St Georges Terrace come six o'clock. This vision of a car-dominated city culminated in the closure of the Fremantle rail line back in 1979, when the Court government thought it could get rid of public transport because cars would solve everything. That is probably the worst transport decision that has been made in metropolitan Perth and Western Australia, and is possibly rivalled only by the closure of the tier 3 rail line in the wheatbelt.

Of course, those American cities have now reached the same juncture we have. The biggest example of this is Los Angeles, where the CBD is an abandoned island after hours and cars choke the freeway so badly that an airline once offered flights from one end of the city to the other. Yet even in Los Angeles, they are learning and changing the trajectory of their urban planning. Los Angeles copied Perth in retrofitting its rail system down the centre of its freeways. I remember driving along a freeway in Los Angeles and having a train overtake me. It was a very familiar feeling, because they had borrowed the design from us. The only difference was that I looked over my left shoulder instead of my right shoulder.

It was with this vision that the Perth Parking Management Act was introduced in 1999 to provide funding for an alternative transport vision for the City of Perth and to avoid the strangling effect of a car-centred transport strategy. It has had some great successes, as we have been talking about. The CAT buses are a daily reminder of how we are putting that into effect.

What is the city that we want? We want a city that is vibrant, alive with people, culturally and commercially alive, and linked to the rest of the metropolitan area. Very few cities, once they get above a certain size, continue to invite more cars into the CBD. Most move very heavily in the other direction. I can look at London, with its near exclusion of private transport, New York and even Sydney and Melbourne. Places like Sydney and Melbourne have been actively reviving their inner city culture and activating dead spaces in large part by bringing people back into the city centre via public transport and residency. Currently, Sydney is trying to retrofit a workable public transport system into the crowded city, but it has started too late, and that has led to a cost of tens of billions of dollars for its tram system.

We have started bringing people back into the Perth CBD with more residential construction. We are planning a new primary school and we have more local facilities planned, but we still have a way to go. At the same time, we can look at walking and cycling as part of the solution. They are increasingly important modes of transport that provide a healthy, affordable and convenient alternative to private vehicles in congested urban environments. Active public transport can reduce congestion by replacing a proportion of short private vehicle trips, generally those under five kilometres. Perth has one of the lowest rates of walking and cycling commuter trips in Australia. Each day, there are an estimated 4.2 million private car trips in Perth, with 2.8 million of those trips being under five kilometres, so we have a lot of room to work with here. There is also a lack of dedicated active transport connections that link key strategic centres in Perth. We are building those at the moment, but we still require more upgrades and more links to be made. In 2021, the Australian infrastructure plan identified walking and cycling as safe and desirable modes of transport of increasing importance in fast-growing cities.

When we look at the data on the growth of cycling and e-rideables, we see a lot of really encouraging information. Cycling levels around Australia have increased by up to 69 per cent compared with the pre-COVID period. The use of long-wheelbase devices such as cargo bikes has increased significantly in South Perth—by 26 per cent. The South Perth foreshore alone recorded an increase of 28 per cent in cycling numbers from pre-COVID numbers to post-COVID numbers. The use of e-scooters has also increased dramatically at a lot of sites, with an increase of 74 per cent on the South Perth foreshore. They are huge increases in traffic. This is really welcome, but it leads to new safety issues, with an increased need for a clear separation between pedestrians and cycling and e-rideable traffic.

How do we link this massive increase in cycling, walking and e-riding on the south shore of the city to the city across the Swan River? We can look at the principal shared path from Glendalough station to Hutton Street that was completed in 2020. Once it was completed, it saw a 50 per cent increase in cycling traffic along that section

and a 25 per cent increase in cycling traffic along the whole PSP, which is huge. How can we get all that traffic in South Perth into the City of Perth? The first thing for us to fix is the Causeway. We already have plant and are constructing the Causeway cycle and pedestrian path, but the current path is incredibly narrow and has a lot of safety issues. It was not built for the traffic it currently carries. Currently, more than 1 400 cyclists and 1 900 pedestrians use the two-metre-wide strip each day. There are several bottlenecks along that path that make it quite a tricky little commute.

In response to that, Main Roads Western Australia is building two bridges just downstream of the current Causeway bridge to provide improved access across the Swan for pedestrians and cyclists. The cable-stayed bridges will provide a six-metre-wide path and will create a safer connection for people walking and riding from the Perth CBD to Victoria Park and beyond. Site establishment and ground improvement works have commenced at McCallum Park, Heirisson Island and Point Fraser. Every time I go down there, it is great to see progress being made. It has a \$100 million budget and we hope it will be completed late next year.

Under the Perth Parking Management Act, the Perth parking levy can be used to complete projects only within the Perth parking management area, which includes Heirisson Island but not the Victoria Park shore. We have this crazy situation in which we can fund the bridge from Point Fraser to Heirisson Island, but we cannot fund the bridge from Heirisson Island to the Victoria Park shore, which is just nuts. We have these artificial lines based on an act of Parliament from decades ago that says that we can do this, but we cannot do that—we can build half the bridge, but we cannot build the other half. One fix is the fix we had with the purple CAT bus, whereby we moved the boundary out a little bit. Maybe if we were doing one or two projects, that would be a sensible thing to do, but if it is a fundamental flaw in the act, let us just fix the act, rather than making an ad hoc change with every single thing we do. Clearly, that is a ridiculous situation, and this bill will fix it. It will give the ability to declare ancillary areas to ensure that projects that expand beyond the Perth parking management area can be funded by the levy.

It is important to note that the ancillary areas can only be in a local government area contiguous to the Perth parking management area and only for projects that are primarily located within and to the benefit of CBD businesses and residents. The ancillary areas will be declared for projects like completing cyclepaths, intersection upgrades and other projects that land just outside the Perth parking management area. This has been drafted to be as restrictive as possible, but it gives us a solution and a way forward. After the Causeway pedestrian and cyclist bridges are complete, I can see the potential for a lot of other projects that link the City of Perth to its neighbouring suburbs and revive the commercial and cultural life of our city and make Perth an even better place to live. I refer to projects like cyclepaths, ferries and rail transport.

This bill is a very sensible reform of the Perth parking levy and will lead to benefits for everyone who lives near and in the City of Perth. Years of car-centred transport decisions have led to the City of Perth becoming an island that is cut off from the suburbs around it. With this reform, we will be able to build the bridges, both metaphorical ones and the actual bridges, to revive its cultural and commercial life. I commend the bill to the house.

**MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Parliamentary Secretary)** [11.51 am]: I am happy to rise today to speak to the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023. The original Perth Parking Management Act was introduced around 25 years ago and has not been updated since. These bills will modernise the act and create more flexibility in how it is administered. The changes will support business by cutting red tape and reducing ambiguities and risks for development in the CBD. We have consulted and engaged with key stakeholders, including the Property Council of Australia and City of Perth, and taken on board their feedback and views of the proposed changes.

The important changes we are putting forward include the ability for levy funds to be invested in a wider range of projects and initiatives that directly benefit CBD businesses and residents; new powers for the minister to waive fees in exceptional circumstances, which is not possible under the current legislation and was not possible during COVID; the ability to waive fees when required to facilitate development within the Perth central business district; allow the minister to pre-authorise new parking at the development approval stage, provide greater certainty for proponents; allow for the funding of traffic management for events, but not the events themselves, which was a decision informed by the strong feedback we received from the City of Perth; the ability to introduce differential rates, which was strongly requested by stakeholders and is huge in terms of how the adoption of differential rates will help stimulate much-desired development in underdeveloped parts of the city; a new requirement for spending from the levy to be published in the Department of Transport's annual report, as recommended by the Auditor General, which is a great win for transparency; and the ability to declare ancillary areas to ensure that projects that expand beyond the Perth parking management area can be funded from the levy, which is particularly important to me. For example, under the current arrangements, we can fund the construction of the new Perth to Victoria Park causeway pedestrian and cycling bridges between the city's foreshore and Heirisson Island, but we cannot fund the construction between Heirisson Island and the Victoria Park foreshore. That definitely reeks of a lack of common sense.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 September 2023]

p4649c-4670a

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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I would like to talk about the fantastic development that lands in my community of Victoria Park. This \$100 million project will see the construction of two iconic cable-stayed bridges comprising a six-metre wide shared path linking my electorate of Victoria Park with Heirisson Island and the Perth CBD at Point Fraser. It will separate path users from traffic, making it safer for those who wish to walk or ride to and from the city. It will create practical and beautiful bike riding and pedestrian facilities between the CBD and Vic Park. The people of my community of Victoria Park are avid cyclists and walkers, and many work in the city or visit it regularly due to its proximity. These bridges will be well used by locals and visitors alike. The new Causeway pedestrian and cycling bridges also happen to fulfil the original intent of the act, even if they do not fulfil all the funding requirements; that is, the original act and levy were introduced in 1999 to help mitigate congestion by discouraging people from driving to the city. The act and parking levy have been successful in achieving this intended aim. When the policy was introduced, roughly 66 per cent of trips into the CBD were made by car and this has now reduced to around 45 per cent. In the same period, the percentage of people using public transport to travel to the CBD has risen from 30 per cent to 45 per cent. With these new bridges, we are going to get even more pedestrians and cyclists into the city and back to Vic Park. It makes sense that such a project could be funded through the Perth parking levy, but only half of it can currently, which, like I said, seems at odds with common sense. This legislation will fulfil a common sense agenda.

As I mentioned, the new Causeway pedestrian and cycling bridges will also improve safety for path users. More than 1 400 cyclists and 1 900 pedestrians use the current two-metre wide Causeway path each day. I have seen many near misses between these two cohorts and lots of squeezes at different bottlenecks. I know that seniors in particular are very wary of when they use the current path, due to safety issues. The seniors from Connect Victoria Park, just up the road from the new bridge's landing spot, are regular users who are looking forward to these new bridges. For those who have not yet seen the design for the new Causeway pedestrian and cycle bridges, I encourage them to check it out. It looks amazing. The design respects the traditional owners of the land, the Whadjuk Noongar people. It reflects and embeds Whadjuk Noongar culture and heritage by recognising the significance of Heirisson Island and the Swan River. This was a direct result of extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including the Matagarup Elders Group. The shape represents the sinuous movement of the Wagyl. The Wagyl is the major spirit for Noongar people and is central to their beliefs and customs. The Wagyl, or Rainbow Serpent, is recognised by Noongar people as the giver of life maintaining all fresh water sources. It was the Wagyl that made Noongar people the custodians of the land. Noongar people believe that the Wagyl dominates the earth and sky and makes the thunder, lightning and rain. That is relevant given the last couple of days of weather. During the Dreaming, it created the fresh waterways. The Wagyl rose up from Garakatta—Mt Eliza at the foot of Kings Park—and formed the Swan and Canning Rivers and other waterways. Members can see how wonderful it is to have the Wagyl reflected in the design of the bridges that will go over one of the rivers that it created and the flagship river of Perth, the Derbarl Yerrigan, or Swan River. When the great Wagyl created the boodja, he ensured that there was wirrin, or spirits, to look after the land and all that it encompassed. I trust it will continue to do so and hope it does with these bridges.

When I was at Heirisson Island with the Noongar elders for a smoking ceremony before works on this project began, a local elder picked up one of the oyster shells that are scattered through the area. He told me that it was a scale of the Wagyl. He rises from the water and shakes off his scales and that is what those shells are. I have never looked at those shells in the same way again.

As well as the Wagyl, integral to the design are also references to prominent Whadjuk Noongar people, including Yagan, who, as many of us know was a Noongar warrior and leader who resisted the British colonisation of Western Australia in the early 1800s. He is deeply respected and is represented by a boomerang-inspired pier. I am a big fan of Fanny Balbuk. I spoke about Fanny Balbuk in my inaugural speech in this place. She was a resistance fighter who fiercely defended her values, traditional rights and country. Fanny walks the matriarchal songline that exists between Kaarta Gar-up, or Kings Park, through Boorloo, Perth, and on to Matagarup, Heirisson Island, where she was born. Matagarup, Heirisson Island, was the birthing place for Whadjuk Noongar women. It is incredibly appropriate and deeply meaningful that her life is reflected in the design of these bridges. She is represented by two digging stick-inspired piers. I cannot wait to see it all. The location, which is approximately 90 metres downstream of the existing Causeway bridge, was chosen as it minimises the impact on existing flora and fauna. The cable-stayed design will ensure that there will be less impact on the river, with only three permanent piers required to support the bridges. I hope the Wagyl is happy with that. The area also includes gathering areas. I am very much looking forward to walking my kids across the pedestrian bridge and taking them to these areas and to new areas they can now more easily explore thanks to these bridges.

I am very pleased that the Perth parking management bills will facilitate, among other things, fantastic developments like the causeway pedestrian and cycling bridges that have footprints in Victoria Park and Perth, as well as Perth's other contiguous areas. Of course, there is the important delivery of differential rates that will support development in underdeveloped areas of Perth city itself. I commend the bills to the house.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 September 2023]

p4649c-4670a

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [11.59 am] — in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the second reading debate on the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023. I would now like to respond to many of the claims made. I thank the member for Victoria Park for her contribution. The new causeway bridge will indeed be an incredible project, which I so look forward to seeing completed. Of course, works are now underway both at the site and in the manufacturing facilities at Henderson. They are well underway and can be seen by anyone driving past. A lot of work is happening there. Plus, the manufacturing of the bridge is being done here in WA. The design is incredible and I cannot wait to see it completed.

The member for South Perth also raised the issue of congestion along the cyclepaths through South Perth. Anyone who has been on the South Perth foreshore or done the circuit around the river will be very much blown away by the number of people who use cycleways through South Perth. South Perth residents will receive the benefits of the new causeway cycling bridge.

The member for Nedlands raised the purple CAT bus, which has been extremely successful. As the member for South Perth highlighted, and I want to reiterate this, we had to, in a sense, manipulate the boundaries of the Perth parking levy management area to facilitate the introduction of the purple CAT. For example, the boundary had to be changed in a particular way to allow the bus to leave the Perth parking levy management area and arrive at the University of Western Australia. It was clear from that and other examples that we needed to modernise that legislation. The idea that half a service can be funded, which will very much reduce congestion in the city, and not the other half, again raises the issue of change. I thank members of the government for their comments.

I want to go through many of the comments made by members on the other side and basically outline how they have misled this house by not giving all the facts. Today, the Leader of the Opposition outlined that he would pause the Perth parking levy. My understanding is that the Leader of the Opposition would scrap the levy. He is opposing it. Is the Leader of the Opposition committing to scrapping the levy?

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am suggesting that you should have considered such a measure and I am suggesting that on the basis of the fact that you have not done, so we will not support the legislation.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that he is committing to pausing or scrapping the levy; is that correct?

**Mr R.S. Love:** We think you should have considered a pause in the levy and some relief for the taxpayers of Western Australia —

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, the election is coming up, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr R.S. Love:** — who are being hit with \$30 million a year that you cannot spend.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** So the Leader of the Opposition's commitment is to scrap the levy?

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am suggesting using \$190 million you have collected and that you should be considering the cost effect of this on the households of Western Australia, and you have not done so.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, this is our policy today. What is the Leader of the Opposition's policy? Is it to scrap the levy?

**Mr R.S. Love:** My policy would have been that I would have considered the effect on the Western Australian taxpayers.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** You are the Leader of the Opposition, there is an election in 18 months. Are you committing to scrap the levy, given all the things you said today?

**Mr R.S. Love:** I certainly would have seen a reduction in the cost to Western Australian taxpayers.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** So you are committing to reducing it?

**Mr R.S. Love:** I believe that there are options available. I will go through some of those things with you in consideration in detail.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** So you are committing to reducing it? It is 18 months from an election. The Leader of the Opposition does not support this, so obviously his election commitment, his first election commitment as the Leader of the Nationals WA, is to scrap the Perth parking levy. That is incredible.

**Mr R.S. Love:** It is not my first commitment by any means.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** So he is saying that it is not his first commitment, but it is a commitment. I am glad the Leader of the Opposition is out there committing to scrap it, because that is what I am hearing today.

I want to say something about the increases to the levy. The former government increased the Perth parking levy by 400 per cent. The Liberal–National government increased the Perth parking levy by over 400 per cent.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Do you support that?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We have —

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**Mr R.S. Love:** You were asking me a question. Do you support that? Are you going to go with that? Why do you not reduce it?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will tell the Leader of the Opposition what we have done to show him the difference. From 2017–18 to 2023–24, we have increased it by seven per cent, compared with 443 per cent under the Barnett government. The Perth parking levy increased by seven per cent from 2017–18 to 2023–24 compared with 400 per cent under the previous government.

I turn to the cost of living. I will tell members what we have introduced. We have capped public transport fares at the cost of two zones. That means we have cut public transport fares for tens of thousands of Western Australians every day so they can now get to the city for much less. That was not funded from the Perth parking levy, but it helps support public transport and reduces congestion in the city. We have fare-free Sundays on the first Sunday of every month. We have expanded the CAT bus system. We have undertaken all these measures to improve the affordability of transport into the city from the suburbs. We are building Metronet, something that the Nationals WA oppose. What is that about? It is about reducing congestion into the city and supporting public transport. We are doing more to reduce congestion into the city and improve affordability of travel than anyone I have ever seen. For example, Metronet identifies new ways and routes to support public transport usage. The idea that these measures cannot be examined in this context is completely false. We have undertaken a number of measures in relation to this. The other point is that not everything we have done for transport in the city has been funded by the Perth parking levy. Matagarup Bridge was not funded from the Perth parking levy. Improvements to Perth train station were not funded from this levy. Fixing the Hay Street overpass was not funded from the levy. The idea that we only fund city transport projects from this levy is false again. Yes, the funds accumulated. That is because we were funding other projects outside of the levy. As I said, the Matagarup Bridge was not funded from the Perth parking levy; it could have been, but it was not. Therefore, funds accumulated. The funds accumulated under the previous government as well. Funds in the Perth parking levy accumulate, and then they are spent on major infrastructure. Funds accumulated under the previous government, and it then funded the Wellington Street busport. That is what happens; funds have accumulated and now we are funding the overpass.

Turning to some of the comments made, the idea that we should just spend what comes in the door because we cannot let funds accumulate is completely false with special purpose accounts. I say that is false as Treasurer. For example, under the previous government tens of million dollars accumulated, and then the government spent the money—that is what happens—on major pieces of infrastructure. The government saves and then it spends. That is a smart way of doing things. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would absorb this but he is not.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am absorbing all these things.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, he is not. I am trying to correct all of the things that he said.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am listening; I am listening to every word.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Did the Leader of the Opposition just hear what I said about Matagarup Bridge?

**Mr R.S. Love:** Yes, I heard what you said.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, he did not. He is too busy scrapping the Perth parking levy. I will tell the Leader of the Opposition the impact it has on regional residents in a minute, when he does that.

We have spent tens of millions of dollars not from the Perth parking levy in the Perth parking levy management area. In relation to the whole idea that we have not thought of things to spend it on, we have; we just did not fund them from the Perth parking levy.

The Leader of the Opposition cannot come in here and say, “These changes are terrible”, but support the purple CAT. The purple CAT arrangement is an example of how the existing legislation did not fit. As I said, we had to manipulate the boundaries to support the purple CAT. Of course, that service supports the CBD and the Perth parking management area. It has been one of the most popular public transport initiatives that we have introduced to increase the number of people who can easily connect to the hospital or universities from the city. It also supports travel through the city.

I have a couple of other things to say. People should think about the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Perth Cultural Centre and Perth Concert Hall. Those three examples have car parks. The Perth Concert Hall, convention centre and cultural centre car parks have been managed by the City of Perth. Perth parking levy money has been collected at these venues, all three of which need an upgrade. The cultural centre is getting an upgrade, but the convention centre and concert hall also need upgrades. The question is: where do we get that money from? All the theatregoers and people using the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre have been paying money to the Perth parking levy and the City of Perth. The City of Perth has not spent money on the cultural centre, concert hall or convention centre. The City of Perth has collected that money, which has gone into its revenue base. The Perth parking levy has also collected money. A lot of the money saved in that bank account has been collected through

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users of the convention centre, concert hall and concert centre, so why should that money not be used to improve facilities there in the future? Why would it not?

The convention centre needs a lot of spend; we all understand that. We are working through all the different options. Who should pay for that? Should it be the users of the convention centre who paid in the past or should it be regional residents? The Leader of the Opposition is saying that upgrades of economic, cultural or transport facilities in the city—everything from a new cultural centre to any upgrades to the convention centre—should be paid for by ratepayers and taxpayers of the regions. That is the Leader of the Opposition’s logic. The Leader of the Opposition is saying that if we accept that an upgrade to the convention centre needs to be done, although it is not entirely transport but might have transport elements, past and future users of the car park should not pay for it, but regional taxpayers should. He wants to transfer obligations away from those using city facilities to people in the regions. I will point out to the people of regional WA that the National Party is arguing against city people paying for city projects; instead, it is arguing for regional people to pay for city projects. By the Leader of the Opposition claiming that he would either scrap, reduce or limit that system, he is saying that regional people will have to step in and the government will have to use general regional taxpayer funds paid by regional people for city projects. That is his logic.

We are widening the scope of the scheme because we understand that a lot of things need to happen in the city. We are doing a lot of those things, whether it be building the new Edith Cowan University campus, a new primary school, new paths that stretch over the water or connecting buses to Subiaco and Nedlands. There is much to be done to continue to activate the city. Those who use the city normally also use some of these other assets that need an upgrade. The proposal is fair. Does the Leader of the Opposition know what is not fair? It is not fair that people who have attended the Perth Concert Hall over all these decades have been paying to use the concert hall, but those who have received those funds have spent nothing on the concert hall—and now its car park is falling in. That is not fair. People have been paying to use the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, and now its car park is so bumpy it looks like some sort of ocean. No upgrades have been made, and some car park spaces are unable to be used. This is about using a source of revenue to help support further upgrades to transport infrastructure and other key investments in the city.

As I said, we funded a lot of things in the city without using the levy, such as \$2.5 million for the Perth train station forecourt, \$50 million for the Public Transport Authority building, \$2.5 million for the new ferry, \$6 million to raise the Hay Street overpass, over \$80 million to Matagarup Bridge and a million for upgrades to the Elizabeth Quay bus station. A lot of other works have been carried out throughout Claisebrook. We could have used the Perth parking levy, but we did not because we paid for those projects through other parts of government.

We want the ability in the future to help support and expand investment to activate parts of the city. That will also bring in a number of different elements that the opposition will oppose. By voting no to this bill, the opposition will oppose differential rates in the city, the ability to waive fees, the ability to support the connection of new bus services in Subiaco into the city, and using the levy to improve things like cyclepaths in South Perth.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we spent Perth parking levy money on a swimming pool. We have not. He has misled this house again and again on that matter. I will say this in relation to a community aquatic facility in the city: the ratepayers of Northam and regional WA had to pay for their swimming pools. Again, the idea that we should not support this type of infrastructure through this proposal is foreign. The Leader of the Opposition is saying that the ratepayers of Northam who paid for their swimming pool should be paying for the one in the city.

I am a little surprised that the first election commitment from the National Party is to scrap the Perth parking levy. It is now incumbent on the Nationals to stand up and confirm that that is the position of the National Party. Through opposing this bill, it is saying that it will scrap the levy. I will send this to Treasury to have it costed. It will be the National Party’s first costed election commitment for the next election campaign. We will get a full costing of what it will mean over the next four years. It will probably cost hundreds of millions of dollars that the Nationals have already committed to. I am not sure that the people of regional WA will support that. I do not know whether the Liberal Party is agreeing to scrap it, too. I suppose it depends.

**Mr R.R. Whitby:** Which minister!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It depends on which shadow minister or Leader of the Opposition decides—the ones inside Parliament or outside. It depends upon who has policy control. It may be the position of the opposition to scrap the Perth parking levy. I cannot wait to explore that a little in consideration in detail. I want to know when members opposite will scrap it and when their legislation will come in. In effect, by opposing this bill, to not be a complete hypocrite, the National Party opposes the levy—thereby making it its first election commitment. As I said, I am happy to debate this in the streets of Northam, in the streets of Margaret River, in the halls of Kununurra and in the less densely populated areas that the Leader of the Opposition is abandoning.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Five years—you’ve not been able to spend it!

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 September 2023]

p4649c-4670a

Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker (ms A.E. Kent); Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Geoff Baker; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Rita Saffioti

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Did the Leader of the Opposition understand it?

**Mr R.S. Love:** You can't spend it on transport infrastructure, and now you've given up on spending on transport infrastructure. That's what you're saying, minister.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** If the Leader of the Opposition could understand English—I do not think he can—I said we have spent \$130 million on transport-related infrastructure in the city that we could have funded from the Perth parking levy, but we chose not to. We have spent money in the city, including on fare-free Sundays and fare caps. We have spent money to reduce congestion. But as I said, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to scrap it, that is up to him. The Leader of the Nationals WA has seen more on the streets of Perth than in regional WA. He is effectively abandoning regional WA in his quest to remain relevant, and targeting the metropolitan area and seats that are held by the Liberal Party. That is what he is doing. I do not know how you guys actually sit in an opposition party room; it would be quite awkward.

The Nationals WA is abandoning regional WA and making this legislation—out of all the legislation—its number one priority. It supported the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill but it is opposing the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023. That is quite a contrast. The opposition wants to scrap the levy. When the National Party is out there campaigning in the seat of Nedlands, the member for Nedlands can talk about how a Liberal–National government would probably see the end of the purple CAT; it would have to go. If the National Party gets its way, it will scrap the levy. That will mean that initiatives like the purple CAT will not be funded.

**Dr K. Stratton:** That's nearly a million people who will be affected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, one million people will be affected. That is what the opposition is saying: scrap the purple CAT; and there will be no chance of a Subiaco CAT under a Liberal–National government.

**Dr K. Stratton:** So all those kids will have to keep on crossing Thomas Street.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes. There will be no chance of a Subiaco CAT and no more bridges connecting the city to other parts of the southern foreshore. That is an interesting position for the Liberal and National Parties to take.

This is a sensible reform that will modernise the act and support businesses. The member for Cottesloe raised other points. I reiterate that the bill will provide more development certainty for businesses, differential rates, the ability to waive fees and support infrastructure in the city, which will support foot traffic for all businesses. It will help to completely revitalise the CBD.

We have invested in a lot of things including Matagarup Bridge, the new Causeway connection, new pathways and cyclepaths, and the Edith Cowan University campus and Bob Hawke College. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into the city and we will continue investing. We want to make sure that that investment continues for many years, but that there is a fair way to pay for it. We have kept levy increases to a minimum; I think it has increased by seven per cent over seven years, compared with 440 per cent under the previous government. We support affordable travel into the city by expanding our rail system, with new train stations at High Wycombe and Redcliffe—I see the member for Forrestfield here. There is also a new train station in Lakelands, the new Ellenbrook and Yanchep lines and the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. We are expanding the network to get more people to leave their cars at home. We have a two-zone public transport fare cap, which I think is the first to have been rolled out in Australia. We are continuing to expand our free bus network through the CAT system. We are doing a lot to reduce congestion and improve revitalisation in the city.

This is a good package of reforms. The Leader of the Opposition never quoted the Auditor General Act, which I asked him to do. He quoted the reporting of it, but did not actually quote the act. As has been confirmed, we have never expended funds outside the criteria of that act. We went beyond some of the original intentions of the act for the purple CAT. We had to change the boundary of the Perth parking management area to follow the route of the purple CAT, so that we would not pick up new businesses to pay the levy, but we were able to fund the CAT. That is what we did. I am proud of the fact that we did that so that we could introduce the purple CAT, but we do not need to change these boundaries every time we want to introduce a new service. The member for South Perth raised a very good point about the South Perth foreshore and the connections to the new Causeway pedestrian bridge. The idea that supporting people getting to the Causeway does not reduce congestion is false. Like I said, I am happy that we are modernising the act and providing a lot of support for businesses. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in transport infrastructure.

With regard to the Auditor General's report, it is quite a weird criticism to say that the government is not spending enough money. That is not really an audit criticism. It is a bit of a weird criticism that I am not spending enough money. That is a weird basis for an audit. I have never been criticised for not spending enough money; it would be the first time, in both my private and public life! We are carefully making sure that the levy is used wisely. We see it as a part of continuing to drive activity and support businesses in the CBD. Businesses in the CBD need

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support; they need foot traffic and people going into the city. The retail section of the CBD is desperate for more people; we are absolutely 100 per cent sure of that. That is why we are creating new bus links; even if they start outside the Perth parking management area, that is fine. We can do that, if it means more active transport connections.

Members should think about the new Causeway bridge and imagine a family day out. They will be able to go across this iconic bridge, which will be both a bridge and a work of art, into the city or along the foreshore. There will be more foot traffic in Elizabeth Quay, and they can then go into the city to support the businesses there. We will see more of that, including a new convention centre and an improved Concert Hall, which will bring even more people into the city. All these things are about bringing more people into the city, more activation, more foot traffic and more support for businesses in the city.

Some of the policies of the past have not worked, and we have all seen that, so let us try to get more people into the city. I agree that country people love the city, and people in the suburbs like the city. They want to be able to go in affordably, and that is why we have fare-free Sundays on the first Sunday of every month. That is why we have capped transport fares, and that is why we are building Metronet—to get more people onto public transport to get around more easily. That is why we introduced the purple CAT.

We also want to continue to support the cultural institutions of the city, like the Perth Cultural Centre Precinct and Perth Concert Hall. We have allocated tens of millions of dollars for upgrades to the concert hall, even though it had car parks attached. The users of those facilities paid for them, but they were not maintained. The Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre will be upgraded and a new Aboriginal cultural heritage centre will be developed—again, it will be a new major tourism icon. There is also the new ECU campus and the new school. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being invested in the improvement of economic activity, better transport connections and better cultural facilities.

If some Perth parking levy funds are used for any of these initiatives, I think it is a good thing, because we want to support the growth of the CBD. Fighting over whether we should be funding the change of colour of a footpath from grey to purple is not where I want to be. I want to support the city growing and, wearing my tourism hat, becoming a place where tourists want to be—a place that is full of activity and life. I want people from the suburbs to come into the city and catch a purple CAT to university or the QEII site. That is where I want things to be. I want to have activity. People have the idea that we will sit around with all our focus on whether we should change the colour of footpaths. I think one of the criticisms from the Auditor General's report was that I did not give enough consideration to some projects, such as changing the colour of the footpath from grey to red. No, I did not because I am looking at building connections and trying to change the entire fabric of the city because without this type of intervention, the government would not be upgrading the cultural centre, building a new Aboriginal cultural centre, and updating and improving the Perth Concert Hall where the car park was left to fall apart, even though people were collecting revenue from that car park for years. It is about creating the new Edith Cowan University district. It is about a new primary school. We built the new high school with Bob Hawke College. It is about more residential buildings. It is about connections—that is what it is about.

I think this legislation is really good policy. There has been an underinvestment in a lot of different institutions and we are playing catch up. This bill is about making sure that the levy can support businesses in the city because some of the policies of the past did not. The best way to support businesses is to bring customers to their door. That is what this legislation is about for retail businesses—getting customers to the door. This bill is part of the overall package to bring more people into the city and more customers to the door.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr D.A.E. Scaife) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (43)

Mr S.N. Aubrey  
Mr G. Baker  
Ms L.L. Baker  
Ms H.M. Beazley  
Dr A.D. Buti  
Mr J.N. Carey  
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke  
Ms C.M. Collins  
Mr R.H. Cook  
Ms L. Dalton  
Ms D.G. D'Anna

Mr M.J. Folkard  
Ms K.E. Giddens  
Ms M.J. Hammat  
Ms J.L. Hanns  
Mr T.J. Healy  
Mr W.J. Johnston  
Mr D.J. Kelly  
Ms A.E. Kent  
Dr J. Krishnan  
Mr P. Lilburne  
Mrs M.R. Marshall

Ms S.F. McGurk  
Mr D.R. Michael  
Mr K.J.J. Michel  
Mr S.A. Millman  
Mr Y. Mubarakai  
Mrs L.M. O'Malley  
Mr S.J. Price  
Mr D.T. Punch  
Mr J.R. Quigley  
Ms R. Saffioti  
Mr D.A.E. Scaife

Ms J.J. Shaw  
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski  
Dr K. Stratton  
Mr C.J. Tallentire  
Mr D.A. Templeman  
Mr P.C. Tinley  
Ms C.M. Tonkin  
Mr R.R. Whitby  
Ms S.E. Winton  
Ms E.L. Hamilton (*Teller*)

**Extract from *Hansard***

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Noes (6)

Ms M.J. Davies  
Dr D.J. Honey

Mr R.S. Love  
Ms L. Mettam

Mr P.J. Rundle  
Ms M. Beard (*Teller*)

Question thus passed.

Bill (Perth Parking Management Bill 2023) read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]