



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT  
THIRD SESSION  
1999

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 11 August 1999

# Legislative Assembly

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**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 12 noon, and read prayers.

## QUESTION TIME BELL

*Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): Several times it has been suggested that when the House does not break prior to question time on Wednesdays, a reminder bell could be rung just before 2.00 pm. The difficulty is that there could be confusion between a reminder bell and a division bell, which might lead to members inadvertently missing a division. As a trial, I propose to have the bell rung at 1.55 pm. The bell will be five short rings of about three seconds duration each. I welcome feedback about this reminder bell.

## DEPUTY PREMIER - PERSONAL EXPLANATION

*Three Parliamentary Questions and Report on Travel*

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [12.04 pm]: My personal explanation concerns three parliamentary questions on notice and the report on overseas and interstate trips recently tabled by the Premier in the House.

In the case of question 1016 asked by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich in the other place on 9 March 1999, it has come to my attention that, due to a typographical error, I provided incorrect information in my response. The date given in part (6) should read 25 July 1994, not 1997.

The member for Bassendean has correctly pointed out in question on notice 3301, dated 30 June 1999, that my answer to question 2795 was at variance with the figures quoted in the report tabled by the Premier. During investigations to determine the reason for the difference between the two figures, officers of the Department of Commerce and Trade became aware that expenditure for significant internal travel in Europe had not been included in either the response to question 2795 or in the report tabled by the Premier. These costs had been incurred by the London-based office of the Agent General, which is an office of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, and the Department of Commerce and Trade was later invoiced. Additional costs were incurred due to flight delays and cancellations encountered during the European leg of the trip. The total cost of Mr Sutherland's trip was \$13 002.02, including all flights and train travel in Europe, international flights, daily incidentals allowance and credit card expenditure. The cost of \$11 821 given in the report on overseas and interstate trips recently tabled by the Premier in the House did not include the costs incurred by the office of the Agent General, while the cost of the airfare included was the amount originally quoted by Qantas and not the amount ultimately invoiced and paid.

In answer to part (e) of question 2795, it was stated that no travel allowance was paid to Mr Sutherland. This is incorrect, as an incidentals allowance of \$30 a day was paid for the 11 days of the trip. This total of \$330 was paid in accordance with public sector guidelines, as outlined in the contract under which Mr Sutherland's services were provided.

In answer to part (d) of question on notice 2794, it was stated that the total expenditure on Mr Sutherland's credit card for the period of the contract was \$9 410.99. One payment was incorrectly coded and was omitted from this figure. The corrected total expenditure on Mr Sutherland's credit card for the period is \$10 660.30.

## JOONDALUP TRAIN STATION, PARKING

*Petition*

Mr Baker presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 100 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of the Joondalup Region, demand that Westrail acquire a suitable parcel of land adjacent to the Joondalup Train Station for the purposes of constructing a motor vehicle parking facility for the dedicated use of train commuters using the said station. We believe that the Joondalup Train Station should have been developed as a "Park and Ride Station", not a "Kiss and Ride Station" due to the fact that the station is not located in an urbanised area and the timetables associated with the connecting bus routes to the station are inadequate.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 6.]

## NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP

*Petition*

Mr Kobelke presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 29 persons -

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia are totally opposed to the Pangea proposal to locate a high level nuclear waste dump in Western Australia.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 7.]

### **SPECIAL FACILITIES TRAIN PLATFORM, JOONDALUP**

#### *Petition*

Mr Baker presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 325 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned users of the various state of the art sport and recreational facilities at the Arena Joondalup, call upon the Western Australian Government to construct a Special Facilities Train Platform on the Northern Suburbs Rail Line adjacent to the Arena Sporting Complex in Joondalup.

This train platform will have the effect of enhancing the public's access to the magnificent facilities and events at the Arena Joondalup including the new Aquatic Centre, the West Perth Falcon's home games played on the main oval and the Arena's tennis, netball, hockey, lacrosse and rugby league and union playing facilities.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 8.]

### **TEENAGE CHILDREN, LEAVING HOME POLICY**

#### *Petition*

Mr Baker presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 60 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned concerned parents of Western Australian teenagers, call upon the State Government to more stringently police its provision of financial and other assistance to young teenage children who wish to leave home due to, amongst other things, perceived or actual irreconcilable differences with their parent or parents. We are verily concerned that in many cases - these allegedly irreconcilable differences can be contrived by certain head strong unruly children who subsequently leave home without the requisite financial, social or worldly skills to enable them to properly manage their lives in what at times can be a harsh environment and that they run the risk of becoming the prey of anti-social elements in the community, particularly those peddling illicit drugs.

Further - we are most vigorously opposed to the Labor Party's so called Drug Abuse "Prevention" Strategy of providing free heroin to heroin users, establishing shooting galleries and of allowing our children to grow up to five cannabis plants at any one time, ostensibly for their own consumption. This policy will have a devastating impact upon our families and our young teenage children and we beseech you to ensure that this ludicrous anti-family policy never becomes a reality.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 9.]

### **WESTERN SUBURBS 2 AND REGIONAL ROADS 4 - METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME AMENDMENTS**

#### *Statement by Minister for Planning*

**MR KIERATH** (Riverton - Minister for Planning) [12.11 pm]: These two amendments affect road reserves for future transport needs, cycleways and footpaths, preserving areas of aesthetic value and changing zonings to better conform to surrounding land uses. The roads affected by the changes include Beach Road and Malaga Drive, West Swan Road, Wellington Road, Southport Street, Spencer Road, Thomas Street, Spearwood Avenue and Collier Road.

The Regional Roads 4 MRS amendment changes remove some land that will not be needed for future transport use, enabling the land to be developed and reducing government contingent liability for compensation by some \$11m. These changes were advertised for public comment between September and December last year and there were 51 submissions and six people or groups met a hearings committee to discuss their views. There was universal support from landowners for the removal of regional road reserves from the affected properties. Where a proposal was to increase the road reserve, owners lodged their objections and the compensation issues raised have been resolved through compromise with the hearings committee in some cases.

The Western Suburbs 2 MRS amendment deals with a number of changes for future road reservations and rezonings to urban, public use and parks and recreation uses in the Nedlands, Cambridge, Claremont and Mosman Park areas. Public submissions were sought between July and October last year and there were 29 replies. Most objections came from proposals to change the former plant nursery depot at the Town of Cambridge and Henderson Park on Salvado Road, Floreat from parks and recreation reserve to urban zone. There were also objections to the transfer of surplus railway land at Claremont from a railway reservation to an urban zoning. After the hearings committee, changes were made to exclude Henderson Park from the amendment and include an additional portion of surplus railway land at Claremont to a zoning of urban. I commend the amendments to the House.

[See papers Nos 62A-63B.]

### **MARK TAYLOR, AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

*Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

**MR BOARD** (Murdoch - Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.13 pm]: I inform the House of the visit to Western Australia by Mark Taylor, the 1999 Australian of the Year, as part of the Australia Day Council's Tour of Honour program. The Office of Citizenship and Multicultural Interests now has responsibility for the Australia Day Council as a component of its efforts to encourage a strong appreciation of citizenship among Western Australians.

Mark Taylor is a well-known Australian due to not only his cricket achievements but also his national pride, his sense of contributing to the community and his high standing in international circles, all qualities which make him an exceptional Australian of the Year. Mark Taylor is an excellent ambassador for our country for three important reasons: He is respected in Australia; he is respected around the world; and he has a deep and abiding love for his country. His unassuming character has put him into the hearts and minds of all Australians, cricket fans or not.

The State Government is committed to strengthening the value of citizenship in Western Australia. Mark Taylor is a role model for good citizenship. The Tour of Honour is a vital part of the Australia Day Council's endeavours to encourage reflections on national identity and citizenship. Mark Taylor spent four days travelling around Western Australia. His ports of call included the WA Municipal Association conference, the South Perth cricket and hockey associations and a number of secondary schools. Mark also ventured into rural Western Australia with visits to Geraldton and the recently flood-affected north midlands. Mark Taylor was spreading a message of stronger citizenship around the State. He spoke of achieving goals despite the odds, the importance of contributing to the welfare of our community and his own experiences of never giving up. I believe that it is fitting for the Australian of the Year to discuss issues of national pride, identity and community spirit in our flood-ridden north. These are areas where the strength of citizenship was recently drawn upon for survival and is an example to us all.

In addition to the Australian of the Year, the Australia Day Council also awards the Young Australian of the Year and the Community of the Year, and gives the Australian Achiever's Award, the Young Achiever's Award, the Aussie of the Month, Achievement Medallions and occasional Special Awards. As the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests as well as Youth, I am keen to promote the importance of creating role models and raising the benchmark for achievement through awards programs. Aiming high and achieving goals are vital components of the Citizenship and Youth portfolios. A number of government programs are working to encourage this. The WA Youth Awards showcase, the Citizenship grants program and the new Leadership WA College, are just some of the initiatives implemented to create role models, encourage community involvement and ultimately strengthen the value and meaning of citizenship. The greatest assets of this country are its citizens. The Australia Day Council deserves to be congratulated as it is working hard to ensure that we join together in that realisation.

### **DRUGS, MONEY AND GOVERNMENT 1997-98 REPORT**

*Statement by Minister for Family and Children's Services*

**MRS PARKER** (Ballajura - Minister for Family and Children's Services) [12.16 pm]: I am pleased to advise the House that the concerted effort of Western Australia's strategy against drug abuse has been recognised in the annual survey and report by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia. In its report, "Drugs, Money and Government 1997-98", released last week, ADCA measured government performance in all jurisdictions of Australia in responding to the drug problem through a survey of 200 key informants, working or having expert knowledge of the Australian drug field.

In looking at the 1997-98 financial year, the report covered the first year of implementation of the Government's Together Against Drugs strategy released in June 1997. The survey recognises the 30 per cent increase in funding for drug-related services between 1996-97 and 1997-98. Incidentally, funding for drug-related services has since been further increased by the State Government in subsequent budgets. Overall, for 1997-98, the performance of the Western Australian Government in response to the drug problem was rated second highest out of the eight Australian jurisdictions, behind the Northern Territory. For the first time, Western Australia achieved a positive rating for its overall performance on drug abuse issues. The Northern Territory and Western Australia were the only two jurisdictions in Australia achieving an overall positive rating for their Government's performance. Importantly, Western Australia was rated first in the country on the following indicators: Having a clear strategy to address drug problems; ensuring that programs are provided to reduce and prevent drug problems; and involving communities in programs to address local issues. Western Australia has gained one place moving from fourth to third out of the eight on the indicator of "ensuring treatment programs and services are available".

While there is still much more to be done, the findings in this report are very encouraging and indicate that we are clearly on the right track. In this context, I would like to thank all the partners in the Together Against Drugs strategy for their

invaluable and important contribution to the success of this comprehensive and multifaceted strategy, the many government and non-government agencies, local governments, schools, local drug action groups, general practitioners, the Pharmacy Guild, community and sporting associations and many more. The Government will never be able to solve the drug problem on its own. We will always need a concerted effort with a strong community involvement.

The Government will continue to provide strong policy leadership into the next millennium, implementing a clear strategy to address drug problems, ensuring that programs are provided to reduce and prevent drug problems and involving communities in programs to address local issues. I table a copy of the report for the information of members.

[See paper No 64.]

### **NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY (PROHIBITION) BILL 1999**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Gallop (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.

### **SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE**

#### *Days and Hours*

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the House shall meet on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm, on Wednesdays at 12 noon and on Thursdays at 9.00 am, with no meal break to be taken on Wednesdays.

### **GRIEVANCES**

#### *Suspension of Standing Orders*

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That so much of Standing Order No 224 is suspended as is necessary to enable the Speaker to call for grievances on Thursdays following the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

### **GOVERNMENT BILLS - RESTORATION TO NOTICE PAPER**

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That under the provisions of Standing Order No 416 the following Bills be restored to the Notice Paper at the stages which they reached in the previous session of Parliament -

1. Gas Corporation (Business Disposal) Bill 1999.
2. Midland Redevelopment Bill 1999.
3. Rights in Water and Irrigation Amendment Bill 1999.
4. Prisons Amendment Bill 1998.
5. Culture, Libraries and the Arts Bill 1998.
6. Culture, Libraries and the Arts (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1998.
7. Parks and Reserves Amendment Bill 1998.
8. Gender Reassignment Bill (No 2) 1997.
9. Telecommunications (Interception) Western Australia Amendment Bill 1999.
10. Planning Appeals Bill 1999.
11. Planning Appeals (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill 1999.
12. Heritage Bill 1999.
13. Heritage (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1999.

### **COUNCIL BILLS - RESTORATION TO NOTICE PAPER**

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting -

(a) that consideration of the following Bills be resumed -

1. School Education Bill 1997.
2. Sentence Administration Bill 1998.
3. Sentencing Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 1998.

4. Court Security and Custodial Services Bill 1998.
  5. Court Security and Custodial Services (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1998.
  6. Government Financial Responsibility Bill 1998.
  7. Transport Co-ordination Amendment Bill 1998.
  8. Water Services Coordination Amendment Bill 1999.
  9. State Trading Concerns Amendment Bill 1999.
  10. Child Welfare Amendment Bill 1998.
  11. Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 1998.
  12. Hospitals and Health Services Amendment Bill 1998.
  13. Trust Removal (Mount Claremont Land) Bill 1998.
  14. Rail Freight System Bill 1999; and
- (b) that the Legislative Council reconsider Assembly Message No 139 of 1998 which refers to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Amendment Bill 1997.

### **COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION**

#### *Appointment*

On motion, as amended, by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That for the present session -

- (a) the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the member for Belmont, the member for Hillarys and the member for Nollamara; and
- (b) the Parliamentary Services Committee shall consist of the member for Perth, the member for Carine, the member for Churchlands, the member for Midland and the member for Roleystone.

### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON CRIME PREVENTION**

#### *Reappointment*

On motion, as amended, by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

- (1) That the Select Committee on Crime Prevention originally appointed during the first session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament be reappointed, with the same terms of reference as follows -
  - (a) to inquire into and report on programs, practices and community action which have proven effective in -
    - (i) reducing or preventing crime and anti-social behaviour at the community level;
    - (ii) addressing community and social factors which contribute to crime and anti-social behaviour in the community; and
    - (iii) addressing community and anti-social behaviour after it has occurred; and
  - (b) that the committee also report on methods by which such information may best be accessed by the community.
- (2) That the committee have the power to send for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to move from place to place and to report from time to time.
- (3) That the member for Belmont, the member for Mandurah, the member for Midland, the member for Mitchell and the member for Swan Hills be appointed members of the committee.
- (4) That the committee report on 30 September 1999.

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS - RESTORATION TO NOTICE PAPER**

1. Superannuation and Family Benefits Amendment Bill 1999.
2. Police (Immunity from Civil Liability) Bill 1998.  
Bills restored to the Notice Paper, on motion by the member for South Perth.
3. Police (Confidence Power and Review) Amendment Bill 1998.
4. Coroners Act Amendment (Deaths in Custody) Bill 1998.
5. Local Government (Political Donations and Electoral Expenditure) Amendment Bill 1997.

6. Public Scrutiny of Bills and Regulations Bill 1997.
  7. Scrutiny of Government Publicity Bill 1997.
  8. Occupational Safety and Health Amendment Bill 1999.
- Bills restored to the Notice Paper, on motion by the member for Nollamara.

### SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGE - MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### *Establishment*

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [12.27 pm]: I move -

That a Select Committee of Privilege be established to investigate and report on -

- (a) the truthfulness of the Minister for Family and Children's Services in stating to the House on 1 July 1999 that "Professor Uchtenhagen also told us about the enormous political pressure he was under from the Swiss Government to come up with positive results in the (Swiss heroin) trial", and her other similar statements;
- (b) the extent to which the minister's statement or statements impugned the reputation and the scientific integrity of Professor Uchtenhagen;
- (c) the degree to which the privileges have been abused and the reputation of the House has been eroded by the minister's statement; and
- (d) an appropriate form of apology or other actions required to uphold the privileges and reputation of the Western Australian Parliament.

I consider this to be a very, very serious matter. I would have thought other members of Parliament would agree that it is a serious matter when a minister provides misleading statements to the Parliament about a contentious issue and refuses to take the opportunity to correct statements and reaffirms those statements in the Parliament and the public domain. The issue arises from a trip to Sweden, Italy and Switzerland undertaken in June by the minister responsible for this State's drugs strategy. She took that trip while Parliament was sitting, which is an issue in itself, although not one we will discuss today. The Minister for Family and Children's Services reported to the Parliament on that trip.

When we consider what Minister Parker said, we must bear in mind her constant and consistent response to the suggestion that Western Australia institute a Swiss-style heroin prescription program. The minister has been a constant critic of such a suggestion, which is her right. The minister has every right to hold a negative view of the benefits or otherwise that such a program could have. However, she does not have the right to come back to Western Australia after visiting Switzerland and misrepresent what she saw in order to underline her ideological opposition to the Swiss heroin model. That is what the minister has done. She made a short ministerial statement in this Parliament on 1 July, the last sitting day of the last session of this Parliament. In that short statement, the Minister for Family and Children's Services said -

In Switzerland, after visiting a heroin prescription clinic and speaking to Professor Uchtenhagen, who was responsible for the scientific design of the Swiss trial, the Zurich Police Chief Operations and Planning, and a World Health Organisation official, my concerns about a heroin trial have been further strengthened.

She went on to say -

Although Professor Uchtenhagen, who was responsible for the design of the Swiss trial, stated that heroin should not replace methadone as a treatment option, we were told at the heroin clinic that a number of addicts come in for methadone during the week and for heroin on the weekend. Broadly, entry criteria have already been relaxed and there is discussion to relax it even further.

I was curious about how anything Professor Uchtenhagen might have said about his program could have reinforced the minister's already strongly negative view of the Swiss heroin program, because I have read a great deal about his results and have followed the debate around the world about his program in Switzerland and the value it might have for other European countries, the United States, Canada and Australia. In July 1997 Professor Ambros Uchtenhagen produced a final synthesis report on the program conducted in 18 centres in Switzerland. It is a very lengthy report, but the conclusions are quite plain -

As a result of above average retention rates, significant improvements can be obtained in terms of health and lifestyle and these persist even after the end of treatment; of special interest is the striking decline of criminal activities.

Such improvements are of great public interest too (prevention of dangerous infectious diseases, struggle against drug-related delinquency etc.).

In view of the considerably impaired state of health of patients on admission to the programme, the mortality rate of 1% per year is relatively low.

The economic benefit of heroin-assisted treatment is considerable, particularly due to the reduction in the costs of criminal procedures and imprisonment and in terms of disease treatment.

His final recommendation is -

It is apparent from these conclusions that a continuation of heroin-assisted treatment can be recommended for the group targeted by this programme . . .

Having knowledge of that report, I found it difficult to believe the minister when she said that what she had heard from Professor Uchtenhagen had reinforced her negative view of the program. On the day she made the statement, Thursday 1 July, I asked in question time -

Can the minister explain why she failed to mention that Professor Uchtenhagen whom she mentioned in her short ministerial statement this morning as the architect of the Swiss trial gives a glowing endorsement of the trial and his views are directly contrary to her own?

The minister replied -

The member for Willagee may have corresponded with the professor.

I certainly have. The minister continued -

I found our appointment with him highly informative. He told us he had been under quite a bit of pressure to produce a positive report.

She did not say that there had been pressure to find solutions, which is the twist she is now trying to put on her statements, but that he was under pressure to produce a positive report. The implications of her statement are quite clear to anybody who has a basic understanding of the English language. On the same day, the minister presented a written report - which is somewhat unusual - of her experiences in Sweden, Switzerland and Italy. Of her visit to Professor Uchtenhagen she wrote, among other things -

Professor Uchtenhagen also told us about the enormous political pressure he was under from the Swiss Government to come up with positive results on the trial.

The implication the average person would draw from that is that the results were formulated to suit the requirements of the Swiss Government, and those who have been following the progress of the program will know that it was under a lot of pressure from opponents of the trial.

As a result of the statements made in this Parliament, Professor Uchtenhagen was contacted by email. One of the shortcomings of the minister's approach to this matter is that she has not recognised that modern technology - telephones and email - allows immediate contact to be made with people all around the world. It is a far cry from the days when people could get away with making false statements about things they had seen in other parts of the world. An email was sent to the professor explaining what the Minister for Family and Children's Services had told the Parliament of Western Australia. His response was -

There was no pressure by the Swiss Government on the research group to produce "positive results" whatsoever, and I possibly could not have mentioned such a thing in our conversation.

The response continued -

If there is a written report by Minister Parker or an official protocol of that Parliamentary session, I would appreciate having an opportunity to read it and react to it, because such an allegation puts me into a difficult spot.

The reason it puts the professor in a difficult spot is that Switzerland has a process of citizen-initiated referendums and a group of opponents to his program have been trying to undermine its value and have it stopped by citizen-initiated referendums. At the time of the minister's trip a citizen-initiated referendum was in progress. A similar referendum had been held in 1997 and the Swiss people, by an average of 70 per cent in all the 26 cantonments, supported the continuation of the program. They did so again this year, despite efforts by people in that country to undermine the validity of that program.

Professor Uchtenhagen's program is being watched by people all over the world, and the minister implied in statements to this Parliament that the books were being cooked to meet the requirements of the Swiss Government. That was an outrageous thing to do and, of course, Professor Uchtenhagen was concerned. At the end of the first email the professor stated -

. . . I would appreciate having an opportunity to read it and react to it,

Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, a copy of the written statement by the minister was sent to the professor so that he could make his own assessment of whether the report reflected what had happened and what he had said. After reading the written report, the professor sent me the following email -

Thank you for your message. I remember the visit of Mrs Ronda Parker. I provided her with ample information on the questions she raised. I definitely made no allusion of any kind to political pressure influencing the result of our evaluation research. A statement such as mentioned by you is a severe attack on my scientific integrity as well as on my common sense. I am prepared to testify for this if your parliament invites me to do so.

The email further states -

But certainly there was no political pressure on content.



The professor referred to time constraints, but said there was no political pressure on content. He further stated -

If you provide me with the address of the competent authority of your parliament, I will send them a statement confirming this.

Best wishes,

Prof. A. Uchtenhagen

Mr Barnett: Did you email him prior to that?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes I did.

Mr Barnett: Do you have a copy?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. I do not have a copy with me, but I can provide it.

Mr Barnett: Do you think you should provide that publicly?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes I can; here it is - a copy of what I sent to him.

Mr Barnett: Is that what you said?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes.

Mr Barnett: Will you table both documents?

The SPEAKER: I advise members that the member for Willagee cannot table it but he can lay it on the Table of the House for the balance of the day's sitting.

Mr Barnett: A photocopy will do.

Mr CARPENTER: I read the paragraph in which Professor Uchtenhagen responded to the minister's comments about her visit to see him in Switzerland.

I intended to bring this matter to Parliament as soon as I could because the Minister for Family and Children's Services has since reaffirmed her position as reported to Parliament. I gave notice of this motion yesterday, as members know. I sent another email to the professor inviting him to exercise his right under the citizen's right of reply procedure, and he informed me by telephone on Monday night that he would like to exercise that right.

Mr Barnett: Is he a citizen of Australia?

Mr CARPENTER: As far as I know, he is a citizen of Switzerland, which may well preclude him from exercising that right. I offered him that opportunity via email, and I provided the Speaker's address. I spoke to him on Monday night because I intended to raise this matter as soon as I could in Parliament when it resumed, and I wanted to ensure that the matter had not been resolved between the minister and the professor. Some time elapsed from the beginning of July to the resumption of Parliament. I spoke to him on Monday night, and no contact - as far as he could pass on to me - had occurred between him and the minister. He received the report I sent him, which he read. He had the same views.

I felt somewhat embarrassed, and was rather reluctant to contact him, as it occurred to me that he must have a very low opinion of the Parliament of Western Australia -

Mr Barnett: Will you give the attendant a copy of your correspondence to the professor and his reply so that we are extended the courtesy of reading both pieces of correspondence?

Mr CARPENTER: I do not have my correspondence to him here, but I could provide it.

Mr Barnett: I think that is rather essential to this debate, don't you?

Mr Court: You said the minister cooked the books, but the minister said nothing about cooking the books.

Mr CARPENTER: I did not say the minister cooked the books.

Mr Court: You said it again today!

Mr CARPENTER: No. An incapacity to understand appears to be evident. Perhaps that was the minister's problem: Perhaps she misunderstood what the professor said when she visited him. The minister seems to be misunderstanding what I am saying now.

Mr Barnett: We are prepared to adjourn debate to allow you to obtain copies of your correspondence so all the information is available. I do not know what you have said to the professor, but I will be interested to read it.

Mr CARPENTER: I am happy to provide a copy of my correspondence to the Leader of the House. I have no problem with that, as it is straightforward correspondence.

Mr Barnett: Shall we adjourn debate then?

Mr CARPENTER: We will continue.

Mr Barnett: We are not necessarily prepared to vote on this motion until we see both pieces of correspondence.

Mr CARPENTER: I would like to continue. The Minister for Family and Children's Services has no problem with my comments about what she said to the professor, and his response. She has reaffirmed her comments several times in the public domain. The minister has no contention with my assertions about what she said or my comments about how the professor reacted to what the minister said. The minister stands by her statements. No problem arises with the minister's position as far as she is concerned: She stands by her statement, to which Uchtenhagen replied.

Mr Barnett: He also replied to your email. By any sense of propriety, it should be made public in this debate.

Mr CARPENTER: I sent by email to the professor a copy of the minister's written report to Parliament, and I invited him to respond. I am prepared to show that email. I do not have that email with me, as I did not think it would be a matter of contention. The Minister for Family and Children's Services has not suggested in conversations and debate that I misrepresented what she said. My assessment was correct.

Mr Barnett: I questioned you and you admitted that you emailed the professor. Make it available.

Mr CARPENTER: I will make it available. I will show the minister later.

Mr Barnett: Arrange for your office to fax it through to Parliament right now.

Mr Court: It is a global world with modern communications.

Mr CARPENTER: I know, but I am on my feet in Parliament.

Mr Ripper: Are you taking account of *The Australian* newspaper, which also got hold of the information?

Mr Barnett: I am not taking account of anything. I question the member's correspondence to the professor, that's all.

Mr CARPENTER: I will provide it. I do not have it with me at the moment, but it does not effect the substance of the motion. The Minister for Family and Children's Services has publicly reaffirmed her position on what she believed she was told.

Mr Barnett: I think you're dodging the issue.

Mr CARPENTER: The issue is that the minister has made those statements several times, and Professor Uchtenhagen has responded in a certain way. The minister does not resile from what she said. I assert that the statement she made to Parliament does not accurately reflect what she was told in Switzerland. She said that her statement reflects what she was told, and she said on radio this morning that Professor Uchtenhagen may have told her things behind closed doors which he may have preferred not to make public.

The minister has deliberately misrepresented what she was told in Switzerland to underline her continuing opposition to the Swiss heroin trials and the prospect of repeating those trials in Western Australia. Such activity should not go unchallenged or uncorrected by Parliament. The minister has a responsibility to apologise to Uchtenhagen, as he believes that she has impugned his professional integrity, and that she created a problem for him in her comments here. The minister has a responsibility to put the record straight. She has made it clear that she is not prepared to do that, which is unfortunate. I seek to establish a Select Committee of Privilege to get to the bottom of the issue and to ascertain who is telling the truth - the minister or Professor Uchtenhagen. Parliament has a responsibility to take the issue seriously and to ensure it is addressed at the most serious level - that is, by a privilege committee.

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [12.47 pm]: I second the motion of the member for Willagee to establish a Select Committee of Privilege. This is a most serious matter. It is not a common occurrence for the Opposition to move such a motion, although precedents exist. It believes that the statements concerned, both in the written report and in a verbal address to the House, are of such a serious nature that they require a Select Committee of Privilege to be established.

This committee can tease out the detail of the comments of the Minister for Family and Children's Services, and what she meant to say. It can determine whether, as the clear evidence presented by the member for Willagee indicates, the minister was misleading the House. The evidence is overwhelming. We should place that evidence before a committee of our peers - on which I assume the Government will want a majority of members - so the matter can be properly examined, and a report can be made to this place. This may require the minister to apologise, or for some other action to be taken to uphold the reputation of this House. We cannot allow the privileges of this House to be abused. Clearly, the privilege of this House was abused in this case.

The minister has clearly been a failure in relation to the drug strategy. The member for Girrawheen held a public meeting recently, as the only way to apply pressure on the Government to face up to the horrendous problem in our community with drug abuse, heroin overdose and deaths - almost daily, but certainly one or two a week - of young people in Western Australia. This Government produces a lot of gibberish which fails to face up to the issue. It is a difficult issue, for which no-one has the answer. However, no progress will be made if the responsible minister makes statements in this place which are totally untrue, but which fit in with a preconceived political position.

This issue is of foremost importance to the people of Western Australia. The abuse of drugs, deaths from heroin overdose and abuse of other illegal substances must be addressed in a rational and proper way. It cannot be based on deceit and falsehood. The member for Willagee has clearly shown that the minister sought to deceive this Parliament. It was not a trivial or unintentional deception because it was contained in the report tabled by the minister. In that report the minister said -

Professor Uchtenhagen also told us about the enormous political pressure he was under from the Swiss Government to come up with positive results on the trial.

It was not that she perceived there might have been political pressure.

That is simply not true. Professor Uchtenhagen is a scientist of international reputation. He would be willing to take on criticism from his peers in scientific quarters to establish the truth of matters. He is not about being influenced by political pressure. Clearly there is political pressure, but his scientific integrity would allow him to rise above that and not be caught up in political pressure. However, this minister has clearly impugned the integrity of Professor Uchtenhagen. That reflects on this House. When the minister made those statements, there was laughter of derision that she could make such statements to support an unsustainable government policy and prop up her political position. A policy which is clearly not respected or accepted in Western Australia and which is generally laughed at because it is so poorly founded on fact is not a basis to attack a scientist of international reputation.

Mr Court: Where did the laughter of derision come from?

Mr KOBELKE: It came from this side of the Chamber at the time the minister made that statement, because clearly it was a nonsense. Professor Uchtenhagen has given us a clear statement that he did not say that to the minister. The minister might have perceived that in her misdirected understanding of what happened, but the professor did not say that. In terms of a matter of privilege, this Chamber has been put in a position in which it can be held up to international ridicule. The fact that a minister who is responsible for such an important area as drug policy could denigrate a person of international standing in order to support her position and that of her Government means that we must uphold the privilege of this place and not simply let the matter slide.

As I have already indicated, the drug issue is an important one. It is not a matter for debate here. However, it must be debated in a rational way based on the facts, not on a total misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the facts. That is what the minister has done. At best this minister has misrepresented her discussion with Professor Uchtenhagen. However, given that she presented a report, and I assume she read the report, it is possible that her abuse of privilege is even more extreme. We have given the Government an undertaking that we will keep this debate to a minimum. I will not elaborate on the key points I have made. It is clear from the facts presented by the member for Willagee that what the minister responsible for the Government's drug strategy is saying is in total conflict with what was said by Professor Uchtenhagen. There is clearly a case for a breach of the privilege of this place. The minister has had the opportunity to apologise and she has not. The next step is to establish a committee to look into the matter properly.

I will also take up one matter raised by the Leader of the House. He suggested we postpone this debate until all the papers available to the member for Willagee are presented to the Government. The member has said clearly that he is willing to present those papers. He has nothing to hide. It shows that the Government does not have a defence for the minister. It is trying to drag red herrings into the debate. I give the Leader of the House and the Premier an undertaking: We will accept postponing this debate, present all the papers and return to it later if they will work by the same standards and allow us to postpone their business any time they refuse to present to the House any papers peripherally involved in a matter. If they are the standards by which they wish to work and the standards which should hold in debate, let us play by them. Let us postpone this debate and any other matter they bring before the House until the relevant papers - even if they are peripheral to the matter - are clearly presented to the Chamber. That is a standard by which they are not willing to live. Will they stand by the standards in this place; will they stand up for government ministers telling the truth; and, in keeping with what was said by the Governor in his speech yesterday "note that values education is now an integral part of the curriculum framework"? Are there any values by which this Government stands, or does anything go when it comes to ministers? If they have any standards, they will support this motion. They will see the establishment of a select committee which, hopefully, will work in a bipartisan way to bring out a report that clearly makes a decision on the truth of the matter and requires the minister to make an apology to this Chamber.

**MRS PARKER** (Ballajura - Minister for Family and Children's Services) [12.56 pm]: At the outset, I am offended at the statements made by the member for Willagee. I am outraged at the way he reflects on my personal integrity for his political gain. I am surprised, to say the least, that the member for Willagee, who was not present at the meeting concerned, has come out with categorical statements that, for example, I made a false statement to this House. He has not qualified that statement in any way. He has not requested it be established in any way. He has simply said that I have deliberately provided a false statement to this Parliament.

Ms MacTiernan: Are you saying that the professor is lying?

Mrs PARKER: I will get to that. I did not interrupt, but I will go through this because it is a serious issue. I want it on the record that I am offended by the actions of the member for Willagee. We were told that the member for Willagee had spoken to Professor Uchtenhagen subsequent to my visit. It is important for us to establish exactly what has been asked and what has been reported. On a number of occasions the member for Willagee has used my comments that the professor cooked the books. With what sort of objectivity has the member for Willagee reported what I have said to the professor? Certainly with his track record of playing the man, and in this case playing the woman, instead of the ball, I wonder how hard it has been for him to obtain some condemning quotes that could be conveniently used against me. The member for Willagee has not spoken with me. He has not sought to establish the context in which that statement was made. He was not present at the meeting. He is acting as witness, prosecutor, judge and jury on the statements that I have made. I reiterate: I stand by the comments I made in my report. At my meeting with the professor, he referred to the political pressure from the Swiss Government to come up with positive results from the heroin trial. Contrary to interpretations by the Opposition and some media outlets, I have never gone so far as to say that the pressure resulted in the professor's changing his report accordingly.

Dr Gallop: Why did you mention it, minister? Because you created an impression. You do not understand the English language.

Mrs PARKER: All I have said is that the professor related to me the existence of political pressure. My statement does not constitute an attack on the integrity of the professor. It reflects more on the keenness of the Swiss Government to obtain positive results after it made a decision about a rather controversial new initiative to deal with drug abuse issues in a highly contentious political climate. I intend to spend a little time giving the background to that initiative as well as others, such as the heroin trial and the shooting galleries in Switzerland, traditionally a very conservative country.

Mr Ripper: How do you explain your statement that he told us he had been under quite a bit of pressure to produce a report? That is what is in the *Hansard*, and you have just denied that.

Mrs PARKER: I have put that in my report, and I stand by that statement. I will also cover what, if anything, put a question mark over the integrity of the trial and, as a consequence, the person responsible for its design. I will comment on my meeting with the professor and the context in which he made his comments, and will also comment on the rationale behind the stunt of the Labor Party. I ask all members present to decide whether they genuinely believe I would stand by a statement if I did not honestly believe it to be true.

I return to the background of the heroin trial. From 1986 to 1991 in Zurich, a city in Switzerland of 360 000 people, the Swiss Government had a policy of non-quarantined and non-targeted harm minimisation, which resulted in "needle park", in which between 3 000 and 5 000 people openly injected heroin daily. The comparative figure for Perth would mean that over 10 000 people would be openly injecting in a central city park. We were told that in 1993 in Zurich the number of overdoses from heroin had reached 16 a day, which represents more than 5 800 a year. The comparative figure for Western Australia would be more than 30 000 overdoses a year; whereas the actual figure, based on ambulance statistics, is between 700 and 1 100 a year. That country had a huge political problem.

The response was mainly to close down the open drug scene, to prevent a new drug scene from establishing and to better coordinate between relevant government departments better responses to the drug problem. The closure of the open drug scene resulted in all the addicts from outside not just Switzerland but the canton of Zurich being sent back to where they had come from. It had a significant impact on lowering the death rate due to heroin. Notwithstanding that, Zurich still has a proportionately higher death rate from heroin overdoses than that of Perth. As well as those initiatives, the Swiss Government decided to introduce shooting galleries and the heroin trial. It is not very difficult to understand that that Government would have been keen for those controversial initiatives to achieve positive results.

Ms MacTiernan: Do you deny that he altered the results in the report?

Mrs PARKER: That is the Opposition's interpretation.

Dr Gallop: Any normal human being will read it that way. Read the question to the Parliament, minister; read the question you were asked.

Mrs PARKER: I made the point initially that I have never said, contrary to the interpretations by opposition members and some media outlets, that that pressure resulted in a change of results.

Dr Gallop: You have reinterpreted that question and answer. This is a Government based on dishonesty. What a joke!

Mrs PARKER: I wish to continue. Let us look at whether anything undermined the professor's scientific integrity or that of the trial. The member for Willagee refers to Professor Uchtenhagen as a leading international scientist in his field, and I agree that his expertise in this field is acknowledged; however, if anything has questioned the scientific integrity of the Swiss heroin trial, it has been the independent report into the trial commissioned by the World Health Organisation. For a long time I have argued and am on the record in this respect, and Professor Uchtenhagen concedes, that the World Health Organisation report made the point strongly, that the lack of a control group has undermined the scientific integrity of the trial. I repeat: I have stated that on the public record for some time. Professor Uchtenhagen concedes and the independent report of the World Health Organisation said that in the absence of a control group, the benefits of the trial could not be attributed to the provision of free heroin, while not taking into account the other benefits. I repeat: Rather than my report to this Parliament, it is the independent report of the World Health Organisation that has questioned that matter. During our visit Dr Suzuki of the World Health Organisation told us that, for that reason, it could not recommend to its member states that they should adopt a heroin trial, without taking into account the other issues in question in the trial.

Ms MacTiernan: Why not just set one up with a control group, if that is what is required?

Mrs PARKER: I will come to the issue of policy positions on heroin trials in a moment. The World Health Organisation did have something to say about the integrity of the trial. At 5.00 pm on 17 June 1999 I met with the professor in his office at the addiction research institute.

Ms MacTiernan: Who was there?

Mrs PARKER: I travelled with my chief of staff and the Executive Director of the Western Australia Drug Abuse Strategy Office, and we met with the professor.

Ms MacTiernan: Were they at the meeting?

Mrs PARKER: Yes, they were. I appreciated the time we spent with the professor. The meeting was friendly, very open and surprisingly frank. It started with statements by the professor that the trial was only one small part of a four-pillar policy, that it was not a quick fix and that the main purpose was to test the medical feasibility of providing heroin on prescription to addicts.

In question time on 1 July the member for Willagee asked me why I failed to mention that the professor had given a strong endorsement - he may have said a glowing endorsement - of the heroin trial. I am sorry to disappoint the member, but I reported on my meeting. Although it is very clear that the professor is a supporter of heroin trials and he has on a number of occasions probably given a glowing endorsement of them, in my meeting with him that was not nature of the conversation. We talked about setting up the trial. As I said, it was not a quick fix to the problem.

Mr Carpenter: You didn't ask him whether it worked?

Mrs PARKER: I was talking to him about the background to the trial being set up and all the other issues.

Mr Carpenter: You went all the way to Switzerland and didn't find out whether it worked?

Mrs PARKER: We talked about a whole range of things, and I have told members about those sorts of things.

Mr Carpenter: Did you ask him whether it was a success?

Mrs PARKER: I understand that Professor Uchtenhagen is a supporter of the trials. I went there to have a look, and I had a look also in Sweden, at a range of initiatives. It is for me to make some assumptions and to look at all the information that is available, and to make a decision about whether there are benefits.

Mr Carpenter: You went all the way to Switzerland and did not ask the program director whether his program was a success and whether it worked! That is amazing! You should pay back the money for the trip!

The SPEAKER: Order! I am allowing some interjections if it is appropriate in a matter as serious as this, but I cannot have people just shouting at each other across the Chamber. It is unacceptable. This is a very serious matter, and I intend to make sure that the person with the call can be heard.

Mrs PARKER: During the meeting, the professor made very open comments, and it was in a sense difficult for me to put those into context. As members know, I represent a Government that opposes heroin trials. He said things like heroin trials had dangerous potential if they were not controlled, and that he was generally worried about proliferation. He said also - and I stand by this statement - that he had been under pressure from the Government to come up with positive results in the trial.

Mr McGowan: Did you or your staff make any notes of that meeting?

Mrs PARKER: I did not make notes. There were some notes -

Mr McGowan: Did your staff make notes; and, if so, are you prepared to table them?

Mrs PARKER: I do not have them here.

This is a stunt by the Labor Party, and one must ask why is it taking this course of action. I believe that the Labor Party wants to divert attention from the critical issues that face us across Australia. Here in Western Australia, we are concerned about drug abuse issues. The member for Nollamara said that I as minister, on behalf of this Government, have failed miserably, and that our drug abuse strategy response is laughed at. I have just tabled a report by 200 independent people across this nation who are experts on or have experience in the drug field and who have made assessments of every jurisdiction. That report names Western Australia as one of the only two jurisdictions that have an overall positive rating. This independent report completely contradicts the statements made by the member for Nollamara.

I have never said that the answers are easy. I have never said that we will solve the problem and there is a quick fix. I have always said that we cannot be complacent about any of the achievements over the past few years. I have never said that we can be complacent. The harms of drug abuse confront every family in this State, and they must be taken seriously.

The member for Willagee has a policy commitment to, among other things, a heroin trial. He took that policy commitment to the Labor Party state conference, and in the hype of that conference, the Opposition adopted the view that it will take to the next state election a drug strategy policy that will include a heroin trial, a shooting gallery in Western Australia, which does not have an open injecting scene.

Dr Gallop: We do not have an open injecting scene. You are out of touch.

Mrs PARKER: Nine of the 77 people in this State who tragically died from heroin use died in a public place, and the remainder died in private homes, from Port Hedland down to Bunbury. We do not have a congregated, open injecting scene in Perth, yet the Labor Party wants to set up a shooting gallery and by a honey pot effect establish an open using scene.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr Gallop: She has changed her view!

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition should not interject when I am on my feet. I remind members that this is a motion to establish a Select Committee of Privilege. It appears to me that the debate has swung around totally to a debate about whether there should be heroin trials, and all sorts of general drug issues. I wonder whether it would be useful if we got back to the motion that is before the Chair.

Mrs PARKER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I did say I wanted to look at why the Labor Party wanted to pull a stunt like this, and it is all about diverting attention. I would welcome some serious policy debate on this matter, but the Labor Party has

got itself in a position where it has made a policy commitment to take to the next election a heroin trial, shooting galleries, and allowing the cultivation and possession of five cannabis plants per adult in this State. Those are defeatist policies that will worsen the drug problem and will be every parent's nightmare. I reconfirm for the record just where we are going with this issue.

Dr Gallop: Refer to your answer in the Parliament. It is plain English. The question was plain and the answer was plain.

Mrs PARKER: The question was about a heroin trial. This Government does not support a heroin trial. We believe that the reported benefits are far outweighed by the significant social harms and other disadvantages of providing heroin on prescription. I do not expect the member for Willagee to agree with me on that matter, but I would be interested to know how many members of the ALP support that three plank policy on drugs. I stand by my statement that Professor Uchtenhagen made that comment in my meeting with him. I also reiterate that contrary to interpretations by the Opposition and the "cooked the books" comment by the member for Willagee, I have never said that that pressure ultimately resulted in Professor Uchtenhagen's changing his report.

Dr Gallop: You are a dishonest Government.

Mrs PARKER: No. This is about the member for Willagee's playing personal politics. It is about the ALP's diverting attention from the serious issues that confront us. I challenge members to ask themselves whether they really believe that I would stand by a statement if I did not honestly believe it was true.

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [1.20 pm]: The minister responsible has given her explanation of the facts surrounding the statement. The Premier will shortly comment on why this Government will be rejecting this move for a Select Committee of Privilege. My purpose in speaking on this matter is to raise some procedural matters. I mentioned some of these yesterday. In this Parliament a committee of privilege is a most serious thing; it has the potential to lead to a member losing his or her seat in Parliament. A committee of privilege should not be used in any flippant way but should be considered carefully. If there is a matter of privilege, it should be drawn to the attention of the House immediately. The member for Willagee drew this to the attention of the House, in my view inappropriately, on the opening day of Parliament. All that was required, as I said yesterday, was to give notice of motion for the establishment of a committee of privilege. That was all that was required for it to be drawn to the attention of the Parliament. It is proper for the member or minister affected to have warning of the issue to be able to prepare material and to respond. That is the parliamentary process. That was not adhered to. There was an attempt essentially to ambush the minister on the opening day of the Parliament. It showed a lack of respect for the procedures, for the rights of the minister and member and for the conventions of the opening day of Parliament.

In the debate today other matters of procedure have arisen. I do not know the exact dates when the member for Willagee corresponded with Professor Uchtenhagen. The member for Willagee in his comments in the debate today admitted that he had corresponded by email and through a telephone conversation with the professor. He did not however bring into this Parliament a copy of what he emailed to the professor. I do not imply any wrongdoing on his part, but if he is to bring into this House an email written response from the professor, he is morally bound also to provide his correspondence that initiated that response.

Mr Kobelke: How come that does not apply to you?

Mr BARNETT: Let us just deal with this issue. We can debate later any other issue. I do not know the answer but I ask when was this information emailed to the professor. The comments made by the minister with responsibility for the drug strategy were made on 1 July. In asking his question on that date, my recollection is that the member for Willagee referred not to Professor Uchtenhagen but to a Professor Zeltner. I understand that the corrected *Hansard* does not refer to Professor Zeltner but to Professor Uchtenhagen. If information was conveyed to Professor Zeltner or Professor Uchtenhagen, was that information either a direct or indirect quote from the uncorrected *Hansard*? If it was, the member opposite is in breach of standing orders. The problem he has -

Dr Gallop: You are unbelievable. The lengths to which you go to cover up the absolute dishonesty of one of your ministers.

Mr BARNETT: No, the problem for the member opposite is that he now must convince this Parliament.

Several members interjected.

Mr BARNETT: No. We are now into procedure and propriety. A committee of privilege is important. I ask the member for Willagee whether he either directly or indirectly quoted from the uncorrected *Hansard*? Did he transmit details of the uncorrected *Hansard* to either Professor Uchtenhagen, whose name appears in the corrected *Hansard*, or to Professor Zeltner whom he named in the question asked on 1 July? The member may have made an innocent mistake. I ask whether he followed correct procedure because if he did not, the committee of privilege may well turn back on him. I do not say that in any sort of payback sense. The point I make is that a committee of privilege is a serious matter. It is the responsibility of any member in this House when moving for a committee of privilege to ensure that it is done properly and to provide the member who could be adversely affected with the full details. I again remind the member that if the uncorrected *Hansard* was used in any way, I will certainly be asking the member for Willagee to account for that.

**DR CONSTABLE** (Churchlands) [1.25 pm]: Like you, Mr Speaker, during this debate I have been wondering really what is the motion before us. I would like to go back to first principles and to address the motion, which is quite simple in the way it is presented. It is asking this House to consider setting up a Select Committee of Privilege to investigate certain allegations. I take this as a very serious motion. I have been thinking about this over the past 24 hours. I am reminded that

privilege allows members in this House to speak without fear or favour. Quite clearly the Parliament could not operate properly without it. It is an essential part of our democracy and has been recognised for many centuries but it carries with it certain responsibilities. Allegations of abuse of that privilege must be considered to be very serious. One example of such an abuse might be a member deliberately putting untruths on the parliamentary record and therefore deliberately misleading the House. On the other hand, it happens quite often that members quite inadvertently mislead. It is quite acceptable in that case for the member concerned to apologise to the Parliament and for no other action to be taken. However, the deliberate misleading of Parliament is quite another matter which we all recognise. It is important that we take any motion that alleges such misuse of privilege very seriously indeed.

All this motion does is call for a committee of privilege to be set up to investigate certain allegations of the minister deliberately misleading the Parliament. It is not within the province of the House to vote on whether the Minister for Family and Children's Services has deliberately misled the Parliament. I do not know whether she has. The motion is asking us to set up the committee to look into it. On the surface we have two quite conflicting statements before us: That of the minister in her ministerial statement in which she says -

Professor Uchtenhagen also told us about the enormous political pressure he was under from the Swiss Government, to come up with positive results on the trial.

The other statement we have, quite clearly stated by the professor in his correspondence with the member for Willagee, reads -

I definitively made no allusion of any kind to political pressure influencing the result of our evaluation research. A statement such as mentioned by you is a severe attack on my scientific integrity as well as on my common sense. I am prepared to testify for this if your parliament invites me do so.

There are two quite conflicting statements. We are being asked to set up a select committee to look at those statements and to make some judgment about them. Each of the statements excludes the other. I am inclined to support this motion because it is a serious matter that should be cleared up and it is not one that this House can clear up; only a select committee can do so. A Select Committee of Privilege is the proper mechanism to investigate this issue.

**MR COURT** (Nedlands - Premier) [1.29 pm]: We are being asked to establish a committee of privilege on some words that the minister said to the effect that she was told there was enormous political pressure from the Swiss Government to come up with positive results from a heroin prescription trial.

The first thing we must do is to make a decision on whether the issue is serious enough to establish a Select Committee of Privilege. If it is seen as not being serious enough or that there has been no wrongdoing, it is certainly not necessary to establish such a committee of privilege. We must then look at the statement. What happens is that at the end of the day it becomes a matter of value judgment.

Dr Gallop: No, it does not.

Mr COURT: Yes, it does. It becomes a value judgment on what one thinks was the end result of those words. The member for Willagee says, and has repeated on many occasions and again in this House today, that the minister has said that the fellow cooked the books.

Mr Carpenter: No I didn't.

Mr COURT: The member for Willagee said on radio this morning -

Now to me, she is inferring that he's been basically cooking the books . . .

Mr Carpenter: I said inferring; not that he told her.

Mr COURT: These were the words: "Now to me, she is inferring". The member for Willagee is trying to make something out of her words to the effect that Dr Uchtenhagen was cooking the books. The member for Willagee said today that the implication was that the results were changed to suit the Swiss Government.

Mr Carpenter: That is the implication; that is clear to everybody.

Mr COURT: That is the judgment of the member for Willagee. The minister did not say that at all. If the member wants a Select Committee of Privilege established based on his interpretation of what was said, he is walking down the wrong path.

The media can put its spin on words too. An article in *The Australian* of 2 July reads -

The minister responsible for the State's drug policies claimed yesterday the author of a landmark study into legally supplied heroin had been pressured to put a positive spin on his report.

Dr Gallop: That is what she said.

Mr COURT: She did not say that.

Mr Ripper: She told us he had been under quite a bit of pressure to come up with positive results.

Mr COURT: She said, "To come up with positive results from a heroin prescription trial." If I were leading a country in which 5 000 people were openly injecting in a park I would want someone to come up with some positive results. Any Government would be putting pressure on for results. This matter boils down to the interpretation by the member for

Willagee of those words. His interpretation is that someone is cooking the books. He said it in Parliament today and on radio this morning. He went even further today and said in this debate that the results were changed to suit the Swiss Government. Boy, are we not changing around those words now?

The minister made it clear publicly that she had no intention whatsoever of impugning the professor's scientific ability. She has simply reported that in their discussions, at which two other officers were present, the professor said that they were under pressure to come up with positive results. I will bet they were. At no time has the minister impugned the professor's scientific ability. Members opposite want to have a Select Committee of Privilege based on the interpretation by the member for Willagee that the minister said that the professor cooked the books. She has not said that, nor has she said that the results were changed to suit the Swiss Government. She outlined what took place at that meeting and members opposite do not like what they heard.

Mr Ripper: She made a mistake and you are blindly defending her because she is your favourite minister.

Mr COURT: No, my friend. Two other officers were at that meeting.

Mr Graham: Those two other officers could give evidence to a Select Committee of Privilege.

Mr COURT: The member for Willagee has tried to turn these words around to read that the professor cooked the books and that he changed the results to suit the Swiss Government. There is a big difference between the two.

Mr Carpenter: You should set up a royal commission as you usually do, then we will find out who is telling the truth.

Mr COURT: That is a sore point.

The SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps now that we have some quiet we can have a little more quiet and the Premier can continue.

Mr COURT: The minister made it clear that at no time has she impugned the reputation of the professor. She reported on a meeting that took place. The member for Willagee has constantly repeated the words "cooking the books" and "results changed to suit the Swiss Government". If that is his interpretation, he is wrong.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [1.34 pm]: There are three elements to a question and answer given in this Parliament. There are words, then there are sentences and paragraphs within which those words are placed, then there is the context in which those words are written or spoken. The context in this case is a reply to a question which was asked in the Parliament and which reads in part -

He told us he had been under quite a bit of pressure to produce a positive report.

I put those words into the context of the sentences and the paragraphs -

The member for Willagee may have corresponded with the professor. I found our appointment with him highly informative. He told us he had been under quite a bit of pressure to produce a positive report. As I stated in my report, he also said there was serious potential for danger if the conditions of the reasons of the trial were not strictly maintained as it became a treatment for option.

Is it not interesting that when the words are seen in the total context of the answer, they gain more meaning? When the question is included with the words, sentences and paragraph, they have a clear meaning. The question from the member for Willagee reads -

Can the minister explain why she failed to mention that the Professor Uchtenhagen whom she mentioned in her short ministerial statement this morning as the architect of the Swiss trial gives a glowing endorsement of the trial and his views are directly contrary to her own?

In her answer the minister is trying to indicate that she met the professor and his views were not directly contrary to her views, because he said that he was under a bit of pressure to produce a positive report and that there was a danger if the conditions of the reasons for the trial were not strictly maintained as it became a treatment option.

There is no misinterpretation at all in this matter. The minister knew what she was saying and why she wanted to say it. She was countering Professor Uchtenhagen's published works on this to give a clear view to the Parliament of the people of Western Australia that it was not all as it seemed. There can be no way out of this. The Premier, the Leader of the House and the minister have tried to play little tricks. There are no tricks possible in this matter. The minister said it; her words gave a clear impression in the context of the question answered. There is no way out of that. There was no misinterpretation whatsoever. It would have been far easier for her to say, "I have been misinterpreted on this matter." However, she said, "I stand by what I said. What I said in that question was perfectly okay."

The minister has been caught out. She should have said straight away what were her views on the matter. Rather, we have been forced to seek to set up an inquiry that will establish beyond any doubt that she misled the Parliament on this matter. She has also seriously impugned the integrity of a professor who is obviously important in the drug debate on the international scene. There is no way out.

The Premier is trying to play another little trick, just like the little tricks he tried to play regarding the Midland Workshops, the gold royalty, Pangea Resources Australia and the jobs in the timber industry. He will not get away with it this time. Words are words are words, sentences are sentences are sentences, paragraphs are paragraphs are paragraphs, questions are questions are questions, and answers are answers are answers.



**MR PENDAL** (South Perth) [1.40 pm]: It is possible for someone to misconstrue someone else's remarks. It is also possible for someone to misunderstand someone else's observations. Of course, it is also possible deliberately to distort someone else's position. In this case I hope that the last option is not the situation. I believe it is not. Whatever the case, there is a serious discrepancy between that which has been reported to the Parliament by the minister and that which has been stated by Professor Uchtenhagen. For that reason alone, and only that reason, there should be an investigation. I therefore support the motion for a committee of inquiry.

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [1.41 pm]: The member for Cottesloe asked whether I sent copies of uncorrected *Hansard*. I did not.

Mr Barnett: Did you quote from it?

Mr CARPENTER: No, I did not. I sent a letter to Professor Uchtenhagen which I am happy to table and which outlined who I am and my position as an advocate of his program trying to get it up and running in Western Australia. I also referred to the minister's report of his remarks, and asked whether he made such remarks and whether they were true. I am prepared to table that letter.

The SPEAKER: The member can lay the letter on the Table for the balance of the day.

Mr CARPENTER: I corresponded with him some time after the issue was raised in the local media. I was not the first person to contact him about what Mrs Parker said. I also sent him the relevant page from the minister's written report to Parliament so that he could make a judgment about what she stated in that report.

Mr Masters: Who first made contact with him?

Mr CARPENTER: That is not my business, but it was not me. If the member were to read the media reports he might be able to answer his own question.

I sent the professor a letter that is available to the Parliament. I would have to be as stupid as the person who I allege made this false statement to write to him misrepresenting the situation. I did not do that; I outlined who I am, where I am from and my views, and sought his view of the events.

Mr Barnett: Are you tabling his email reply?

Mr CARPENTER: I will quote from it again and table it. I have already quoted three sections of it.

Mr Barnett: Is it dated?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes.

Mr Barnett: Is all the correspondence dated?

Mr CARPENTER: My email is dated 21 July and his reply is dated 23 July. I have quoted from it.

The essence of this debate is whether we are putting a false construction on the minister's words to the Parliament. The professor's interpretation is straightforward. He states -

I definitely made no allusion of any kind to political pressure influencing the result . . .

The minister has said that he did, that he produced a positive report and that there was considerable political pressure on him to do so.

Mr Court: One can be subjected to political pressure, but that does not force one to produce a positive report.

Mr CARPENTER: The minister said that he was under considerable political pressure to produce a positive report. Some of the words in the professor's response are polysyllabic, so they might be difficult for the Premier to comprehend. He stated -

I definitely made no allusion of any kind to political pressure influencing the result of our evaluation research. A statement such as mentioned by you is a severe attack on my scientific integrity . . .

They are not my words. What professor in such a position would go behind closed doors with the minister and make statements that would embarrass him if they became public? The minister said that on the radio this morning.

Mrs Parker: I did not say that.

Mr CARPENTER: She said words to that effect, and she knows she did. Everyone knows she did; everyone heard it. The professor went on to say that this was an attack on his commonsense. As though he would say that the results were good but that he was subjected to political pressure to come up with good results!

Did he tell the minister that the results were good? I understand from what the minister said today that she did not even ask him about the results. She went there with her position worked out and listened to some of the things he said. However, she did not ask whether the results were positive and good for the community. She returned to Western Australia, after all that time away with her advisers - one of whom I am certain wrote the report for the minister and she probably had no idea of what was in it until it hit the Parliament -

Mrs Parker: That is an outrageous statement.

Mr CARPENTER: The minister said today that she did not write the report. She went overseas with her view firmly in place. She did not even bother to ask whether the results were positive or how they might be translated. She spent a lot of taxpayers' money going to Sweden, Switzerland and Italy because she always wanted to go to those places, but she did not have enough sense to ask the most crucial questions: Is this a good program; why; and can we implement it in Western Australia? Instead, she reported to the Parliament that the professor said he was under considerable political pressure to provide a positive report. She did not report that the team was under pressure to come up with solutions to a problem that was claiming hundreds of lives; she stated only that it was under pressure to provide a positive report. The implications are crystal clear to everyone but the minister and the person who wrote the report, and he may not have understood the implications of the words.

The implications are very clear to Professor Uchtenhagen. That is why he has responded in this way. He could have replied that I should get lost because he was not interested. When I telephoned him the other night he could have told me to leave him alone. He did not; he said that this was a severe attack on his integrity and commonsense. That is the interpretation that everyone with any brains or understanding -

Mr Court interjected.

Mr CARPENTER: It is an indefensible political position. That is the only possible interpretation of those words.

If we let a minister of this Government get away with traipsing around the world when we are supposed to be in this place - taking staff with her and meeting the Archbishop of Perth in Italy - then misrepresenting a vitally important piece of information to the community of Western Australia and the rest of Australia, we will let ministers get away with anything.

The minister has done the wrong thing. She may have done it inadvertently. If so, she should have apologised in the first instance. This Premier has spent inordinate time and money pursuing another person for making exactly that claim. She should have put the record straight immediately the problem was brought to her attention. However, she has bunkered down and made the problem worse for herself by attacking me for raising it. Members are not allowed to raise ministerial accountability; that is a strict no-no! The member for Cottesloe had a go at me for doing that yesterday. I admit that there is some validity in what he said. Nevertheless, this point must be cleared up.

The minister had a go at the media for having the guts to try to get to the bottom of this matter. What sort of tin-pot, pathetic regime are the clowns in this Government running? There should be a committee of privilege to get to the bottom of this matter. If people want to appear before that committee of privilege and give evidence to support the minister, let them do that. They can produce all the notes they took while they were in Switzerland. Let us have a list of the questions they asked and the responses they received. A committee of privilege should investigate this matter, and everything we have heard today underlines that.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

Ms Anwyl	Dr Gallop	Mr McGinty	Mr Ripper
Mr Brown	Mr Graham	Mr McGowan	Mrs Roberts
Mr Carpenter	Mr Grill	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Dr Constable	Mr Kobelke	Mr Pental	Mr Cunningham ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr Edwards	Ms MacTiernan		

Noes (28)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Court	Mr Kierath	Mr Shave
Mr Baker	Mr Cowan	Mr MacLean	Mr Sweetman
Mr Barnett	Mr Day	Mr Marshall	Mr Trenorden
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Masters	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bloffwitch	Dr Hames	Mr Minson	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Omodei	Mr Wiese
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Johnson	Mrs Parker	Mr Osborne ( <i>Teller</i> )

Pairs

Mr Marlborough	Mr Tubby
Mr Riebeling	Mr Prince
Mr Thomas	Mr House

Question thus negatived.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS - PRECEDENCE**

*Motion*

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That following adoption of the Address-in-Reply private members' business shall take precedence on Wednesdays from 4.00 pm until 7.00 pm and government business shall take precedence at all other times.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### *Statement by the Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): Following the agreement of the House to the previous motion, I advise the House that under Standing Order No 224 I will call for grievances after brief ministerial statements on each Thursday after the Address-in-Reply has been adopted. I also advise that under Standing Order No 225 I will call for statements by members, commonly known as 90-second statements, at 12.50 pm on each Thursday after the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. In pursuance of the understanding reached by the House, I will normally leave the Chair for meal breaks from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm on Tuesdays and from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm on Thursdays. The closing time for questions on notice will remain at 12.00 noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### *Motion*

Resumed from 10 August.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [1.56 pm]: The Government is facing major challenges in the State of Western Australia. Firstly, dealing with the economy, there has been a significant downturn in commodity prices which, given the nature of the resources sector in Western Australia, is bound to have an impact on economic activity. That is a challenge that faces the Government, which clearly will have to be met over the next few years. Secondly, there are major stresses in our society, manifesting themselves in a continuation of high rates of crime and in the drug crisis which exists in our community. These stresses and strains in our society have caused major problems for families and communities, and the resulting consequences must be addressed by Governments. Thirdly, in the area of the environment, major pressures can be seen in the city, particularly in the emergence of an air pollution problem in Perth, and also in the country with the major salinity crisis. These issues need to be addressed on a long-term basis.

If these issues are to be seriously and systematically addressed on a long-term basis, a number of preconditions must be met. The first precondition is that we need a Government that is capable of dealing with those challenges. However, when we look at Western Australia today, we see a Government which is divided, paralysed and out of touch with the community it claims to represent.

Let us consider each of those issues in turn. First, I will deal with the Government from the point of view of its internal unity. This is a seriously divided Government. What is interesting is that the divisions which exist within this Government are not being contained within its Cabinet and within its party rooms. They are spilling out into the public debate. It is interesting that collective cabinet responsibility is certainly not a working principle of this Government. There are two parts to the collective cabinet responsibility doctrine. The first is that if the Government is to have a proper management system for its Cabinet, cabinet members must be able to speak confidentially to their colleagues and they must remain united in the way they present the Government's message to the community. The second reason that doctrine is important is it provides certainty for the community. The community knows that whatever the difference of opinion within it on a particular topic, the Government of the day has one position. Therefore, in their dealings with Government, people have certain knowledge of the Government's policies.

### [Questions without notice taken.]

Dr GALLOP: It is now clear when we look at the major challenges that face the State that the ability of the Government of Western Australia to meet those challenges has been severely compromised by the divisions which exist in the Government. If we look at the divisions in the Government today, we see the Deputy Premier in opposition to the Premier over the Government's budget strategy, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Energy in conflict over the Government's electricity tariff strategy, the National Party and the Liberal Party in conflict over the forest strategy, the Minister for Local Government opposing the rest of the Government over the forest strategy, and the liberals in the Government opposed to the conservatives over social reform. Indeed, there are so many divisions in the Government these days that it is hard to give a definition of what this Government stands for. This means that there is no certainty for the public in its dealings with the Government.

The second feature of the Government which we see today and which results from this division is the paralysis that exists at the heart of the Government, particularly in respect of major social questions that we need to address today. The one we have been focusing on in recent days is the question of prostitution law reform. Within the coalition there are such differences on that issue that its members are paralysed in their search for finding a solution to the questions that are posed. The third and most obvious feature of the Government today is that it is out of touch. We see this in its obsession with capital expenditure on items like belltowers and convention centres. Many of its supporters have spoken to the National Party on this matter, which led the Deputy Premier to make the comments that he did at the weekend. Our problem is that this divided, paralysed Government is out of touch, yet many economic, social and environmental questions need to be addressed in the State of Western Australia today.

Let me start by looking at the state of our economy. The latest economic statistics show a slowdown in the Western Australian economy in 1998-99. The Treasury's economic quarterly, which was released last week, confirms that slowdown. What is of particular interest, however, is the emerging disparity between the national and Western Australian growth rates. State final demand for the year ending March 1999 in Western Australia stood at 1.1 per cent. That is the second lowest of all of the States and well below the national average of 3.9 per cent. Western Australian growth figures for retail trade, business investment and exports are all well below the national rate of growth. Business investment fell 5.2 per cent for the

year ending March 1999 compared with a national growth of 0.9 per cent. The annual decline is the first since September 1992. The 1998-99 budget had forecast business investment to grow by 8.25 per cent in that financial year. This forecast has now been revised downwards to a fall of 15 per cent. Retail trade grew by 2.6 per cent in Western Australia for the 1998-99 year compared to a national growth of 4 per cent. The June quarter saw a fall in retail trade of 2.7 per cent, suggesting that the strong growth in consumer demand that was evident in the second half of 1998 is moderating. However, the impact of any pre-goods and services tax buying may boost consumer spending figures in future quarters.

There are also emerging difficulties in the international trade front. Western Australia's trade surplus fell in nominal terms by a record 22.5 per cent in the 1999 June quarter compared with the June quarter of 1998 and it fell by 9.8 per cent in 1998-99. That is the largest annual decline on record. Exports fell by 4.3 per cent in 1998-99 compared with a national fall of 2 per cent. Imports increased by 4.7 per cent in 1998-99 compared with a national increase of 7.6 per cent. In relation to dwelling commencements, it is anticipated that pre-GST construction will boost the housing market this year. Partial indicators suggest that this is the case. Dwelling commencements grew by 13 per cent in the year ending March 1999 compared with the national increase of 4.5 per cent. Employment growth for 1998-99 was around 2.5 per cent, slightly above the national average of 2.2 per cent but well below the budget forecast of 3.25 per cent.

It is important to go from those figures to look at the economic outlook. There are distinct differences in opinion between the Government and economic forecasters on the outlook for the Western Australian economy. Although the state budget papers forecast economic growth of 4.5 per cent in 1999-2000, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia forecasts a rate of economic growth of 2.75 per cent. The Government is also forecasting employment growth of 2.25 per cent in 1999-2000 while the Chamber of Commerce and Industry is expecting a much more modest growth of 1 per cent. The July Access Economics five-year business outlook forecasts GSP growth of 2.6 per cent in 1999-2000 and employment growth of 1.8 per cent in 1999-2000. The latest business confidence survey released by the chamber shows that the gap between the medium term outlook for the Western Australian economy and the national economy has widened over the first half of 1999. Around 16 per cent of respondents thought that the Western Australian economy would improve compared with the 45 per cent who thought that economic growth would deteriorate over the next year. It is only the second time since 1994 that the expectations of the Western Australian economy over the next year are worse than the national economic outlook. Meanwhile the May 1999 *Yellow Pages* small business index shows that Western Australia's small business is not confident about the economic environment. Only 26 per cent believe that the economy is in growth compared with 46 per cent nationally. In Western Australia only 34 per cent believe that the economy will get better a year from now compared with 38 per cent nationally. We have had a downturn in the economy and the business sector is telling us that it has a negative view of the future in Western Australia.

Mr House: You love to be negative.

Dr GALLOP: I am not being negative; I am reporting what the business community is saying.

Let us look at the crime statistics in Western Australia. "Western Australia is in the grip of a crime crisis. Our police are powerless to stop it." That is what the coalition said in its election statement in 1993. If we were in a crisis in 1993, what would the Premier call it now? When the coalition Government came into government in Western Australia, we had the fourth worst armed and unarmed robbery rates of the nation. We now have the second worst figures of all the States. The incidence of armed robberies per 100 000 persons increased by 170 per cent between 1993 and 1998. The incidence of unarmed robbery per 100 000 persons increased by 140 per cent. Assault has also been on the increase under the coalition Government. Since 1995 the assault rates per 100 000 persons have increased by 43 per cent. Western Australia also now has the highest sexual assault rates of all the States. We have seen a 32 per cent increase in sexual assault crimes from 1993 to 1998. Western Australia also continues to have the highest rate of unlawful entry with intent, motor vehicle theft and other theft of all the States. What are some of the other ways in which we can describe the degree of the success of the Government in ensuring that we have a safe community?

Despite the Government's rhetoric we will never get to the heart of the crime problem unless we address the drug crisis in our community. Under the policies promoted by the Government as "sending the right message", the number of heroin deaths has trebled since 1993. The "Interim Report of the Select Committee on the Misuse of Drugs Act" released in November 1997 estimates that there are more than 14 000 heroin addicts in Western Australia. It is estimated that the number of heroin users in the State is up to 57 000. In 1993, 28 deaths resulted from opioid drugs; in 1997 there were 90; and in 1998 there were 79. Australia-wide the number of young people dying each year far exceeds the number of young Australians who were killed during the entire period of the Vietnam war.

This tragedy not only impacts directly on the users; but also it affects a widening circle of people in our community. It has a wider social impact; it affects our suburbs and the way of life of our people. It is an issue that this Government has not addressed in the six years it has been in government.

I refer to education and one indicator of educational failure: Thirty one schools in Western Australia today are still suffering teacher shortages. That figure comprises 21 country and 10 metropolitan schools.

There are continuing problems in our health system. State Treasury figures show that the State's contribution to hospital funding fell by 8.1 per cent in real per capita terms between 1992-93 and 1997-98. The 1999-2000 state budget saw a total of only \$66m of additional funding put into the total health budget. That translates to a real per capita cut of 0.4 per cent.

Our Homeswest waiting lists that the Government promised to reduce by 25 per cent at the time of the last election have increased by 12 per cent. We have those social and economic problems. However, it is not as though the Government is in a good budgetary position to address some of the problems. Despite all the revenue gained in a period of growth and

despite the \$4b worth of asset sales, our budget is in serious deficit. The 1999 budget brought down by this Government is widely recognised as its worst budget. In 1999-2000 there will be a record general government deficit of \$638m and a blowout in government debt of \$800m.

The best comparison we can make is with the other States. In 1998-99, South Australia was the only State to have a higher deficit as a proportion of gross state product. In 1999-2000, Western Australia is expected to have the highest general government deficit as a percentage of its GSP of all States. Only South Australia is expecting a deficit. All the other States are expecting a surplus. This is despite record revenue growth since 1992-93. Since this Government took office, state taxation revenue has increased by an incredible 65 per cent. It has sold nearly \$4b worth of public assets, yet our State's budget is in serious deficit.

The Government has set itself financial targets, one of which is to run an underlying balance in both the consolidated fund and the general government sectors. The June quarter treasury economic summary shows clearly that the Government is not meeting those targets this year, nor will it in future years. One of the difficulties we have had with this issue is that the Premier has not been able to accept the fact that he has a general government deficit of \$640m. Hours after presenting the budget he went on radio to claim that he had a budget surplus of \$171m. He was talking about the accrual operating surplus for the whole of the Government. The Opposition and the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry immediately pointed to the figures that were conveniently presented at the back of the budget papers, the government financial statements.

These statements are now presented by all jurisdictions and are the basis on which the Commonwealth and other States present their budget bottom line. What do they tell us? The Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry put it this way -

The surplus quoted in the Budget for 'whole of government' conceals that, in fact, the government has incurred an underlying general government deficit of more than \$733 million . . .

The day after the budget was presented, Alan Wood from *The Australian* wrote -

Court will no doubt be surprised to learn he has a deficit at all, let alone a record one, because his Budget shows a surplus of \$171 million.

Mike Nahan from the Australian Institute of Public Affairs was more blunt. He wrote -

They've arranged the books to show a surplus when it is not there.

This Government has major problems with that government deficit. It has provided us with two explanations of how it will get out of this problem: Explanation No 1 is the GST package and explanation No 2 is its hope that privatisations will be passed by this Parliament.

The Premier has refused to release a secret Treasury analysis of the impact of the revised Howard-Lees GST package on Western Australia. Is that not interesting? He was happy to release the Treasury analysis of GST mark 1 and the State Government's submission on business taxation reform. However, he will not release his own Treasury's analysis of GST package mark 2. Why is that? It is bad news for Western Australia. The Premier implicitly confirmed this fact in the comments he made recently about the lack of commonwealth support for the Regional Forest Agreement mark 2. He claimed that the coalition here in Western Australia supported the GST mark 2; therefore it was John Howard's turn to support the RFA mark 2.

He supported the GST, not on the grounds that it was good for Western Australia, but simply to support the Howard Government. Both mark 1 and mark 2 GST packages will see a greater centralisation of financial power than is now the case. For seven years the Premier has been complaining about the concentration of financial power, yet he has agreed to a package that will further concentrate financial power in Canberra.

What will be the impact of that GST on state finances? We have undertaken an analysis of the Howard-Lees package that shows that owing to the above, the state budget will be significantly worse off to the tune of \$400m before any compensation. A range of state government and council fees and charges must increase under a GST. They include electricity, gas and public transport. The Western Australian public was told by the Premier during the last federal election campaign that under the GST a range of so-called nuisance taxes would be abolished. These included all financial taxes and nearly all stamp duties. All up, nine Western Australian government taxes will be abolished. Under the Howard-Lees package, seven and a half of the nuisance taxes that were meant to be abolished will remain until at least 2005. A study undertaken by BIS Shrapnel claims that a typical house and land package in Perth will increase by \$9 800. The first home buyer's scheme rebate of \$7 000 will be insufficient to meet that GST impact.

The GST package will be no solution to the Western Australian state budget; it will be quite the reverse. That is why we have not seen the Treasury analysis placed on the Table of this Parliament. The Government has found that privatising public assets is a good way to overcome budget problems on an annual basis. Revenue comes in and it all looks good. The Government now has on its agenda the sale of AlintaGas and Westrail freight. The Opposition argues that decisions about these matters should not be based on either ideological grounds - that privatisation is necessarily good - nor that the Government is in such a budget crisis that it needs the revenue and it does not care what sort of sale it wants to undertake. These decisions on privatisation are based on blind faith. They are designed to raise revenue and are not based on economic grounds. Both Westrail freight and AlintaGas are vertically-integrated entities. There are sound economic reasons not to privatise them in their current form. While the sale price might be maximised by selling vertically-integrated entities, there are significant adverse, long-term impacts for competition and future revenue streams for government. These concerns have

been raised not only by the opposition spokespersons for Transport and Energy, but also in the community. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry states -

AlintaGas should be broken up to allow true competition and lower gas prices. Concerns have been raised by others that selling AlintaGas would only create a private monopoly and prices would increase . . .

They are the words of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry about this Government's strategy for dealing with AlintaGas.

The Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreement's report on competition policy and reforms in the public utility sector states -

. . . there may be a number of issues concerning the privatisation of AlintaGas that need to be addressed including the need to restructure AlintaGas. The Government should proceed with caution when transferring a public monopoly to a private monopoly.

Despite those words of caution and economic wisdom, the Government is going ahead with the sale of these assets because of its ideological prejudice and its desire to raise revenue. The Opposition will treat those issues on their merits. Privatising those assets is not justified.

As the member for Armadale has argued in numerous debates in this Parliament, Westrail is no different. We must discuss greater competition, but the sale of that vertically-integrated structure is not economically sensible. In its submission to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements, the Western Australian Farmers Federation stated -

The Federation is opposed to the sale of Westrail. The State Government has been unable to provide farmers in this State with the necessary evidence to show that a private company would provide any more beneficial service or indeed even maintain the current service to the State's grain growers.

We have a Government with a serious budget deficit problem. Its only solution is either to flog off state assets in a way that is damaging to the economic interests of this State, or to attempt to con the public that the GST package will be good for Western Australia. If it were so good for Western Australia, why is the Treasury analysis of that document not on the Table of this Parliament? This Government is facing real financial problems. The economy has turned down and it is under severe challenge.

The Government's social agenda is paralysed. Its law reform agenda is on the backburner and it is likely to stay there. Many of these are complex issues and they involve competing interests and views. The Government must take a stand on these issues. Whatever the case, someone will disagree. Backbench members in the coalition cannot front up to these issues and come to an agreement about what must be done. Therefore, the Government remains paralysed.

I will cite some examples of this legislative paralysis. The prostitution legislation is in its seventh draft; it has not even been released for public comment. In his speech last year the Governor stated -

The sensitive issue of prostitution needs to be debated and a Bill will be presented to the Parliament.

Not only are tighter health requirements essential, but there is the additional concern about the present inability of the police to have effective controls in this area.

Despite that, nothing has happened. The failure to deal with this issue is impacting on our suburbs. The local council responsible for the Northbridge area is making regular representations to the Government. Health and corruption problems have arisen, as have problems related to the ability of the police to do their job. Of course, the police are among the first to say that Parliament should deal with this matter by introducing reform legislation. Local government is left carrying the can at the local level.

We were promised last year that legislation dealing with medical care for the dying would be reintroduced. The Governor stated -

A Bill to address the medical needs of people with a terminal illness will be introduced. This Bill has a number of initiatives aimed at improving the situation for the terminally ill. They include the right of a dying person to refuse medical treatment and pain control and have their decision respected.

We were promised that last year, but it has not appeared. Where is it? It is not mentioned in the Governor's speech; it is in the too-hard basket.

De facto property rights affect many people in our community. They must be addressed by this Parliament so that people can go about their lives knowing that a framework of law exists to deal with the unfortunate but inevitable conflicts that arise from time to time. Gender reassignment legislation was introduced in May 1997 and was passed in the upper House, but it is now languishing in this place. The Government has also refused to allow debate on the Australian Democrats' homosexual law reform Bill in the upper House.

This Government cannot address many of these issues. Some are having a very big impact on our society and some are very important to minority groups. These people are part of our society and they deserve their interests to be taken seriously by this Parliament. This Government cannot deal with these social questions.

That leads me to another major issue confronting the people of Western Australia and the Government of this State. Of course, I refer to the forest issue. The Government's handling of the Regional Forest Agreement is yet another example of

its inability to deal with contentious issues. It has had this issue on the table since 1993 when it came to government, but it still has not been able to come up with a package that meets community expectations. The Government is completely out of touch with community expectations on old-growth forests. The deep divisions within Cabinet and the Government in general have rendered it incapable of providing a genuine solution. It has come up with what it thinks is a political fix. In fact, it has fixed nothing. The Government has failed in its handling of this issue on two fronts: Firstly, it has failed to protect Western Australia's remaining old-growth forests and to meet the community's expectations. Less than 10 per cent of our original old-growth forest remains intact. The community says that it wants to preserve that area for future generations. However, the Government cannot meet that expectation because of the divisions within its ranks. It has come up with what it thinks is a political fix, but it has fixed nothing. Secondly, the Government has failed to create a proper industry plan capable of providing secure employment for displaced timber workers in the south west.

The Labor Party constantly criticised the Government's secrecy throughout the RFA process. It refused to release a draft of the RFA for public comment and scrutiny. It refused to submit the RFA to the Environmental Protection Authority for assessment, and it refused to bring the RFA before Parliament for scrutiny. It received about 30 000 public submissions on the RFA, which is a measure of the importance of the forests to the community of Western Australia. However, the Government chose to ignore community sentiments on this issue and drafted the RFA behind closed doors. It was no surprise that when the RFA was released it unravelled from day one. Firstly, it was revealed that more than 50 000 hectares of previously reserved old-growth and high-conservation area forest had been removed from the reserve system. Secondly, it was discovered that the so-called world-class reserve system contained a research station and a rubbish dump. We then learned that the one million hectares of reserved forest was padded out with rocky outcrops, sand dunes and scrub.

The people of Western Australia do not take kindly to that sort of misrepresentation, particularly when taxpayers' money was spent delivering that misrepresentation to the wider community. The community was disgusted and demanded changes. Even within the coalition, RFA mark I was subject to criticism. The Deputy Premier made reference to a National Party wish list of 21 so-called icon blocks that should be protected. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party claimed that the community had lost faith in the RFA, and backbenchers were squirming in their marginal seats. It must be remembered that all of this has come after nearly seven years of coalition government. It is not as if the issue arrived just yesterday and was presented to the Government as a problem; it has been around since the Government came into office.

What have we seen? The Premier, in an embarrassing and obvious lack of confidence in his environment minister, took control of the rapidly disintegrating RFA. He held four weeks of talks with stakeholders. Four weeks was all the time he allocated to deal with one of the most difficult issues in Western Australia this decade. Then he unveiled his so-called solution. He promised no new reserves, no reduction in logging and no protection of old-growth karri forest until 2004. He gave a vague pledge to end large-scale clear-felling and promised to hold discussions with woodchipping companies.

However, the RFA mark II was an even greater failure than the original agreement. Some 80 000 hectares of old-growth jarrah forest will still be available for logging. Logging will commence or continue this year in high conservation value old-growth karri and tingle coupes, including Beavis, Gardner, Dombakup, Wattle, Thomson, Carey and Swarbrick, and no new reserves have been created under the RFA mark II.

I will deal with another important issue. The Premier still failed to satisfy the bottom line for the community; that is, an end to logging in our old-growth forests. At the same time as it changed course, it became clear that the Government had no plans and no policies for dealing with those people affected by the proposed changes. The tragedy of the RFA mark II was that it exposed the incompetence and inability of this Government to provide relief and options for workers affected by these changes. It is ironic that the Labor Party was criticised in this Parliament by the Minister for the Environment. She said it had the three Rs policy: Redundancy, retraining and relocation. She said that was the Labor policy on forests. All the Government seems to have on this issue is the one R policy: Redundancy. Now those workers have been left high and dry by the Government, given a redundancy cheque and a ministerial handshake, with nothing for the future. The Government has been caught on the run without a comprehensive plan to deal with worker redundancies.

Labor has been calling on the Government for two years to ensure that what is put in place is a proper restructuring plan to ensure that new jobs can be created in the south west for workers who will be affected by change. Change in this industry was inevitable. The Government made no provision for that and has now been caught on the run. Therefore, now that the Government has changed course, if only in a hesitating and compromising way, we find that it has no plan in place to deal with the consequences of that change of policy.

Today I call on the Government of Western Australia to scrap its plans for a \$100m convention centre grant and immediately create a south west industry development fund - a fund designed to generate new jobs in new and existing industries in the south west. This funding package must be in addition to the \$60m that was set aside under the RFA for timber industry restructuring. It is not as if I am making that call on the Government today in isolation from other comments made in recent days. I turn to comments of the Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party at the National Party conference and in the media on Monday. It was stated -

Mr Cowan wants Mr Court to drop or delay some of his pet projects and hand down a mini-Budget to fund timber industry restructuring and blowouts in health, education and justice.

It was further reported -

Mr Cowan said luxuries should not come ahead of genuine need in health and education. Projects such as the \$100 million convention centre would generate jobs, but the State could not afford them, he said.

The project should be put on hold to allow the Government to invest in capital works projects in the South-West timber communities damaged by the Government's revised forest strategy.

The Opposition joins with the Deputy Premier and calls on the Government to drop that \$100m gift and to set up an industry development package today - not tomorrow, not the day after, but today - to deal with the consequences of changes in the timber industry which are inevitable, which are happening, and which everyone who had any knowledge about the values of our community knew would happen.

The announcement last week by Burswood International Resort Casino that it will spend \$75m expanding its convention centre facilities to cater for 1 800 delegates means that Perth will have a convention centre able to meet its medium-term requirements and service 90 per cent of the world's conventions. It may be appropriate in 10 or 15 years to build a bigger facility, but the priority today should be on the need to develop new and sustainable industries outside the central business district.

Let us examine the proposal I am putting to the Government today. The south west industry development fund should focus on not only the timber industry, but also other industries in the south west of our State, including tourism, hospitality, agriculture, viticulture, manufacturing and aquaculture, all of which have the potential to generate secure local employment in the south west. This fund would be administered in association with local government, community groups, industry representatives and other stakeholders, as well as the South West Development Commission. Close consultation with these groups would identify the best options and opportunities for employment and industry generation. This is an approach based upon giving people hope. What hope have the people of the south west from a \$100m gift to a private developer in the central business district of Perth?

In the timber industry, funding assistance should be provided to value adding and downstream processing initiatives to ensure greater returns to the State from fewer timber resources. Depending on the results of feasibility studies, assistance could be given to a laminated veneer lumber plant, a pulp and paper mill, a medium density fibreboard plant or other new manufacturing facilities. Industry development assistance and small business assistance grants would be available to local enterprises wanting to set up ventures, not only in the timber industry, but also in other industries, such as tourism, viticulture and manufacturing. The emphasis of these grants should be on assisting businesses with a potential to generate local employment.

When the Government tried to pretend to the community that no-one would be affected by the Regional Forest Agreement, the Opposition went to New South Wales to examine what should be done if a conservation strategy is in place. Of course, Bob Carr had put in place substantial mechanisms to deal with the consequences of change. Therefore, the Labor policies that I am putting forward and recommending to the Government today, with the support of the Deputy Premier, are based upon what can be done, what has been done and what should be done.

In an effort to speed up the cessation of logging in all old-growth forests, funding must be set aside for timber haulage assistance to help timber mills with any potential additional haulage costs. Let us start talking about the sorts of things that must be done to have a timber industry that is not based on old growth but is based on regrowth and plantations. Funding should also be injected into the expansion and maintenance of eucalyptus plantations and research to ensure the optimum silvicultural management of our hardwood and softwood plantation estate. Financial assistance should also be provided in the marketing overseas of plantation timbers to ensure that plantation owners receive a realistic return for their timber. That is another policy that the National Party said it supports, and we on this side of the House also support it. There will be a domestic marketing push to ensure that plantation timbers replace jarrah in structural uses.

Local tourism ventures must be encouraged and supported with the potential to exceed the popularity of the tree-top walk at Walpole. The fund would initiate an ecologically responsible tourism and recreation development strategy similar to the recreation plan in the Walpole wilderness proposal. This strategy could provide for nature-based recreational tourism including walking and cycling trails, camp sites and cabins, and activities for day-trippers including orienteering, canoeing, birdwatching and abseiling. Greater assistance must be provided to the wine industry in the south west which has enormous potential for expansion of grape and wine production. Assistance should be provided at the production end of wine operations and in marketing the product domestically and overseas.

Jobs will be generated in the maintenance and management of the parks and reserves of this State by placing old-growth forest in nature reserves. As a priority retraining should be provided to assist displaced timber workers to gain new, secure employment.

Mr Osborne: How do you pay for it?

Dr GALLOP: The convention centre, my friend. The \$100m convention centre fund would pay for this. Let us get it in place now. The bottom line of the south west industry assistance fund is it will create jobs in the south west - jobs in manufacturing and value-adding, in national park management, in plantation expansion and management, in tourism, in small business, in wine production and in aquaculture. This will give us a future where there is hope. What do we get from the Government? A redundancy payment, thank you very much.

Mr Osborne: How do you pay for it?

Dr GALLOP: I am embarrassed that the member for Bunbury is asking that question. I will quote from the Deputy Premier; this is how one funds it, my friend -

Mr Cowan said luxuries should not come ahead of genuine need in health and education. Projects such as the \$100 million convention centre would generate jobs, but the State could not afford them, he said.



The project should be put on hold to allow the Government to invest in capital works projects in the South-West timber communities damaged by the Government's revised forest strategy.

That is the answer to the member for Bunbury's question and it comes from the Deputy Premier. The south west industry development fund would provide much needed government support in a region experiencing significant change due to a range of factors. It is a region which can play a significantly improved role in our economy. It is a region which needs the support of Government. The priorities of this Government are clear; the Premier's pet projects are all based on the central business district. The central business district is the Premier's obsession and he is using taxpayers' money to prop up his pet projects in the CBD. The time has come for that convention centre gift to be put to real use in Western Australia; that is, it should be used in the south west of this State. This initiative would not only fast-track the shift to regrowth and plantation timber but would also facilitate new infrastructure and the creation of new jobs and would allow the Government to protect more of our valuable old-growth forests.

The Government has the ability to redirect its priorities, to give new hope to the people of the south west and to manage this change in our timber industry in a proactive way which takes the people who are affected by that change with the Government instead of placing them in conflict with it. The Premier must set aside his personal obsession with building self-indulgent monuments in the CBD and start to get his priorities right. The creation of new jobs is vital and nowhere is it more vital than in the south west region. The south west industry development fund will be the catalyst for new jobs, new investment and a new future in the south west.

*Amendment to Motion*

Dr GALLOP: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Court Government's expenditure priorities are wrong in that a \$100m gift to a private developer to build a convention centre, properly described by the Deputy Premier as a luxury, is being offered when funding is urgently needed to invest in south west communities affected by changes in forest strategy.

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [3.25 pm]: In May of this year, a Regional Forest Agreement was presented to the State of Western Australia, an agreement that set out how we would manage our forests for the next 20 years; an agreement signed by the Premier and the Prime Minister. The RFA had three objectives. The first was to establish a world-class system of forest reserves; the second was to provide certainty to the industries and regional communities in the forest area - that certainty was to enable development of internationally competitive and ecologically sustainable industries; and the third objective was the ecologically sustainable management of the whole forest both on and off reserves. Unfortunately, the RFA has failed in all three of its objectives and the Opposition's amendment arises out of its failure to meet the second objective which I will concentrate on; that is, the failure to give industry and the regional communities the certainty and security they were looking for and deserve. The Opposition believes this amendment will help to restore security and certainty to those communities.

Mr Omodei: You now choose to take a political opportunity to gain votes.

Dr EDWARDS: Nonsense; we released our policy a long time ago. Our policy is balanced; it balances the needs of the people in the region with the need to conserve forests into the future. The problem is that when the RFA was signed, there was no comprehensive plan for the workers, nor was there a comprehensive plan to manage the changes which will inevitably flow from the RFA. Due to a lack of planning, we are only now seeing some redundancy money, a ministerial wave in the wind and handshake, empty commitments and rhetoric about the Government working with communities to make things better. It has failed.

Mr Omodei: You don't know.

Dr EDWARDS: Let me tell the member for Warren-Blackwood that I know. He should sit there and listen. The RFA unravelled quickly; it was seen to come apart. A couple of weeks ago the Premier put forward the Regional Forest Agreement mark II.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: Clearly the Opposition did not support the Government's RFA because the Government did not listen to the community and the agreement did not go far enough.

Mr Omodei: It is about a few airy-fairy votes. That is all this is about. It is political opportunism and you know it.

Dr EDWARDS: What is the RFA mark II about? Is that about a few airy-fairy votes as well? Is that why the member for Warren-Blackwood voted in Cabinet for the changes the Premier and Deputy Premier put forward? Airy-fairy voters - what a lot of nonsense! I know for a fact that members on the other side of the House have polling results which show that 85 per cent of people under 25 years of age do not support logging of old-growth forest. Are they airy-fairy voters? I think not.

Mr Omodei: Do they support a sustainable timber industry?

Dr EDWARDS: We all support a sustainable timber industry but we want to see a sustainable timber industry delivered. The member for Warren-Blackwood is doing little to see that come into effect. When the Premier released his RFA mark

It a few weeks ago it exacerbated the situation. It exacerbated the problems we were seeing in Greenbushes and it exacerbated the problems facing Whittakers. The difficulty the Opposition has had all the way through is that the Government has not had a plan; it has not had a process whereby it listens to the people and works out how to manage this change. I will compare the situation in Western Australia with that in New South Wales to show that one can manage people and communities through the types of changes the Opposition would like to see. In New South Wales the Government has three programs to assist workers and communities. It has a worker assistance program, a business exit assistance program and a proper industry development program. That is based on the principle that when a major conservation decision impacts on people and communities, Governments should support the people who are affected by that change. That principle is not new. It is spelt out in great detail in many Regional Forest Agreement documents. Members on this side of the House, and presumably the Government, have no problem with utilising taxpayers' money when a significant government policy change affects people and their communities. Let us consider what the New South Wales Labor Government has done and what a Labor Government would do in Western Australia. That is a far cry from what is happening here. If we were in power we would implement a special redundancy package. Part of the problem we face is that while the RFA was in progress the Government argued that it would be worker neutral; it would be job loss neutral. That is nonsense, and I could use stronger language. Unfortunately, change is occurring in this area and jobs will be affected.

Mr Omodei: You do not understand the timber industry. Thank goodness you are a shadow minister. How can we have a sustainable timber industry if we stop logging in old growth forest?

Dr EDWARDS: The member for Warren-Blackwood should listen to what I am saying. He is so keen on interjecting I think we have hit a nerve on that side of the House.

As in New South Wales, we would have a special redundancy package. I have no doubt that some people will need a redundancy package. In addition, we would offer training assistance. It is interesting to note that in New South Wales training assistance was provided prior to retrenchment and post retrenchment and redundancy, as well as in the longer term. Training assistance had three separate elements. That tells us that the NSW had thought about what it would do. The NSW Government had a plan and the means to put it in place. That is a far cry from what we see now in Western Australia. The New South Wales Government provided relocation assistance to anywhere in Australia for workers formerly employed in the industry who could show they had a new job in the industry in some other region. The final part of the NSW Government's worker assistance program is an employer incentive scheme by which a retrenched worker who goes to a new job in the timber industry effectively takes money with him, so that the new employer is assisted to employ that person and to get him into a new long-term job.

The NSW approach has shown thought and concern. Earlier this year when the Labor Party was looking at its policy, the Leader of the Opposition and I travelled to New South Wales to see what had been done there and how it had been implemented. We were mindful that we wanted a balance between the best conservation reserves on the one hand, and a sustainable and ongoing timber industry on the other. We asked our colleagues in NSW to tell us what had worked well for them, and what ideas we could pick up and implement in Western Australia when we were in a position to make this change. More than that we asked them to tell us what they did not do well, so we could rectify that. We learnt from that. We discussed the issues in detail. We heard the stories to which the member for Warren-Blackwood is undoubtedly referring. We were told that when people lost their jobs they were extremely unhappy. We were then advised of the follow-up that occurred months later, when the situation had turned around. A number of timber workers were quoted on the front page of their local newspapers as saying that they were happier than they had ever been because they had been retrained in new jobs and these new jobs were permanent and had a future. They said they had new skills and were better paid. The conservation side had a positive outcome as well. Mills had been retooled with government assistance. They were using smaller amounts of timber, but were producing a more highly valued product at the other end. The truth was that the mill was making more money. We had a win-win situation. Conservation was winning, industry was winning and workers were protected. The Labor Party wants to implement a program like that in New South Wales. We want the \$100m that is to be spent on a concrete building in central Perth spent in the south west. We want the people who work in the industry to be protected and adequately catered for. Let us have a win-win situation.

I want to make a few comments about the industry development assistance that occurred in New South Wales. I hope that we will see this implemented in Western Australia. When the Leader of the Opposition and I visited New South Wales, we were told that \$6.2m had been put into 22 separate forest businesses as part of the structural adjustment package. That created 137 new jobs, and fits in with something we all know: In this period of change, particularly with a government-initiated policy change, if we carefully think through the money that will be put into the process, industry will benefit and there will be new jobs. That is what we all want. For example, in New South Wales, \$1.2m was put into Kempsey Timbers Pty Ltd and \$1m into Hurford Hardwood near Lismore. That provided state of the art equipment and created 19 new jobs. In Grafton \$1m was put into a small mill creating 24 new jobs. In Taree \$900 000 was provided for kilns and other value adding parts and more jobs were created. New South Wales has been in the happy situation in that the money put into industry restructuring has created jobs at the other end. They were not the only stories: Sixty-one jobs were created to thin hardwood plantations and regrowth forests, 25 jobs were created in the expansion of eucalypt plantations, and 10 new positions were created to undertake detailed resource inventory operations to see what is on the ground. On top of that, 105 new jobs were created in the NSW national park service for rangers, field officers, fire and pest control liaison officers and neighbourhood liaison officers. The point of those examples is that if the Government has a plan, some money and the will to implement the plan we can have a win-win situation. We can have a win for the workers, which is extremely important, and a win for the industry to help it be there in the long term and help it be sustainable. At the same time we can have a win for the environment.

The Leader of the Opposition has already referred to the great opportunities that exist in the south west and the Governor

made passing reference to them yesterday when he opened Parliament. He spoke about the exciting initiatives in viticulture, and how new opportunities in viticulture can foster jobs in other areas. The Labor Party wants to see all of the opportunities pulled together at the local community level, so that more jobs are created. I want to give an example from horticulture. I recently visited Thurlby Herb Farm near Walpole. I had been to this herb farm about four years ago. I was amazed with the changes that had occurred. That herb farm, which is a very small farm near Walpole, now employs 16 local people. It distills the essence from some of the herbs. It started from scratch, and is employing local people. That is an extremely worthwhile activity. We want to encourage these sort of activities. That herb farm exports its products to Paris and Singapore. That is a real issue of significance for that local community. That herb farm is also a tourist attraction. People want to see what happens there. They want to see the local produce and they are excited to hear how it is exported all over the world.

I will turn now to timber opportunities. I was pleased last week to meet with representatives from the Western Timber Cooperative and to hear about their plans and what they have been up to. I wish them all the best in their talks with the Government over the future of the mills at Greenbushes. I hope that the Government gives them a good hearing, and feedback so that we see a better outcome than we see at the moment. I was interested to hear their thoughts on what could happen with the chipper on the Whittakers site. The other issue they raised with me that really concerned me was that they asked the Opposition who they should talk to in order to get help.

Mr Omodei: So you sent them to see me.

Dr EDWARDS: I do not know whether they would want to see the member for Warren-Blackwood.

I was surprised and saddened they needed to ask that. The RFA has been in the public arena since early May 1999. We have been told that there will be a forest industry structural adjustment package, the Government is looking at it and we will see good outcomes from it. However, a timber cooperative that had been meeting with the Premier, and was off to see the receivers that afternoon, was not altogether clear about the structures the Government has in place to look after people who are interested in furthering the industry and making it sustainable and in creating more jobs.

Mr Omodei: Did they tell you they had been to the development commission?

Dr EDWARDS: Ultimately, they went to the Premier and found contacts through him.

Mr Omodei: They have been to everybody.

Dr EDWARDS: They are located in the south west and based in the minister's electorate of Warren-Blackwood. They are in the industry and if they need to ask where to go for that information, clearly the Government is not marketing its message properly. I am concerned that other people in the community who may have some vision for the future and a will to implement good measures for the timber industry are hampered because they do not know whom to contact.

Mr Omodei: They are not the only players in the game. Two or three other people have also approached the Government for information. They have done it through the development commission.

Dr EDWARDS: I will not go into the detail of the proposals presented by these people, because that would not be fair. I am aware that there are other players. I was told about a week ago by a person working in the mining sector in Greenbushes that Jensens tried to relocate to Greenbushes a year ago. That would have been a good move. Given that debate on the Regional Forest Agreement has been going on for so long, and that job losses and closures have occurred in the timber industry, why did the Government not assist that relocation?

Mr Omodei: Because the Government has problems with the local government and some of your supporters, including the green division.

Dr EDWARDS: People have problems with local government all the time. The minister said today that he has contact with some local governments far too often and he wished he did not have to see them.

Mr Omodei: I did not say that. I said I met some of them far too often, not that I didn't want to see them.

Dr EDWARDS: This Government is lacking the leadership to implement the change needed in the south west to provide a sustainable timber industry and protection for the workers. Where is Wally in the jigsaw? Where is the Government? Similarly with Nannup, we all know the RFA brought bad news for Nannup. However, we also know people are interested in taking over the mill, doing the right thing and establishing a sustainable industry that will take us into the future. The Government effectively disrupted that process because it put people on the industry advisory committee who had a direct interest in following that line. The Government has mishandled the whole RFA process.

Mr Omodei: That is nonsense. You want somebody on that committee who does not know anything about the industry.

Dr EDWARDS: Absolutely not. In New South Wales a similar committee was set up, and all the members of that committee were from the timber industry - they were not conservationists or from other sectors to which the minister might object. However, they were people in umbrella-type positions in the timber industry who represented the whole industry. There was no conflict of interest, and nobody in New South Wales is complaining about the process.

Mr Omodei: Who is complaining in Western Australia?

Dr EDWARDS: Many people are. I have had numerous telephone calls from small mill operators who are extremely concerned.

Mr Cowan: Are you holding New South Wales up as a model?

Dr EDWARDS: The Deputy Premier has been listening to Wilson Tuckey too much!

Mr Cowan: I have never listened to Wilson Tuckey. Are you holding up the New South Wales timber industry as a model?

Dr EDWARDS: I am holding up aspects of workers' assistance as a model. The New South Wales timber industry is very interesting, and we will have a conversation about that afterwards.

We have the capacity, as a Parliament, to put forward ideas that will result in a win, win situation; a win for the environment, a win for the forests, and a win for the timber workers and the long-term sustainability of the timber industry. That will require money. The Government has allocated a tiny bit so far but it is not enough. The Government does not have a plan; or if it does have a plan, it is the best kept secret ever. People in the industry ask me whom they should contact to progress their ideas, and that indicates something is very wrong with the Government's plan. The \$100m allocated for the wasteful and nonsense idea of a convention centre would be much better employed in a south west industry development fund. I commend this amendment to the House.

**MR MCGOWAN** (Rockingham) [3.45 pm]: I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which was most ably backed up by the member for Maylands. I support, and have always supported, the position put forward by the Labor Party on old-growth forest. It would be a terrible shame if we allowed those areas to be lost. Those comments are supported by the vast majority of my generation and the people in my electorate. There has been much talk, particularly by the Minister for Local Government, about how the industry will be destroyed. However, he will acknowledge that one million hectares of forest will still be available for logging, even if all the old-growth forest is reserved for the future. No-one seems to have raised that point in the past few weeks. Some attacks have been made on the New South Wales Government's approach to the timber industry. New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Mr Omodei: Only because of the Olympic Games.

Mr MCGOWAN: New South Wales has a lower unemployment rate than Western Australia has. Also, reference is made to the remaining old-growth forest in WA that is available for logging, which is an area between 80 000 and 90 000 ha, but New South Wales has managed to preserve one million hectares of old-growth forest.

Mr Omodei: Are there any rocky outcrops or swamplands in that area?

Mr MCGOWAN: If there are, the Government probably has it in the reservation under the RFA. New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the country and has preserved one million hectares, and the Western Australian Government cannot preserve an area a tenth of that size. It becomes plain when one examines the amendments made to the Court Government's RFA that it will preserve only 15 000 or 20 000 ha of old-growth forest, and that will not happen until 2004. Blocks that have high-conservation value karri and tingle can still be logged until 2004. The Opposition has had a consistent approach to this matter and has called for a moratorium on the logging of those blocks.

Mr Omodei: Your leader has said he will stop logging of all high conservation value old-growth forest. Does that mean he will log some old-growth forest?

Mr MCGOWAN: No, the minister should wake up to himself. Our position is to preserve all old-growth forest and we will do that when we come into government. However, 90 000 ha will be lost if this Government continues in office. That is the simple choice that people must make.

I now refer to the convention centre issue which comes within my shadow portfolio. I refer to the money the Government has set aside for that proposal, and the fact that it has not put in place a comprehensive plan for the south west of this State. In Queensland, for example, an inquiry was held in the early 1990s into Fraser Island which had been logged for approximately 100 years. It is the world's largest sand island. An ongoing battle took place about that piece of real estate in the same fashion as that taking place in our old-growth forest in the south west. An inquiry by a certain Justice Fitzgerald comprehensively examined all aspects of that island, and concluded that logging should cease in that area. The Queensland Government implemented that finding, and put in place a comprehensive, well-funded plan for people who formerly worked on Fraser Island in that industry. Many of those people found jobs in the new tourism industries which bloomed on Fraser Island as a result of that decision, and I remember vividly that workers were much happier following that change. I am sure that if we put in place a comprehensive, well-funded plan for communities in the south west of this State, we will see them make the jump -

Mr Omodei: We have not seen any Labor politicians down there.

Mr MCGOWAN: I have been there, and driven past the minister's house.

Mr Carpenter: We have the photographs to prove it!

Mr MCGOWAN: Indeed. We took a close look because the Labor Party wants to put money into the minister's proposal. We know it will generate jobs for the Omodei family, and we think it is a great idea! I am sure the minister will vote with the Labor Party on that basis.

Queensland had a comprehensive plan. The south west requires such a plan, not a piecemeal series of proposals implemented little by little as the Government runs away from its RFA. I would not be surprised to see more backflips in months to come. The Opposition is committed to such a well-funded plan for the south west.

This Government has allocated \$100m up-front for a new convention centre in the heart of Perth.

Mr Omodei: Do you think the Government should build it, as was done in Queensland?

Mr McGOWAN: Does the minister support a convention centre in Perth, with a \$100m to \$200m subsidy? An unnecessary and unwanted \$100m to \$200m convention centre is to be funded by taxpayers. It will receive a \$100m up-front subsidy, and the Minister for Sport and Recreation has indicated that another \$40m may be allocated if a sports complex is incorporated. The cost of the land also must be included. Therefore, a gift of up to \$200m will be made to a private developer.

This is the Government of free enterprise. A private sector developer is spending its own money at the Burswood Island Resort; however, the Government is providing up to \$200m to an alternative developer. Is that a level playing field? Let us imagine that a member of Parliament owned a car dealership in, say, Geraldton, and the Government said, "We want more car dealerships in Geraldton, so we will pay half the costs for another dealer." That is fair, is it not? This gentleman - I have no-one in mind - is operating a business in which he has invested money and taken a risk. He wants to make money. He employs people. Let us say that he is a Ford dealer, and someone wants to establish a Toyota dealership in Geraldton. As it will create a few jobs, the Government decides to pay for half of the operation's costs. Is that a sensible system? Why stop with car dealerships? Let us do it for butcher shops, fishing fleets, steel makers and all other operations. The Government will create jobs in such activities. The Government would create an unfair advantage to one private developer over another with such a policy.

Mr Omodei: Be consistent. Should we not give incentives to timber industry initiatives in the south west?

Mr McGOWAN: Yes.

Mr Omodei: What is the difference between that and what you just said?

Mr McGOWAN: Does the minister back the convention centre development?

Mr Omodei: It will be a cheaper proposition than the one for which you argue; namely, the \$400m centre developed by the Queensland Government, not the private sector.

Mr McGOWAN: The minister is in cloud cuckoo land. He has gone berko in his excitement because the Labor Party supports putting money into his development.

A \$200m subsidy will be given to a private developer, which will give an unfair advantage to one party. At the same time, the Burswood International Resort Casino has plans for a \$75m expansion of its convention centre facilities. This expansion will include a new multipurpose hall for 1 800 delegates in the plenary mode, on top of the current facility which can house 2 300 delegates. An additional 900 square metres of meeting room, and 3 300 square metres of pre-function and foyer areas will be provided, as well as support back-of-the-house areas. A series of concurrent meetings and functions can be held in other rooms at conventions, for which Burswood will provide 900 square metres of extra facilities. In plenary session, if one links up the new ballroom, the current facilities, and the additional facilities, Burswood will be able to accommodate over 3 000 people at once.

Mr Osborne: You support institutionalised gambling, do you? Would you like to see Burswood grow and prosper?

Mr McGOWAN: The member for Bunbury has gone crazy too. The facility will cater for over 3 000 people in the plenary mode, whereas the Government's convention centre proposal will have a 2 500-seat meeting area. It will have 12 to 14 break-out rooms, which is the same as that to be provided at Burswood. Therefore, the Government will allocate \$200m to copy what Burswood is doing.

Also, 95 per cent of conferences have fewer than 2 500 delegates. If a government-funded convention centre has the capacity to house 2 500 people, and Burswood puts in place essentially the same facility, two facilities will cater for 5 per cent of the Australian convention market. That 5 per cent of the convention centre market which caters for over 2 500 people is a minuscule number of conventions. Various reports have been put to me about how many there are in Australia in one year, but it is in the vicinity of 10 to 20. The two facilities in Western Australia that could look after those conventions would compete with Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. If we divided those five facilities into that \$100m to \$200m subsidy, we would have three or four conventions of that capacity in this State every year. However, Burswood can actually cater for it. The reason many in the tourism industry do not want to rely on the Burswood set-up is that, although they acknowledge it will be very good, will cater for 2 000 to 3 000 people and a private sector developer is investing money and taking the risk, it is outside the central business district. Although it is outside the CBD, it is a short distance away. We should put in place some rapid transit services, such as ferries, which would use the river in the same way as other cities use their rivers; that is, we should have a service running straight across the river into the city centre. That project should be taken up immediately.

Another concern I have is the location selected by the Government. One location is adjacent to the Perth Entertainment Centre. I have great difficulty with that site. That site would be a mistake and the reason for that is obvious: It is away from our city's greatest asset - the river. If any site is selected in the city, it should be close to the river.

I have made my points. We have a \$100m open grant and \$50m or \$60m worth of land, and \$40m for a sports complex will be given to a private developer. We have massive change in the south west, and communities must have some certainty and funding to make the jump from what they have been doing to new industries and developments. The Government has no plans in place for that region, yet it is putting all this money into a development in which it favours one private developer over another. It should show some commonsense and put in place a reasonable, structured fund for the south west communities out of this gift which it is giving to a private developer.

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [4.03 pm]: I support the amendment moved by this side of the House in relation to the Regional Forest Agreement. An incredible debate has unfolded in Western Australia in the past year. In the past couple of months that debate has taken on a whole new dimension. In many ways what has happened is a tragedy. It is a tragedy of lack of foresight and planning. One of the problems faced by all political parties is that they have blind spots to certain areas of activity. The Labor Party has blind spots on occasions. This Government has had blind spots on a few issues. Native title is the most obvious one. We have been dealing with it for some time and the Government has refused to see the obvious. It has refused to see history unfolding on that issue, but history has a way of asserting itself despite the opposition of political parties and individuals. The trends in social development are obvious when one looks around the world. On that issue, reality has hit the Government in the head like a brick.

The same thing has happened with this forest issue. To people looking at it from a non-partisan point of view, it has been obvious for many years where the debate about the future of Western Australian old-growth forests and native timber was heading. The debate started in earnest about 25 years ago when the licences for woodchipping were granted. The debate has gone on ever since. Community opinion has slowly but surely come to the view that the remnant old-growth forests in the south west should remain intact and should not be logged. The Government had the opportunity to see that debate develop and to see that trend in Western Australia head towards this inevitable conclusion. However, it refused to do that. Not all members of the Government were blind to what was happening. For a considerable time many of them, some publicly and some privately, have voiced the view that we should protect the remnant ancient forests. The Government, as an entity, refused to take that position. It also became involved in a process which was less than honest, less than clear and less than accountable in defending the position it had taken on the RFA process, which we were promised would be an open and accountable process. It turned out to be exactly the opposite. We were told that, after all those years of deliberation and the input of about 500 scientists, the Government had come to an acceptable solution for the community. The RFA was announced on 4 May, or perhaps earlier.

The Government's initial reaction to the RFA was that the agreement met the realistic requirements of all sectors of the community: An unprecedented amount of research and input had gone in to drawing up this agreement and it would provide certainty and a long-term sustainable future for the timber industry in Western Australia. The Government left more than 100 000 hectares - about one-third of our precious remaining old-growth forests - available for logging. However, the Government thought it could convince the community that the reserve system was good enough, balanced and scientific. The problem is that the Government, in this area as in other areas, has been unable to read the community view. It has refused to read the community view. It has not had the skills to see what the community is demanding of it. Despite an extensive and expensive advertising campaign from the Government to sell the RFA to the community, it did not work, although in the early days there was some positive media coverage of this RFA. Many government advertisements told us that the RFA had achieved a balanced outcome, but the public of Western Australia disagreed. That is a classic example of the defeat of an argument that the media can determine community opinion on everything. It cannot. As much information as possible can be put into the community via the media, but if it does not accord with people's reality of life, they will not believe it.

Mr Omodei: Particularly if as a political party you keep spreading misinformation and getting your supporters to propagate it throughout the community, aided and abetted by the media, which has now come around 180 degrees.

Mr CARPENTER: One of the things that members of the Government tend to underestimate when dealing with this issue is the capacity of people these days to go to the areas to which the RFA applies, to have a look, to draw upon a range of sources of information, and to make up their own minds. My standing here and saying what I am saying will not make people believe that the RFA is good or bad. People can make up their own minds, and they do. No matter what advertising campaigns members opposite conduct, if they are selling a dud, people will not buy it; and they have not bought this RFA. There has been a manifest objection to this RFA throughout the State, and that is why some members of this Government are highly agitated about this issue. They know that the local people in their communities do not support the Government's position, and that may have a tremendous political cost. That is why the member for Bunbury is so upset about this matter. The member for Bunbury wanted the Government to come up with a position which was viable and which he could sell to his community. The Government has not done that. The Minister for Local Government and member for Warren-Blackwood also wanted that. However, he has the same problem. He does not have a position that he can sell to his community. The minister is in a difficult situation, and so are many other members. They know that in their communities, this is a big issue.

In my electorate of Willagee, there are no forests, but there are a few trees. During the winter recess, I surveyed my electorate to find out the main issues that the people believe are important at the moment, and, not surprisingly, crime, education and health were the three main issues that they mentioned. However, in my electorate of Willagee, where as far as I know forestry has never been raised as a local issue, the fourth most important issue was forests. That issue reverberates around the State. I am sure, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Baker), that in your electorate of Joondalup, the situation is the same. People can make up their own minds. They have the capacity to make assessments. The people realised that the RFA was a dog of an agreement. They did not like it. It might have suited the interests of some parties, and it might have suited the short-term interests of Bunnings Forest Products Pty Ltd, but it did not suit even the interests of the timber workers.

Mr Omodei: That is not right. The timber workers agreed with the RFA.

Mr CARPENTER: It is right. It did not suit the interests of the timber workers, because it was not a viable agreement. The Government has now had to confront that reality and amend the agreement, because the community refused to accept it. In other words, the position that the Government tried to sell to the timber workers as a sustainable position was not a sustainable position, and the tragedy for the timber workers is that the Government did absolutely nothing to help them

confront the reality which inevitably must confront them; that is, their industry must change and restructure. That happens all the time. Some of the policies that this Government has been enacting have been ripping the guts out of country towns for the past 10 years. The member for Ningaloo would know the incredibly adverse impact of the reduction in government employment in his area. Some small country towns in the great southern that used to rely heavily on government services like Westrail have had the entire Westrail work force taken out of those towns. The Government has made no preparation for the reality that will befall the timber industry. It has tried to stop the process that has been unfolding in Western Australia for the past 25 years, but it cannot do it.

Exactly the same situation occurred in the 1970s in my home town of Albany with the whaling industry. Many people fought and fought to keep the whaling industry going. Most of the people in Albany were caught up in that debate - the people who wanted whaling to stop and said other industries, such as tourism, would flourish in the absence of the whaling industry, and the people who were second and third generation whalers and who knew no other life and whose families could see no prospect of other employment. Many of the people whom I knew worked at the whaling station. They were ordinary working people. When the whaling industry was under attack, their lifestyle and their history as human beings was also under attack, and they could not accept it. However, we had to step outside and take a wider view, and the whaling industry in Albany had to stop.

Mr Omodei: It stopped in Albany, but the Russians and the Japanese continued it.

Mr CARPENTER: It had to stop, and it did stop. We are not saying that the timber industry must stop, but it must change, and it is changing. The key for government is to prepare the ground for that change and to put in place initiatives that will make that change, which will be painful, as painless as possible. Unfortunately, because of the attitude the Government has taken, it has not prepared the ground for that change and has done nothing to put in place alternatives, because it does not want to accept the reality. The Government is like a person who stands in the middle of the road and watches a freight truck coming towards him and says, "I do not care what anyone says; it will not hit me", and is flattened! The freight truck has been coming for a long time, and both sides of politics have had to deal with it. This matter has caused an immense internal debate in the Labor Party. That debate has been far more painful than what the other side has had to put up with. It has been a very difficult debate for the Labor Party, but we have had to confront the reality that there is no long-term sustainable future in the way that we are going in the timber industry.

Mr Omodei: You have made a political decision.

Mr CARPENTER: The pain is being felt in this party very sharply, but the Labor Party has had to decide whether to confront reality or continue to deny it. We have not denied it. The Government has denied it, and in so doing it has denied many timber workers the opportunity to prepare for the change and to be given some sort of assistance to move into other areas, because it appears that many of them will need to move into other areas. The Government came up with an agreement and said, "This will fix it." Everyone said, "No, it will not", and the Government had to change that agreement. The agreement that the Government has in place now will not fix the problem, but the Government has refused to do anything to put in place support for the people who are caught up in this painful process of change. That is a great tragedy, and Western Australia is now being torn apart by this debate. It is very painful to see people demonstrate on the front steps of Parliament House because they believe their livelihood and their family's history is being ripped away from them, when a few months ago they were told that their futures were secure.

Mr Johnson: You would stop them tomorrow if you had your way!

Mr CARPENTER: The member for Hillarys has not been listening to what I have been saying. The reality must be confronted. Today, the Leader of the Opposition brought forward announcements that we had intended to make later and said there are alternatives. This sort of thing has happened in other places in the world and Governments have had to deal with it. We do not want to see Manjimup and Pemberton become ghost towns, and they will not, and we do not want to see the Minister for Local Government defeated at the next state election by a One Nation candidate. I would rather have the minister in this Parliament than a One Nation candidate, and if I have anything to do with it, he will stay.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Mr CARPENTER: Then the minister will not get assistance for his chalet, so he should stop coming over and asking for it! I do not want to see the Minister for Local Government, whom I consider to be an honest man, knocked off by a representative of a fascist party. I do not want that, nor does anyone else in the Parliament. By the same token I cannot support a position that is untruthful. Telling people that nothing will change, that they are okay is wrong. It is not true. So many pressures are coming to bear on that industry that change must occur. The Labor Party is attempting to do what this Government is not doing; that is, looking at situations in other countries. In the United States bizarre things have been done to confront this problem. Private citizens have been allowed to buy forests so that they will not be logged and many other things have been done. This problem has been occurring all over the world. We have been trying to say to people that other Governments have put alternative strategies in place.

The Deputy Premier has correctly identified a large pot of money that the Government is prepared to spend on a convention centre, no doubt against the wishes of the majority of coalition members. If this other matter involving the forest were not in train, that would be okay; we could look at where we could spend the money on things such as a convention centre and the belltower. However, a problem exists which must be attended to by government and which will cost a great deal of money.

How will the timber workers in the south west feel when reality overtakes them, as it will, and the Government is spending \$100m on a convention centre and when, as we heard a few times from the member for Rockingham, Burswood International

Resort Casino plans to spend \$75m to extend its convention capacity? We must think a little laterally and ask what we can do.

Mr Osborne: It will be all paid for by the pokies.

Mr CARPENTER: The member for Bunbury knows I would never support the extension of "pokies", but that is beside the point.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): Order!

Mr CARPENTER: I understand that the money was allocated in the budget.

This Government has a moral responsibility to act honestly and openly with the people involved in the timber industry and the communities in that area to provide them with the vision of a sustainable future. It is not doing that. Money will play a huge part in that. It is no good telling all the people in the south west to become tourist industry operators or to get involved in horticulture or viticulture or to build roads for the internal network of chalets for the member for Warren-Blackwood without providing them with any assistance. They will need redundancy and retraining packages. Incentive packages should be given to the country towns to make them viable.

We went to Northcliffe, which used to have a large timber mill, but which closed and which was supposed to mean the death of the town, but it did not die; it is thriving.

Mr Omodei: Is it?

Mr CARPENTER: The minister should go there.

Mr Omodei: I go there often.

Mr CARPENTER: He does not visit the town often enough. Denmark was once based on two industries, the timber industry and dairying. It is now a thriving little place which supports a remarkable variety of industries.

Mr Omodei: Legal things.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, legal things - high tech! Walpole is the same. The government can do it.

**MR OMODEI** (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Local Government) [4.23 pm]: As usual the Labor Party gets it half right, which is never appropriate in a situation such as this. I will talk about the timber industry for a moment. I agree that change has been predicted for many years. Reports predicted that the jarrah cut would be down to 300 000 cubic metres by 2004 and that the karri cut had to be reduced. At one stage under the Labor Government the jarrah cut was as high as 680 000 cubic metres, but the proposed cut is now 286 000 cubic metres. That will ensure a sustainable jarrah industry. However, the decisions made in relation to karri have been brought about by political pressure.

The reason behind the harmonious management of forests in Western Australia over the past few decades is that in the early 1980s, when the Labor Government was in power, it proposed changes to forest management with the creation of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. It was debated strongly in this place and the National Party supported the Labor Party in the upper House when it debated the legislation. At that time the conservative parties - I was not in the Parliament then - strongly opposed the amalgamation of the Forest Department, Fisheries and Wildlife and National Parks. Nevertheless, CALM was established, with Dr Shea as its executive director.

Due to the people in that organisation, it became a very professional organisation, highly regarded across the nation and internationally. There are some good scientists in CALM, many of whom are conservationists in the true sense of the word rather than conservationists belonging to a political party. Over time they have enhanced their reputation. The work they do on plant propagation, plantations, forest management, the treatment of national parks and the provision of tourist facilities has been exemplary. They are a wonderful group of people, but the current political debate must be tearing them apart.

In 1987, after the establishment of CALM, timber management strategies and forest management plans were put in place that were agreed to by the conservative parties then in Opposition. In 1992 and later in 1993, changes were made to those management plans harmoniously and without too much division within the community because the political parties agreed on the issues.

In more recent times, aided and abetted by the conservation movement, particularly the Greens (WA), which party provides strong preferences to the Labor Party in federal and state elections, the Labor Party made a quantum shift from its position. Ten years after the establishment of CALM the Labor Party proposed its split. I am amazed at the Labor Party's quantum change in attitudes over the past decade. The people who established CALM are now initiating the move to split it. The Labor Party, which supported workers 10 years ago is now supporting the blue rinse set.

A range of events are occurring that are in complete contradiction to that which occurred a decade ago. To the detriment of the State, because of the groundswell of opinion initiated by the Greens (WA), and the Australian Democrats to a lesser degree, and in which the media also played a part, the Labor Party sought to polarise the coalition and see the parties at loggerheads about a decision to severely curtail the timber industry in this State. It was done for a political purpose, not because it was necessary. All the management plans have predicted reduced cuts in the bush to maintain sustainability of the timber industry. Although within party politics division has existed between the conservatives and the socialists,



communities, and communities within them, are being pitted against each other.

The member for Willagee referred to Northcliffe which is a wonderful community. The original people who settled in the group settlement days were dairy farmers. A butter factory and a timber mill were built there. Timber was an integral part of the environment in that part of the world including Walpole, Pemberton, Manjimup, Augusta, Margaret River and Karridale. All of those places had thriving towns.

Up until a few years ago the timber industry was owned by Bunnings Forest Products Pty Ltd. It spent a large amount of money on the mill and then decided to close it. The first thing that happened was that the butcher, the baker and the bank closed. We are now told by the conservation movement that tourism is the salvation of Northcliffe. It is partly true that tourism will continue to grow. It certainly was not hampered by the growth or the existence of the timber industry. However, if Northcliffe is thriving so well, would somebody try to explain to me why the butcher, the bank and the baker have not returned to Northcliffe? They have not. I suggest to the House that the jobs that were generated by the mill were the lifeblood of that town. The demographics are changing, hopefully for the better in the long run. The Government has done a great deal to provide facilities and resources for the telecentre, the family centre and other facilities. There is a proposal for an interpretative centre which, as the local member, I have supported.

The Opposition talked about the wonderful job that New South Wales and Queensland have done. I will read a couple of comments about what has happened in New South Wales and I will refer to some of the councils in New South Wales and Queensland, including Bombala, Hastings, Grafton, Herberton, Bega Valley and Cooma. These comments refer to the impact of their Regional Forest Agreements, the closures of mills and the support of the Government. At Bombala, early next year the hardwood mill will close and will be re-opened in Eden as a restructured mill. Twenty-six employees will be stood down, and there will be an effect on contractors, etc. Some employees will go to the Eden mill. The New South Wales Government has been working on alternatives, including a softwood processing plant. This is similar to what is occurring in Western Australia.

At the Herberton Shire Council, the issue has been dealt with very badly. We have just heard from the member for Rockingham and the member for Willagee about the wonderful example that the Queensland Government has provided for us. However, the Herberton Shire Council has made it clear that the issue has been dealt with very badly. The contact person did not think much would be gained from a visit to the Herberton council as all matters could be discussed by telephone. The council needs outside negotiators with professional skills to examine issues with all the stakeholders in order to find common ground. The people with these skills are in the community in private practice - for example, psychologists and sociologists. That council is in an absolute mess.

In Bega Valley, the Eden mill closed five years ago. The chip mill also closed. Five hundred jobs have been lost over the past five years. There has been an enormous flow-on effect throughout the community, with a dramatic effect on the local economy, despite its large size. Those economic problems have been exacerbated by closures in the fishing industry, which was the other major industry. More mills will soon close, and a restructure involving major government input will see an amalgamation to re-open the Eden mill site.

I deal next with the Cooma council. The Tablelands sawmill closed. This had a multiplier effect on other industries, such as transport, schools and shops. Small numbers of redundancies have made a big impact on the community. The redundancy package included labour force retraining in the renewable softwood and hardwood industries. Another important matter is that as a result of a lack of resources, national parks have turned into havens for feral animals and weeds, and there is no money to do anything about it. The local people are now saying that there is an urgent need to develop a strategy to neutralise the green campaign. Therefore, when the Australian Labor Party in this State tells us what a wonderful example the New South Wales Government is, I suggest that there is another side to the story.

There will be a major impact in the south west of Western Australia as a result of changes to logging practices. What are the alternatives? The member for Willagee mentioned the One Nation party. That is not a very good option for those communities. Unless that party had the balance of power, with a competent member, it would be a liability for that community. Another alternative for people in that area would be to vote for the Labor Party in 2001, should the election be held at that time. However, the Labor Party will decimate the timber industry in the south west. Although the Government in this State has curtailed the intake of karri down to 50 000 cubic metres after 2003, at least the jarrah forest has been protected, because the Government believes that value adding will generate a large number of jobs and that in part will replace some of the jobs that have been lost. The Government has the capacity to retrain, both from the Commonwealth's package and the State's package, and it is looking at alternative industries. Many of those are in the formulation stage at the moment and will be announced in the near future.

The Western Australian Government is doing all the things that have not been done in New South Wales. At the moment we have a committee, which the Premier chairs, of all the ministers involved in programs in the south west. There has been a gathering of chief executive officers of all government departments to examine the impact of this issue on the south west and to provide alternatives in job creation activities. Apart from the Premier's committee and the CEOs meeting, a consultative committee in the south west is chaired by me. We have already had one meeting, with another meeting scheduled for next Thursday. That committee comprises representatives of all the shires in the lower south west; that is, the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, the Shire of Manjimup and the Shire of Nannup. The chambers of commerce are also represented on that committee, as well as a representative of the Australian Workers Union and progress associations in those communities. The committee is coming up with a range of options for the Government to pursue.

That is what the Government is doing. They are proactive moves. Major impacts are yet to be felt as a result of the changes that have been implemented, including the impact on a number of transport operators who cart logs to the mills. The

Government must provide alternatives to maintain some form of employment for those people. Therefore, apart from all the programs that are being fast-tracked and are already in this year's state budget, the Government is looking to job creation to minimise the impact of the RFA on those areas. The alternative, under a Labor Government, is to totally decimate the economy of the south west.

In the towns in my constituency, bankers have tightened credit. Families are concerned about the loss of their houses. In that connection, the Ministry of Housing has been examining alternatives, including buy-outs or partial buy-outs of those houses. Therefore, a range of initiatives are already in place, and they are being progressed by the Government. The Dr Geoffrey Gallop blue-sky proposition - the \$350m that the Labor Party put into blue-sky during its term in government - would have helped to grow industry in the south west of Western Australia.

It is my firm belief that out of adversity comes opportunity. Many people are now focusing on their futures. Some of them will be severely hampered and some will be made bankrupt by these decisions. The Government must try to help them as much as it can. As members have acknowledged, it has been a difficult issue for me because of my profile as a minister in the Government. At the same time, I have a good understanding of the district, of the logging industry and of the national parks because I grew up there and have lived there all my life. When the Opposition pretends that it will help people in my electorate, I feel cynical because I do not think it will deliver. The Labor Party has taken a political opportunity to try to grow its political party, and by doing that it has decimated the jobs of the very people in my electorate who supported it in elections gone by.

I have said to people in my electorate in a direct manner that it was a difficult decision for me to accept. However, I will work for them and with them to try to minimise the job losses and try to generate new activity by creating new industries which will create employment in my electorate. As chairman of the consultative committee, I have told the people in my electorate that if I do not deliver those opportunities for them, I will not mind if they decide to vote for somebody else at the next election, because that is their right and they may choose to do that. However, I have asked them not to lose those friendships that have been established over a lifetime of living in that area. The issue has impacted not only on me as a public figure, but also on my family, particularly my wife, who was born and bred in Pemberton. We have both lived in that area all of our lives. It is a difficult situation.

Nobody disputes the need for a rationalisation of the timber industry in Western Australia. Everybody acknowledges we must clean up our act in the logging of jarrah forest in particular. The political stance taken by the Labor Party has forced the Government into the current situation. Had the Labor Party agreed to management plans along lines similar to those in years gone by, the Premier would not have been in the position of having to reserve extra forests in Western Australia. The crazy thing about the reservation is that it was unnecessary, because we have a large forest of karri in the lower south west. Many of those areas are being logged now, and when the dust settles on this the people who are seeking to retain those so-called old-growth forests - some of which are regenerated forest - will never visit those areas which are hundreds of kilometres from anywhere. People will visit places like the 100-year-old forest, the settlers forest, Nornalup National Park, Warren National Park, Beedelup National Park, the Cascades, the Four Aces near Manjimup and places that are readily accessible by bitumen roads and are close to civilisation.

The Government has put a package in place, and a range of matters come up every day. Daily new organisations express interest in creating new jobs in the Warren-Blackwood district. That is heartening. At the end of this process if we can provide solid jobs the community will have a good future. The situation is not helped by point scoring by political parties and playing with people's lives. This affects families in the south west. I know a young family which has just bought their first house after saving for six years. They have a 12-month-old baby and another on the way. Members in this place, collectively as a Parliament, are making decisions that are taking away people's livelihoods, and possibly their houses. I am not proud of that. I am not proud to be involved in a Parliament in which the Labor Party, which traditionally supports workers, is deserting those people on a political whim.

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [4.42 pm]: I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I will first respond to the final comments made by the minister. I appreciate that the minister is in a difficult situation as this issue is so important in his electorate. As he has rightly pointed out, many of his constituents are also in difficult, if not impossible, situations. One can only feel for the torment those people are going through because of the loss of their livelihood, or the likely loss of their livelihood. The minister's suggestion that somehow the Labor Party is playing politics with this matter is wrong. It is a political decision regardless of which side one is on. The one big difference between the position of the Labor Party, our leader, Dr Geoff Gallop, and that of the Government is that, having recognised the situation, the Labor Party has spoken the truth. That is not always the case on the government side.

Mr Omodei: I challenge you on that. In 1987 and 1992 you chose not to make a political decision. You made a commonsense decision for the management of forests in Western Australia, and we supported it as the then Opposition. You have now made a political decision and that is impacting on those families.

Mr KOBELKE: I totally disagree. The minister is going back 10 years. We are talking about the current situation. In the light of the scientific information and assessments, and also the changed political view of the whole population as to the importance of our forests, the Leader of the Opposition stood on the steps of this Parliament and spoke to a crowd that he knew would not be happy. He told them the truth, whereas the Minister for the Environment did not tell them the truth. It had to be dragged out of her the day after that there would be job losses. She stood in front of a crowd who had direct interest in this area and would not tell them the truth. That is one of many examples.

Mr Omodei: You are choosing to bend the truth yet again. The minister went out there yesterday and said the Government would not change its decision.

Mr KOBELKE: The member for Warren-Blackwood should not duck the issue. I am talking about several weeks ago when there was a demonstration at the front of Parliament House by people who supported the continuation of a high level of logging. The Leader of the Opposition addressed them and told them straight that there must be changes and there would be job losses under any regime. The Minister for the Environment addressed that crowd, spoke about looking after their jobs and would not give any indication there would be job losses when she knew that would be the case.

Mr Omodei: That was under the original RFA.

Mr KOBELKE: Yes; there were job losses under the original RFA, and the minister would not say that.

Mr Omodei: It was documented and published.

Mr KOBELKE: I could go through many more examples, but I will give only one because this is going away from the amendment before the House. It is a fundamental matter in this debate that the Leader of the Opposition has been up-front and honest with people. He has tried to put together a program that will look after the interests of people in the timber industry. That is not easy. However, it has been done on the basis of speaking the truth and dealing with the issues in a way that gives a better chance of achieving something.

The amendment before the House highlights the wrong priorities of the Court Government. It is willing to spend \$100m or more of taxpayers' money on a convention centre that will be privately owned and run when we have a huge range of needs across the State, and particularly in the south west with what has been happening to our smaller communities, especially because of changes that are taking place in the timber industry. That is an example of wrong priorities. It is not to say that a convention centre does not have a lot of merit. We certainly would gain employment and advantages through a convention centre. However, when a private operator is willing to expand facilities for a convention centre there is no need at this time to spend \$100m of taxpayers' money to build another convention centre. This is about the Premier's need to build monuments, to have something that he can put his name on which is bigger and better than what exists anywhere else. If the convention centre does not attract the number of big conventions that make such centres pay, we might find it will become a white elephant. We need a convention centre and improvements to the facilities in Perth. However, players in the private sector are willing to invest in that area and we should not commit taxpayers' money to it. Therefore, I fully support the suggestion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition that the \$100m which the Government has allocated to a convention centre should be redirected to a range of programs to support the communities in the south west of Western Australia.

The Government has been caught out by a major shift in the political desires of the people of Western Australia. The people of Western Australia have moved to a situation in which they overwhelmingly support the preservation of the heritage values of our forests. We can argue whether that is based on good economics and forestry management, which are important issues; however, overriding all of that is a major shift in public opinion that requires us to preserve the forest as part of our natural heritage for our children, grandchildren and beyond. I will quote from a book handed to me by a constituent a couple of days ago. It bears directly on the beauty of our forests and their importance to the State of Western Australia. The quote refers to the karri forests in the south of Western Australia and reads -

It is not their absolute size only, though that is great, but their extreme beauty which impresses one. They grow wide apart, three or four to an acre, but when you look on high you perceive that the branches meet. A karri forest is a natural temple of the noblest architecture, with its vista of living columns roofed by the graceful spread of the distant and far-reaching branches.

The quote continues -

There is no pressing question yet of forest conservation in Western Australia, but even with our vast and untouched woods, the subject should be borne in mind by the Government, and the manner of working should be watched and culpable waste prevented.

Those words may seem as though they do not quite fit the style of language today, but they also strike a chord with people who see the real need to conserve that forest. What I found fascinating was that the gentleman came in with the original book, which had been passed through his family. That book was the sixteenth volume of the *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 1884-85. Those were the comments of Governor Broome who travelled to London and addressed the Royal Colonial Institute on Western Australia. Even 115 years ago, the then Governor saw the beauty and wealth of that forest and the need to exploit it. Even then, there was a warning to look at the conservation of such a marvellous resource so it would always remain a part of our heritage. The Government has simply been caught out. Things have moved on. In a democracy as we have in Western Australia, the voice of the people must be heard, and it cannot be denied. Parties must take that on board and ensure that we preserve that heritage, while at the same time do the best we can to ensure that we have a sustainable timber industry and that we look after those people who are currently involved in it. That was what the Regional Forest Agreement was supposed to be about.

The RFA, as the Government has said many times, was initiated under a Labor Government. There was a need to reassess our level of logging from our various types of forests and to ensure we had a sustainable industry. There was clear evidence from a range of sources, including the Environmental Protection Authority in recent times, that the level of logging was not sustainable. The RFA was to be the process by which we could sort this out. The potential of the RFA was destroyed by the Government. For a year we attacked the Government for handling the process in an appalling way. There has been no ability for the scientific information to be discussed, shared openly and verified among a range of scientists. That lack of proper openness and accountability undermined any credibility the RFA might have had. I have forgotten for how long the member for Maylands and the Leader of the Opposition have said that in this Chamber. Clearly it was on the record that

the Government would run into trouble if it did not ensure that the Regional Forest Agreement was based on a proper process. Then, after the RFA had been signed and agreed upon, and full-page advertisements in *The West Australian* told us of the hectares of forests that would be saved in perpetuity, we found out that what the Government was talking about in part was not forest at all. Areas which we had been told were put aside as special forests were simply farmland, heath, lakes and a range of other types of ecosystems. The minister's defence that these must be preserved does not stand up. We understand that for biodiversity there is a need to preserve a range of ecosystems. However, the RFA was not about preserving ranges of ecosystems; it was about achieving a sustainable yield in our forests. The language and rhetoric of the Government was about preserving forests when it knew it was not talking about forests, but a range of ecosystems.

Mr Osborne: Why did it set biodiversity targets if it was only about forests?

Mr KOBELKE: When we look at the management of the forests, we obviously want a range of ecosystems. However, the advertising and language of the Government was not about preserving a range of ecosystems; it was all about preserving forests. To be deceived in that way, and it was a clear deception by the Government, totally destroyed any credibility the RFA might have had. We are now left with an industry which has no certainty. We are left with workers and their families who have no certainty. They do not know whether they will have jobs tomorrow. They do not know whether they will be able to pay their mortgages. That uncertainty means that house prices will fall in many of these towns. A spiralling effect will be created by the uncertainty which was brought about by the way the Government mishandled the RFA. This Government did not plan how it would handle the restructuring that the RFA would bring about. It simply tried to avoid the issue, which brings me back to where I started.

The Government was not honest and up-front about what was involved and what were the possible solutions. We know that changes in technology, logging regimes and areas that are available for logging alter the nature and location of the industry. For many years that has impacted on the people who work in the forestry industry. However, when we place on top of that a change to what is dictated politically by the vast majority of Western Australians, an even bigger adjustment must take place. On no basis could this Government, which was not dealing honestly with the minor adjustment that would take place if it kept up an unsustainable level of logging, deal with a change which reduced logging to a sustainable level and preserved the heritage of our old-growth forests.

The Government has been caught out in many areas in trying to look after industries and to restructure. What will the Government do about the closing down of Simplot Australia Pty Ltd? That has been going on for many weeks, yet we have not had a clear public response as to how the Government will help the people affected. It is not easy, but the Government has been caught out. It is behind the play again. It has not put together a clear proposal to do something about that. What has the Government done about the workers at the Norseman goldmine which closed down some months ago and who lost all the benefits to which they were entitled by law? There was no payout to those people. Various other goldmines have closed down. Has the Government come in behind those workers with support packages? In the current situation, because it is a change of government policy, I do not have a problem with special support packages for workers who are affected. However, it must be laid down clearly so the issue is dealt with on a rational basis, otherwise it simply becomes a political knee-jerk reaction to give some people money to keep them quiet or because there is a political advantage.

That is the level of government to which we have sunk in Western Australia. The Government does not have a clear policy on redundancies and retraining packages across the south west. The Government now must come up to speed with proposals because of the changes being brought about in the forestry industry. What did this Government do for the Midland Workshop workers who were displaced? What did it do for the MetroBus drivers who were made redundant? Many other public sector workers have been forced out of work. I could go on. This Government has an appalling record of looking after even its own employees. Now it has been stung into doing something to support the workers in the timber industry. Something must be done, but it must be done on a planned basis which is rationally defensible and not simply on a political handout basis, which is the way this Government is working.

I will go through some of the matters that have taken place in this Chamber about the Opposition's call for the Government to give support to the workers in the forestry industry. Clearly the Government did not have a policy. On 11 May, we asked the Minister for the Environment a question about what was happening in areas relating to the Department of Conservation and Land Management. The minister used that opportunity to talk about communities in the south west only to attack the Labor Party. The Government had no policies. It had no idea what it would do to help workers in the south west. In response to that question the minister said -

All that those opposite offer are the three Rs - redundancy, retraining and relocation.

The minister, who is now saying that she is looking after workers, could only attack the Labor Party because on 11 May we asked what the Government would do about displaced workers. What will it do to help them? We have looked at the program in New South Wales. We have assessed that it contains some good things and some aspects could be handled better. Let us put in place a proper program to look after workers in the south west, to retrain them, to help them stay in their towns, to build the economies of those towns and to give them support to move if they have to and want to move. What will this Government do about it? It has done nothing, except to attack us for saying that those things must be looked into. On 22 June the member for Maylands asked the Minister for the Environment this question -

Is not the membership of the committee simply confirming that the minister's main interest is the timber companies and not the workers and their families?

In part, the minister replied -

The Labor Party policy is directed towards relocation, retraining and redundancy.

That is, the minister could not say anything to this House about the Government's policy to try to look after workers who would be affected or displaced by changes in the timber industry.

I refer to the *Hansard* of 29 June, when the member for Maylands again asked -

Will the minister indicate how much money has been set aside under the Regional Forest Agreement for direct worker assistance in retraining?

The minister said that money was available for the timber industry restructuring and that it included opportunities for payments when businesses exited from the industry. The minister could not say one thing about what the government policies would do for workers in the timber industry. She had not even thought about it. That was the level of interest by this Government on 29 June this year. On 30 June, when the Opposition had continued to press the Government about what it would do for workers who would be affected by any change, the minister said that \$4m would be allocated for redundancy payments. That is all she said. Nothing was said about retraining, or specific industry development, or that these workers could move into jobs for which they would be suited. The Government had not even thought about that at the end of June this year. With respect to forestry in this State, this Government is playing catchup; it is behind the game. It has no plans to look after the industry, to ensure a long term sustainable timber industry for this State, and to ensure those workers, who have to be part of a restructure or who change jobs, will be looked after and given every opportunity to continue employment in the towns in which they choose to live and to look after their families.

The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that \$100m can establish a vision for industries in small towns in the south west, that there will be sustainable industry and that people have a future in which they can have confidence.

**MR PENDAL** (South Perth) [5.02 pm]: I will address two parts of the amendment because, like many other members of the House, I have had some interest in both of them. I begin by saying that, although I do not want to be unkind to the Minister for Local Government, one must challenge the stance he takes on government planning and support for timber workers in the south west. Again, without wanting to be too uncharitable towards him, it might be worth the Government's remembering that the problem of what to do with redundant timber workers in the south west has not cropped up simply as a result of the announcement of the Regional Forest Agreement. Any member who believes the problem confronting the timber industry has come upon us in only the past three months does not deserve to be here. The problem in respect to the potential issue - if not of redundancy of south west timber workers, at least of their being restructured into other forms of employment - has been staring us in the face for almost a generation.

I have said this before and I will say it again in this House: In the past 15 or 20 years we should have been, and were capable of, addressing the solution to the problem facing not just the timber workers, but the economy of the south west of Western Australia. I have also said this before, and I will say it again: For my part, the problem arose when successive Governments failed to deliver on the policy that was brought down in 1978 when the Government of the day - ironically a very pro-development Government - came to the conclusion that enough was enough in terms of what was harvested from native forests. In 1978 the Government set new targets. It said something like this: "We must reduce the cut in our native forests and, while we are reducing the cut, we must make a transition to plantation timber".

The target was that by 2000, 50 per cent of our timber needs would be extracted from the native forests and 50 per cent from plantations. We are entering the year 2000, the target date. What has transpired with that undertaking? It is not a take of 50:50. As we enter 2000, 69 per cent of our timber needs comes from native forests and only 31 per cent from plantations. Why are we not taking more from the plantations? It is because the plantations are not there in the magnitude that was promised in 1978. Why not? It is because Governments from about 1984 onwards - that is, about five of them - quietly pulled the pin on that transition to plantation timber. Thirty years ago plantation timber was largely seen as pine. Then we began to see the potential for other forms of timber and bit by bit we began plantations in larger numbers, but nowhere near enough to meet the target set in 1978, which, if adhered to, would have solved the problem of the harvest of old-growth forests, and we would not even be talking about the matter today.

The current Government must bear a fair bit of the blame. It has been in office for seven of those 22 years. One-third of the time since the promise for the transition was made in 1978 has been occupied by the current Government. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The proof of the assertion that the transition was never made is that in recent years when members in this House have attempted to learn how much timber has been put into plantations, the Government has been unable to give an answer. The Government was asked how much plantation timber was put in between 1981 and 1996 by both the private sector - that is, the timber companies - and by the public sector, the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Certain figures were given to the Parliament. The Government could say how much was planted by both of these sectors in each of the 15 years, but the sting in the tail was this: The Government cautioned us not to believe that what went into the plantations was still in the ground. I found that an extraordinary admission. The Government said, "Well what was planted in those 15 years may not be there because of a number reasons". One was a change in land use planning. The Government was telling us that the figures had been put in to meet the deadline of 2000, but it was virtually warning us to accept that what went in was not necessarily in the ground right now.

No wonder, therefore, that on the very eve of the year 2000, when we were to retain 50 per cent of our native forests, we are nowhere near doing so because we never made the transition. That is the answer to the Minister for Local Government. He cannot have it both ways. He has gone from one side of this argument to the other in the past three or four months. He has brought on himself a huge political problem. I do not have a lot of sympathy for him because he was part of the Cabinet that had at its fingertips the wherewithal to ensure that the reduction of 50 per cent would take place on time; instead nothing of the kind took place. Had it taken place, the problem would not be here and we would not have needed a Regional Forest Agreement. Regional Forest Agreements were only dreamed up as a way for society to determine how to reduce our reliance

on native forests and resolve the ever-growing conflict between the diminishing resource of native forests and the increased demand for timber products. I am talking about pre-dated forest agreements by 10 and, in some cases, 15 years. The Minister for Local Government has been hoist with his own petard. For him to say that the rest of us are playing politics and seeking to injure the job prospects of the people he represents is arrant nonsense because he had the capacity to do something about that as a member of Cabinet, particularly in the years that led up to the 1993 election, when he took the view that the interests of the timber companies should always win out over and above the environmental issues of the day.

That leads to the conclusion and brings both those parts of the amendment together. The Government must refocus and ask itself what it believes and what drives it from a philosophical point of view. What should drive it from a philosophical point of view, since we are talking about the two issues, is, first, that we do not commit \$100m of taxpayers' money for a convention centre. I have said inside and outside this Chamber on many occasions that I do not consider that to be a core function of government. I know that the Premier, quite rightly, and other ministers have a great belief in the future of tourism as a money spinner, income earner and job provider. The last time I checked I saw that it was the swiftest growing industry in Australia and very labour oriented. No-one disputes the value of trying to win a bigger share of the convention market on the Australian and world markets. I have no difficulty with that, but I have a fundamental philosophical difficulty in saying that \$100m should be spent on something which is a private sector responsibility. I was part of the Opposition as were members of the Government who said that it was not appropriate to spend \$700m, \$800m or \$900m on the petrochemical industry. That was not to say it would not be good to have a petrochemical industry as part of our regional economy. Everyone believes that it would be advantageous to the State. However, the crucial issue that was being decided then was that it was not a core function of government to provide a petrochemical plant.

The people of Western Australia spoke about that issue. They threw out of office a Government that did not know how to judiciously spend the public purse. History will repeat itself. I agree with the previous speaker, the member for Nollamara, and others and those who have written letters to the editor who have asked where was the Government's concern about displaced workers when it was doing such things as downsizing the civil service. Both State and Federal Governments went down that path because they believed that they would produce a better and more efficient society by doing so; in other words, by getting government out of the marketplace and letting the marketplace expand in its place. That is why I say that the Government needs to refocus. This amendment is an invitation to do that, particularly in respect of the \$100m convention centre.

The Deputy Premier was right on Sunday when he made those comments. I am of the old-fashioned view that, having said what he did say, he should have resigned as a result. However, what he said was quite accurate. I say that as a supporter of the belltower. Occasionally in our society we must spend funds on things simply because they will be beautiful, attractive monuments. If members were to walk down any street in Paris and ask a policeman what the nearest monument was about, he would often tell them that the monument was not about anything but it was just beautiful to have it there. Therefore, the belltower will focus our minds away from some of the more utilitarian things, like schools, roads and hospitals, on which of course we can always spend more money because they are bottomless pits. To that minor extent I disagree with the Deputy Premier. It is a good thing to build the occasional belltower. Whenever people talk about it, they refer to a bill of \$80m. It will be nothing of the kind. I understand that the belltower component of the Barrack Square development will cost \$4m.

Ms Anwyl: Is it a coincidence that we will be able to see it from your electorate?

Mr PENDAL: That could have something to do with it, but I am serious. It will be attractive, particularly housing, as it will, an important part of Britain's heritage. How they ever managed to give away something of such importance to their cultural heritage, is beyond me, but that is a question for another day.

Let me come back to the main point. It is not a core function of the Government to provide \$100m for a convention centre, notwithstanding the value of a privately-driven convention centre to this State. It is beyond my capacity to imagine why we continue to privatise in this way. We are about to sell off AlintaGas. I have no real difficulty with that although I have a proposition when we get to that stage about how we might spend some of the proceeds. For the life of me I cannot understand why we proceed down the almost puritanical path of privatisation, which suggests that government does not always know the best way to spend the public dollar, while at the same time spending \$100m on a convention centre which, as the Deputy Premier said, could well be provided by the private sector.

What does all of that mean when it is brought together and related to this amendment? It means that the Government needs to refocus. I made a similar remark during debate on the Westrail country services legislation that we dealt with a few months ago. That also indicated the Government's need to refocus and work out what it should be doing.

I return to the defence presented to us today by the Minister for Local Government about the displaced timber workers. It is still not too late to lift our game in that transition to plantation timber. I have no difficulty with the financial package that the Government is providing to sustain some of those people while we undergo that transition. However, people such as the Minister for Local Government, Trish Townsend from the so-called Forest Protection Society and union leaders should not be running around the south west trying to build up a false, emotional, city versus country hatred. If that is their intention, it is working. It is distinctly un-Australian.

Firstly, the Government should refocus in much the same way that the Deputy Premier has suggested. Secondly, it must start putting more resources not into paying off State debt - to its credit, state debt is at a more manageable level than at any time previously - but into more worthy projects. Over the next few weeks I will have more to say about how we might productively use some of the large sums that will become available to the State. Underpinning all that, the problem of timber and the displacement of workers will go on and on. It will revisit every successive Minister for the Environment, and

the Minister for Forests when we get one, unless the Government makes a distinct commitment within the asset sales process to increase vastly our capacity to produce plantation timber in Western Australia. We have the potential to commit more than two million hectares of land to plantation timber. We will run out of native forest resources within a few years. We must plan not for the next 100 years but for 200, 300 and 400 years beyond that if we are to be reasonable stewards of these resources. For those reasons, I support the amendment.

**MR BLOFFWITCH** (Geraldton) [5.22 pm]: I will speak on behalf of the convention centre. On Saturday night, along with 500 other people, I will attend the annual get together of the automotive traders at the Burswood International Resort Casino. The Burswood showroom is the biggest place in which we can all have a meal in some comfort. It provides a first-class meal.

Mr Carpenter: Where is that?

Mr BLOFFWITCH: At the Burswood showroom.

Mr Carpenter: I warn you, I have some knowledge of what you are about to say.

Mr BLOFFWITCH: In fact, 350 people who rang were told they could not attend the function. Why? Because there is no room. We could have used the Ascot Racecourse facilities and sat among the turnstiles, or we could have sat on the wharves at Fremantle. When trying to encourage people to attend a function, providing a plush setting such as that at Burswood is the way to go. This city desperately needs a larger convention centre.

Mr Carpenter: When is the dinner?

Mr BLOFFWITCH: On Saturday night.

Mr Carpenter: Do you think if we start building it now it would be ready by Saturday night?

Mr BLOFFWITCH: What does the member think?

Mr Carpenter: What you suggested earlier is not a bad idea. Are you going to propose that now?

Mr BLOFFWITCH: I am. This Government should not attempt to build such a centre when a proponent has offered to do so. The Government should get together with the operators of the Burswood Casino and discuss providing something special for Perth. We could provide a facility to seat 1 500 or 1 600 people. Of course, such a venue would attract world conferences. When the Western Australian Municipal Association has its big dinners it has the same problem; it must knock back people who want to attend because there is no facility large enough to accommodate them.

I would like the Government to build a first-class facility. Some government support might be required, but it is the Government's role to ensure we have an excellent facility. I know people say that the casino should have the money to build such a facility. Would it not be better for the Government to spend \$20m or \$30m to provide this State with a facility of which it can be proud and in the process save \$80m?

Do Governments throughout the world build convention centres? Yes, they do. The convention centre in Bali seats 2 000 and was built by the Indonesian Government. I am going to Durban for a corruption commission conference in one month. That city has one of the best convention centres in the world. Who built it? The Government built it because it did not have an organisation such as Burswood Casino to provide such a facility. Had such an organisation existed, the Government would have involved itself in a joint venture and promoted the idea.

We have the opportunity to do something great and to promote it. Like the member for South Perth, I believe that the belltower will be very attractive on the Perth foreshore. If it costs \$4m, we should spend it. If we have the opportunity to display the bells, we should do so. Let us be proud of it. We should also have a convention centre built in conjunction with private enterprise. If we pursue such projects, we will be going very much in the right direction. I urge the Government to proceed.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (17)

Ms Anwyl	Mr Graham	Mr Marlborough	Mr Pandal
Mr Brown	Mr Grill	Mr McGinty	Mr Ripper
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mr McGowan	Ms Warnock
Dr Constable	Ms MacTiernan	Ms McHale	Mr Cunningham ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr Edwards			

Noes (30)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Cowan	Mr MacLean	Mrs Parker
Mr Baker	Mr Day	Mr Marshall	Mr Shave
Mr Barnett	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Masters	Mr Trenorden
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Dr Hames	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bloffwitch	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Minson	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Board	Mr House	Mr Nicholls	Mr Wiese
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Johnson	Mr Omodei	Mr Osborne ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr Court	Mr Kierath		

## Pairs

Mrs Roberts  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Riebeling

Mr Tubby  
Mr Prince  
Mrs Holmes

Amendment thus negatived.

*Debate (on motion) Resumed*

**MRS van de KLASHORST** (Swan Hills - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.32 pm]: I set off last Thursday on an exciting trip to follow the Golden Pipeline; that is, the pipeline which starts at Mundaring and goes through places like Cunderdin, Merredin, Yerbillon, Southern Cross, Karalee, Gilgarna, Dedari, Coolgardie and then on to Kalgoorlie. On Sunday I followed a branch of the pipeline north from Merredin to Nungarin, Kununoppin, Trayning, Welbini, Wyalkatchem and Dowerin. The Golden Pipeline, the Mundaring-Kalgoorlie pipeline, is 550 kilometres long. When one drives along it as I did, one starts to realise the enormity of the undertaking. The mind boggles when one links that undertaking back 100 years to when C.Y. O'Connor decided he would build the pipeline and had the idea of damming water from the Helena River and sending it to Coolgardie - the goldfields at that time. The concept was so far-fetched it was like building the gas pipeline from Dampier to Kalgoorlie by hand. Members should think about it. C.Y. O'Connor first had to convince Premier Forrest to provide the money. Members who have seen *Yes, Minister* on television would recognise that Premier Forrest's decision to provide the money was a "courageous" one. It caused much consternation in this Parliament and to the people of Western Australia; Forrest was considered to be wasting so much money on a pipedream. However, the pipeline was built and built by hand. C.Y. O'Connor had a head start because the Perth-Kalgoorlie railway had already been built and he knew the engineering contours. O'Connor suggested building the pipe alongside the railway line and the road I travelled on was built later. In some places there are three parallel lines, although it has changed over the years in other places. The concept consisted of the dam, eight pumping stations - the old steam pumping stations - and original wooden pipes which were made and placed by hand; they were dug in.

Mr Cowan: Those were not the original ones; they were the war-time replacements.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: The pipeline was initially placed underground but that caused problems and the pipeline was later raised. The pipeline workers carted the goods by train and lived in the bush. There were no towns as we know them and no air-conditioning. They suffered with the heat, the flies and the harsh conditions to build this pipeline and open up the goldfields. Coolgardie was the main goldfield when the pipeline was first envisaged, but when the pipeline was finished, the goldfields had extended to the Golden Mile in Kalgoorlie.

This is a heritage link. I am a member of the Golden Pipeline Council and working in conjunction with the National Trust I travelled there to find out what the pipeline was about. One can read things on paper and look at maps but one really needs to go and have a look at things in order to understand their full implications. The second purpose of my trip was some public relations along the route, meeting with shires and other people associated with the pipeline. I also had a look at all the various pumping stations, both steam and electric. The first stop after Mundaring was Cunderdin where I visited the Water Corporation building and learned a bit about the history of the pipeline. However, I saw more than that; I saw how the Perth-Kalgoorlie pipeline runs now. It is run on a series of computers which are linked to Cunderdin. It is amazing. Every tank on the pipeline to Kalgoorlie has a computer connection and as it fills or lowers it sends information back to the computer screen at the Water Corporation building in Cunderdin. One person can watch and control the whole 550 kilometres of the pipeline. The computer system alerts the person at Cunderdin if a tank falls too low or gets too high. As members know, water is pulled at different rates; therefore, some days they need to pump more or less. Three people are on call 24 hours a day and they can link the pipeline to their home laptop computer should there be an emergency after hours. There are five electricians, some welders and maintenance men who go out and fix any leaks. Twenty million gallons of water are pumped through the pipe every day and the electricity bill for the pumping is about \$6m.

I have taken an interest in this because I consider the beginning of the pipeline in Mundaring to be the most important part of the Golden Pipeline and it is in my electorate of Swan Hills. The Golden Pipeline Council wants to give the pipeline a heritage status and it has considered seeking a world heritage listing. The council also wants to use the heritage of the pipeline - the second best engineering feat in Australia ever according to the engineering awards it received - and create a tourism concept. It had another reason for travelling the pipeline besides observation; that is, looking at ideas for tourism. The Golden Pipeline Council and the National Trust have applied to the tourism development fund and the Western Australian Tourism Commission for assistance in increasing the visitation and understanding of the significance of the goldfields water supply scheme and taking this history to Western Australian, Australian and international visitors by enhancing the quality of the community experiences along the pipeline.

The initial intent of the application for the grant is to provide funds to enable distinctive signs to be placed along the pipeline. These will help people to follow the pipeline. There were no signs when I started the journey and I had to find my way to places such as Gilgarna, Karalee dam and other places which are not signposted. We drove along looking for the little blue Water Corporation signs and travelled along bush tracks until we found the areas we were seeking. There are many places of historical value along the pipeline, and the idea is to make sure that visitors can clearly find their way. The goldfields water supply scheme was the greatest public work undertaken in Western Australia at that time, and we can be very proud of our forefathers who built it. We should therefore give it the reverence it deserves by developing its tourism potential while at the same time preserving it.

The pipeline heritage project includes the pipeline and its reserve, which is 550 kilometres long, and landscaping along the pipeline. It has four pumping stations; and two pumping station sites to be commemorated - I had a picnic lunch at one of



them; the Mundaring Weir and its surrounds; associated historic infrastructure along the way; tanks associated with the original sites and subsidiary water supply distribution; and railway and road tracks along the way. At Karalee dam we built a small fire and had a billy tea sitting in the trench of the old pipeline that went to Karalee. We saw earlier water resources, such as Hunts well and several others along the way.

Most important, together with the physical structure, is the social and human side of the pipeline. One of the projects under way at the moment is a women of the pipeline project, which is part of the women's suffrage celebrations. Stories are being put together about women who were associated with the development of the pipeline. There is also Aboriginal heritage along the way and the human stories are being gathered to build a composite picture of the whole project. The idea is to conserve and interpret each of these sites, and that includes historic, natural and indigenous environments, and undertake a major heritage initiative leading to tourism initiatives. A project as large as this will take 10 to 12 years and will cost between \$10m and \$12m. It is intended to investigate the possibility of this project being World Heritage listed. It certainly deserves that.

The first stage of the project is the signage at the exit and entrance to each site. At each parking area near the site there will be interpretive signs. The cost will be \$200 000, which includes setting it up along the pipeline, making the signs, investigation and finding the stories. I commend this project to the Minister for Tourism - I will make sure he gets a copy of this speech - and ask that the Government assist with funding because it is the beginning of a major tourism development in this State. It must be remembered that there is not much tourism in the Mundaring to Kalgoorlie section and not many visitors stay there overnight. It will be of major economic benefit to towns in the vicinity of the pipeline. We will extend visitor staying time. I was an example of this as my first stop was at Southern Cross, where I spent the night in a motel. Normally if travelling to Kalgoorlie for some reason, I would not stay there overnight. I also stayed at Kalgoorlie and Merredin for one night. I would not normally have stayed at any of those places, and did so only because I was following the pipeline. The project will provide tourism opportunities in those towns. We had meals in the towns where we stopped along the way and I also purchased some items for my grandchildren, as one does when spending some time away from home. Retail establishments will benefit and other benefits will be derived from tourism. Greater use will be made of visitor infrastructure facilities. Of course, tourism is a major contributor to local rural economies, and the shire personnel I spoke to on the way are very aware of this and are keen to be part of the golden pipeline tourism and heritage structure. The signage will also encourage people to stay in the town.

The role of the Golden Pipeline Council is to establish the golden pipeline as a viable, publicly owned project for the permanent conservation of the heritage of the goldfields water supply. The council meets regularly and plans to develop a comprehensive program to conserve the heritage of the goldfields water supply and develop a program which will facilitate public education about all aspects of the pipeline, so that the people of Western Australia understand and know what it is about. It must be remembered that without the pipeline, the goldfields and the towns in that area would cease to exist. Efforts have been made to find water but I believe significant amounts have not yet been found.

Ms Anwyl: There is a lot of water but it is hypersaline. There will be a desalination plant.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I was told that mining companies are considering desalinating sea water, so that the pipeline water can be used for domestic and retail purposes. If anything happened to the pipeline, Kalgoorlie and other towns in the area would not continue to develop. The people at Corrigin told me that the pipeline is extremely important, not only to Kalgoorlie but also to farms that have a connection to the pipeline. In my electorate the new Acacia Prison will obtain its water supply directly from the pipeline. The significance of this pipeline to Western Australia is massive because Kalgoorlie, the goldfields and the farming areas are important to the development and economic wellbeing of Western Australia. We must look after the pipeline and make sure we understand the full benefits of it.

Apart from the money required for this heritage and tourism project, there is another aspect that relates to the Swan Hills electorate. The year 2003 will be the one hundredth anniversary of the day when water first reached Kalgoorlie through the pipeline. I am seeking government support to upgrade the Mundaring Weir site. I have not contacted all ministers yet, but several so far have visited the Mundaring Weir. In due course I will contact all ministers and ask for their help with this project. The Mundaring Weir site must be made much prettier and nicer, and it must have more facilities. The Shire of Mundaring is willing to assist.

It is also interesting that the electric pumping stations along the pipeline are so powerful that if the pipe bursts or leaks, it cannot be detected because the pressure is so high. The people at Cunderdin told me that the Water Corporation relies on those travelling along the pipeline to report any leaks or burst pipes. I heard about that on the Thursday, and when travelling back to Perth on the Sunday I remarked to my husband that it was amazing that someone was watering at that time of the year when it was raining. It was actually a burst pipe. I felt good that I could telephone the person who had told me about this three or four days ago and say that I had found the leak and ask whether someone could be sent out. Someone was sent out and we watched the pipe being fixed.

Mr Kobelke: Has the frequency of those sorts of incidents of bursts or leakages increased?

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I did not ask that, but I was told that they were reasonably satisfied with the number. This pipe had burst because of the frost. I stayed at Merredin and when I came out on the Sunday morning, my car was white from the frost. Evidently the pipe freezes at certain places. One can see that there are different patches in that area where the pipe has burst.

Mr Kobelke: I witnessed a spectacular one at Mundaring which caused me to be concerned whether it was an increasing occurrence which suggested the need for a high level of maintenance or a maintenance program.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I was told that only a small number of people maintained it but they just cannot afford to lose the water.

Mr Trenorden: It is still a very old piece of infrastructure and it does break down.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: A lot of new pipe has been put in along the way. I could find that out for the member, but I was not told that it was a problem.

Mr Kobelke: I would appreciate that.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I asked what they did with leaks, and I was told that they send people to fix them. They also have a manual override when anything goes wrong with the pipes; for instance, if the computers were down, they could override them by sending people to manually inspect the whole length of the pipeline. This is an important enough subject for members to be aware of the pipeline and of the massive and wonderful job it does for Western Australia. As I said, I will be seeking the assistance of the cabinet members to whom I have not yet spoken for the upgrade of the Mundaring Weir, perhaps as a gift to Mundaring for the birthday of the water reaching Kalgoorlie. We look forward to major celebrations all along the pipeline. All the shires along the pipeline have agreed to be part of this celebration in 2003 when we celebrate 100 years of the water reaching Kalgoorlie. I take my hat off to and commend all those people involved in the past. This is a living museum. It is still important to Western Australia today.

**MR CUNNINGHAM** (Girrawheen) [5.52 pm]: My contribution to the Address-in-Reply will be totally devoted to the insidious drug-related problems we are experiencing in the electorate of Girrawheen and the neighbouring suburbs. Our electorates collectively believe we have a problem. I feel hurt that people believe politicians in this Parliament are cowardly. They use words like "cowardly", "spineless", "gutless" and a series of other words. They have done it to my face. People who come to my office do this. They believe we should be placing the blow torch on not only the drug lords, but also these insidious small-time peddlers who are killing the children of this State and bringing profound misery to the families in our community. Each and every one of us is passing the buck. We are saying that fighting the scum and filth, which is what these drug peddlers are, is not our job. We are saying that this is a job for the police through Crime Stoppers. I assure members that the logic of leaving it to the police is not working. We have never been worse off in this State regarding the growth of drug peddlers. The problem will escalate further unless we find some backbone. Now is the time for all of us in this Parliament to answer the desperate calls of the many families and young people in our community. For sometime I have heard first-hand the tragedy, desperation and dismay in my electorate. An extremely successful community meeting of nearly 320 people was organised by the federal member for Cowan, Graham Edwards, and me last Thursday night. Many frustrated and angry members of the community said that little has been done about the drug peddlers who are rampant in our community. It was people power at its very best. The residents told of the anger and the hurt, the anguish and the frustration that they are enduring because nothing is being done. Many complained of small-time drug dealers who are flourishing on our local streets. Residents told the meeting that used needles and syringes were being found in schoolyards, parks, public open spaces, bus shelters and public toilets.

Assistant Commissioner Tim Atherton, Acting Deputy Commissioner John Standing, Daryl Lockhart, the officer in charge of Joondalup police, and Inspector Kim Richards from Warwick heard that information on drug activities was continuously being supplied to police, but in most cases the drug dealers carried on merrily. Assistant Commissioner Tim Atherton was a breath of fresh air. With his compassionate, caring and responsible approach, he came across as a man of intellect and he promised that zero tolerance of heroin dealers operating in our suburban streets would happen. Mr Atherton went on to inform the meeting that he was organising an operation against some of the dealers contained on a list I handed to him nearly two weeks ago. He told the meeting he would be enacting a zero tolerance policy against these people immediately. The meeting was told of two plans: The first was my naming drug dealers in this State Parliament, and the second was holding candlelight vigils outside the homes of well-known drug peddlers. I intend to press ahead and name people and hold candlelight vigils if no action is taken by the police. I believe that Assistant Commissioner Tim Atherton is a man of his word. I met with him at 8.15 this morning at Curtin House. I stated that I would wait a reasonable time before holding the candlelight vigils and naming those responsible for inflicting pain and suffering on our community. He has promised swift action. We will be holding many more public meetings until the streets are safe and free from syringes and needles. We will be monitoring police arrests of those peddling death to our young people and destroying the very fabric of our community; that is, our families. On the other hand, the response of the Assistant Deputy Commissioner was disappointing in last Saturday's *The Weekend Australian*. John Standing openly attacked the federal member for Cowan, Graham Edwards, and me as acting as judge and juror. He went on to say that in a democratic society, this is not cricket. I can assure John Standing that we are definitely not playing cricket in Girrawheen and the neighbouring suburbs. Assistant Commissioner Standing would be wise to talk to the mums and dads of Redcliffe Avenue, Rawlinson Drive, Woodward Circle and Highclere Boulevard in Marangaroo; streets on which these insidious leeches are peddling drugs to our young people. The good people of Girrawheen and the neighbouring suburb of Marangaroo are saying in cricket jargon that the assistant deputy commissioner would make a wonderful underarm bowler. The assistant deputy commissioner did, however, win the support of national civil liberties convener and well-known bleeding heart Terry O'Gorman.

It would be remiss of me at this stage not to pay my respects and congratulate a very courageous journalist from *The West Australian*, Mike Southwell, who has performed a magnificent task in exposing these evil leeches and perpetrators of death in our suburbs. People like Mike Southwell may give politicians some backbone in the fight against these leeches who kill our young people. The northern suburbs, along with the wider Western Australian community, are now at war. We are awash with drugs. The war against the drug peddlers who exist in our community is being fought in the schools, shopping centres and local streets. Illegal drug trafficking is a billion dollar-plus business throughout Australia. This is a real war organised against our young people who allow themselves to be enticed with all kinds of drugs through the leeches of society. The enemies are at most times non-using pushers who are driven by greed in their evil pursuits.

The groundswell against the peddling of drugs in our suburbs relates back to that address of 9 Redcliffe Avenue, Marangaroo, and the excellent expose by *The West Australian* and Mike Southwell. When we are learning every day that four or five deaths have been related to this address over the past 12 months, we must believe that something is terribly rotten in drug enforcement. There is a strong belief that at least one of these tragic victims, and possibly up to three, was given what we call a hot shot; in other words, a high quality shot that resulted in not only death but possibly murder. In my view, the death that occurred at the service station in Alexander Heights may, as the member for Joondalup indicated some weeks ago, be murder. The investigating officer and senior police have failed to explain to the family how the victim travelled from Carine TAFE, where he was dropped off just before midday, to a Cash Converters store in Osborne Park, and then to the service station in Alexander Heights, where he was found dead just before 1.00 pm. They have also failed miserably to trace all the jewellery the victim was wearing, or to explain how one of the two rings that he was wearing ended up in the possession of one of his drug associates, and how the other ring was placed by another of his drug associates in his coffin at a viewing.

They have also failed to explain from where he got the fatal dose of heroin and how he prepared that shot. Only a needle, a syringe and an unopened bottle of water were found with the body. The service station victim was a careful drug user, if there is such a thing, with two years' experience in drug use, yet the post mortem toxicology report showed that he was a victim of one of the highest overdoses that has occurred in the past two years, so strong that it would have knocked him out instantly and killed him within a few minutes. The mixture included doxepin, morphine and codeine. Most overdose cases with morphine levels as high as the victim's are found with the needle still protruding from their arm, because the effect is so rapid. In this victim's case, the cap had been put back on the needle and it had been placed back in his bag. There is no doubt that the shot was injected not by the user but by someone else. I have a statement from the family that the victim never injected himself but was always injected by other people. That statement is extremely important. A letter that was presented to me this morning from the boy's family reads -

Our son has never injected himself.

He has always got other people to do it for him. Even the person in question in Redcliffe Avenue has stated to myself and my wife on tape that because of my son being so terrified of needles they had to inject him.

Most of his so-called user friends have told us the same thing.

From an early age, my son had that fear of needles.

Even his local general practitioner knew that. I believe my son was murdered by these people because of a love triangle and the girl that was involved with my son is an ex-girlfriend of an associate of my son and she is afraid for her own life.

That letter speaks for itself.

Apparently security tape footage from that service station in Alexander Heights which was taken on 6 May has been seized by the police. The police say it shows the victim entering alone, buying water and heading for the toilet, but the police have refused a request from the family to examine subsequent footage to see whether they can recognise anyone walking in after the victim. Why have they done that? The video is on super fast. It is believed that a person with black cropped hair and a person wearing a baseball cap appear on the video. It is also believed that in the car park there was a woman in a blue-grey Commodore.

The common belief is that a containment policy is in place for some of these dealers, because very little appears to be done. The only possible reason for the inaction about 9 Redcliffe Avenue is that this woman is a police drug informant, so she is allowed to continue to sell heroin to teenagers, with the deaths becoming more frequent. Nine other victims of overdoses have been revived by ambulance officers at the house in question. Senior police have stated that 9 Redcliffe Avenue has been under investigation and surveillance for the past three years, but in all that time only one charge has been laid against this woman for possession.

There is no doubt in my mind, and there should be no doubt in the mind of anybody in this House, that a judicial inquiry, federal and state funded, is a matter of urgency in Western Australia. A judicial inquiry should not only review anti-drug legislation in Western Australia but must also evaluate how effective is drug enforcement in this State. The extremely serious drug problem that our community is experiencing must be taken out of the political arena. The only way we can do that is by establishing a judicial inquiry that will have wide-reaching powers which will leave no stone unturned. I have on numerous occasions over many years since I have been a member advised my constituents that, when they know there is a problem of a drug peddler in their street, they should report it to Crime Stoppers. Many of them have told me repeatedly how disappointed they are that, despite numerous calls to Crime Stoppers, those insidious peddlers of drugs still continue on their merry way. There is a special problem here. Crime Stoppers pass on the information to the local police stations. They only deal with the Mr Bigs in the industry. It is common knowledge that the police are totally under-resourced in the State of Western Australia. The public has had a gutful. I, as the member for Girrawheen, have had a gutful. We must drive these leeches, these peddlers of death, out of our community.

I have promised to wait for information from Assistant Commissioner Atherton before I decide to act and name people. I have every confidence that the wait will not be too long. Now is the time for us, as members of Parliament, to act. The community is crying out for its elected representatives to act decisively, to take back the lead in the war against drugs; the war against the death merchants who reap the profits of illegal drugs at a cost to the community that is measured by the dead bodies of our young people that are found on our suburban streets. The quasi acceptance of drug pushers by the public is certainly related to the perception created by the police of a "leave it to us" attitude. Only an increase to total public outrage

in feelings towards the pushers is likely to create the change that is needed to effectively combat this plague. We cannot allow the pushers the contentment of feeling either comfortable or safe from lawful harassment, prosecution and public condemnation. The pusher is and always will be the scum and the filth of our society.

In conclusion, there is one quotation that I do not ever want to come to fruition in this debate. I refer to the late Martin Luther King Junior who said, "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

*Amendment to Motion*

Mr CUNNINGHAM: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Court Government has refused to be accountable to the public and the Parliament of Western Australia in continuing to deny access to information in a vain attempt to avoid public embarrassment.

**MR GRAHAM** (Pilbara) [6.15 pm]: For the amendment to succeed, if there is any justice in the western world, all that someone on this side of the House needs to do is demonstrate to the Government an occasion or a number of occasions when the Government has denied access to information in an attempt to avoid public embarrassment. Let me do exactly that. This is by any yardstick a most secretive Government to the point of being duplicitous in its dealings with the public generally and the opposition particularly.

Without going through the whole issue in its entirety because I do not want to do that, I will touch on the Global Dance Foundation matter and issues that have followed on from it. Of course, members will be aware of the now infamous Global Dance Foundation arrangements put in place by the Premier of Western Australia on 22 December 1994. Members will be aware of the report of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee that leaves absolutely no doubt that the Premier of Western Australia was the driver of the project.

Mr Osborne: Have you read that report?

Mr GRAHAM: I did not think I would get such an interjection from the member.

Mr Osborne: You make me wonder.

Mr GRAHAM: I would have thought that of all the people in Western Australia the member for Bunbury would be aware of how thoroughly I read that report.

Mr Osborne: The reason I make the interjection is that, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary from my memory of the report, I cannot believe that you have read it. The report did not say that the Premier put the arrangement in place or was responsible for it. I do not think you have read the report.

Mr GRAHAM: This is where the member for Bunbury and I always have a bit of fun. He picks up my words, inserts a weasel word and says that I am wrong. I did not say that the report conclusively showed that. I said that the report leaves no doubt that the Premier of Western Australia made those decisions. I refer the member to page 42 of the report where the evidence of the senior Treasury official indicated quite clearly that the decision to proceed with the Global Dance Foundation issue was made at the meeting mentioned. That is a finding of the report. Mr Hall said -

It [the decision] was arrived at on the basis of listening to Reynolds' arguments for why it should occur. On hearing those arguments, the Premier found in favour of the event proceeding.

There can be no doubt that the Premier of Western Australia drove it. I say that only because I anticipated the interjection from the member for Bunbury. It is not what I want to talk about. I had a rough idea that he would leap to defend the realm.

Some \$430 000 of taxpayers' money was paid to the "promoter" Peter Reynolds ostensibly to arrange an international dance event. I say "ostensibly to arrange an international dance event" because a finding of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is that he established the Global Dance Foundation to access government funds. It was not to do anything other than that. He organised his affairs to access taxpayers' funds. That also was a finding of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. There is no doubt that was approved by the Premier at the meeting of 22 December 1994. Nor is there any doubt that the accountability measures covering the event and the companies associated with Mr Reynolds were removed at that meeting of 22 December. By that I mean that the Western Australian Tourism Commission had recommended that the money should be paid only in two moieties and the second one would be dependent on performance of certain events and certain things by Mr Reynolds. That accountability measure was removed at the meeting chaired by the Premier who was the Minister for Tourism responsible for the event and the Treasurer. His argument was that it was arrived at by consensus. However, the only person in the room who could have made those decisions was the Premier and he did make them.

The condition imposed by the Premier at the meeting of 22 December was that the amount of money Mr Reynolds had to repay would depend on the number of people who turned out to the event. From memory - I am happy to be corrected - if fewer than 4 000 people turned out for the event, Mr Reynolds would have had to refund the money. It is now history that in his quest for 4 000 patrons he fell 4 000 short. He did not even buy a ticket himself to attend the event, which is ironic.

That was the last accountability measure put in place by the Premier. A series of questions were asked about that and there were many politics around the issue, which I am happy to go over at some other time, but we have really done that to death. The Government's defence immediately after the public accounts committee reported was that we should not ask questions on this matter any more; we should not investigate this matter; and we should not pursue this matter further because it was

the subject of legal action between the Government and Reynolds and his companies. I remember it vividly, as I am sure do other people.

Mr Trenorden: Someone on your side had problems in that area.

Mr GRAHAM: It is interesting; we get that interjection often. Would it not be interesting if we had \$6m and a royal commission was held to investigate Global Dance and the Premier gave his view of events of 22 December 1994, and his staff, who put a completely different point of view to the public accounts committee from that of the Premier, gave their view?

Mr Trenorden: He did not say he forgot though, did he?

Mr GRAHAM: The member for Avon was at the hearings. He knows we sat up there giggling at all the ways that the Premier found to not say "I do not recall". I know he remembers it vividly. Perhaps we should have a royal commission into the member for Avon's memory! The Premier found every way possible to not say "I do not recall".

Mr Court interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McHale): Order! I remind members that it is disorderly for them to talk out of their seats.

Mr GRAHAM: I give the Premier full marks for that. He never once said that he did not recall, but he did not recall a whole damned lot when he had the opportunity. However, I remember, as I am sure do other members, the Premier coming out of the Stirling Centre in the Terrace making doorstops and saying in many and various ways, "The Opposition is scurrilous; it will jeopardise the legal action that will get back the taxpayers' money." I remember listening to Howard Sattler's program. I did not pull out the transcript because I did not think it would be a point of objection. However, everywhere the Premier spoke he said, "The scurrilous Opposition will jeopardise the legal action; they do not want us to get back the taxpayers' money." What was going on?

On 16 September 1998, I asked a question on notice of the Premier. I am prepared to jeopardise legal action from time to time! My question was to the effect that it is now three years since the Premier decided to give the money to Mr Reynolds, and what legal action had he instigated. He chose not to answer my question. He also chose not to answer letters from the Leader of the Opposition that were sent about which I asked him questions in June and August 1998. He said he would follow it through, which is his usual answer. He said that the response would be along the lines that we do not provide briefings on the process of legal action. We asked if the Government got the money back. He said, "No, but we are hopeful." In September 1998 he was hopeful. On 15 June 1999 I asked a series of questions again of the Premier about what action the Government had taken to recoup the advances to companies and people associated with the failed Global Dance proposals. I asked which ones had been successful, how much money the Government had recouped, what actions it had taken that had been unsuccessful and what actions had been discontinued. The answer from the Premier was -

It would be inappropriate to respond at this time given the questions are the subject of current legal proceedings.

What were the legal proceedings? A friend of mine is a solicitor so we went to court and found out what they were. No legal proceedings were under way on 15 June. The only action the Government had taken was to seek a preaction discovery of documents to get the documents from Mr Reynolds to see whether there was a possibility of the Government's taking legal action. On that alone we could say that the Government was, as our motion says, denying access and information in an attempt to avoid public embarrassment. From 15 June 1999 until 8 July 1999, Hon Norman Moore put out a press release which read -

The Western Australian Tourism Commission has accepted legal advice to not try to recover funds from parties associated with the World Dance Congress.

That is a surprise. Between 15 June 1999 and 8 July 1999 no legal action occurred. Not only was no legal action taken but also the Government dumped any prospect of legal action in the future. When we examine Hon Norman Moore's press release, it is obvious that not only had the Crown Solicitor advised that there was no prospect of legal action being successful but also that a second opinion had been sought from Clayton Utz which confirmed the view of the Crown Solicitor's Office. I can make the assumption that all that was under way when I asked my question on 5 June 1999. Either that or within three weeks, the Crown Solicitor's Office and a set of private solicitors had examined all the paper work and determined nothing was likely to succeed. On that ground also we could say that the Government was denying access to information.

However, it does not stop there; in fact, it gets better. In January 1997, the chairman of the State Supply Commission wrote to the Western Australian Tourism Commission indicating that his commission would carry out a review of three WATC contracts: The Global Dance Foundation contract; the Elle Racing contract; and the Marketforce contract. The Labor Party lodged a freedom of information application for all the documents relating to that review. The letter received from the State Supply Commission has a heading on the top right-hand corner, the date, Mr Shane Crockett's name and address, and then everything else except the government crest on the bottom has been deleted. That is how the Government dealt with an FOI application to the State Supply Commission. This is an open and accountable Government, or so members opposite tell us. The Labor Party followed up that application with a further application relating to the Elle Racing contract information. It was established that 35 documents fell within the scope of the application lodged by Dr Geoffrey Gallop. It cost \$30 to be told that access to all 35 documents was denied because they would reveal an investigation by the commission into a possible failure to comply with state supply policies issued pursuant to the State Supply Commission Act 1991. What is that other than the Government's refusing to release information in an attempt to avoid public embarrassment?

Mr Ripper: It sounds like a new technique: One calls an inquiry to ensure the information is kept secret.

Mr GRAHAM: Absolutely!

I refer again to the Global Dance Foundation. This is even better. On 12 May 1999, the Labor Party applied for access to documents relating to the three matters being investigated by the State Supply Commission. It again cost \$30 to be told that 264 documents existed. We were as successful in getting those 264 documents as Peter Reynolds was in getting 4 000 people to attend his dance congress. We got none. We were refused access to each document because the issues were being investigated by a branch of the Government. I asked myself whether that indicated a Government's attempting to hide information to avoid public embarrassment. My answer was "Yes."

It does not end there. The catch-22 in the release of these documents is that we cannot get access to them until the government investigations are completed. The investigations cannot be completed because external litigation is under way. Until all the legal actions are completed, the Government cannot finish its inquiry or release any documents relating to any step of that process. I ask members to make up their own minds. We listened to the Minister for Family and Children's Services with bleeding heart this morning saying that she is absolutely honest and that she would not do anything unless she truly believed in it. This is her chance: She can vote along with her colleagues to hide more information in an attempt to avoid public embarrassment.

**MR BROWN** (Bassendean) [6.34 pm]: I support the amendment. In the time available to me I will provide a few examples of the Government's trying to hide the facts to avoid embarrassment and scrutiny. I will mention a few areas in which the Government has attempted to do that and in which it has not had the courage to be forthcoming enough in the Parliament to disclose certain events that have occurred or matters relating to government finances.

Last year I asked the following questions of various ministers about the disposal of government assets -

- (1) What assets over \$200,000 were sold by departments and agencies under the Minister's control in the following financial years -
  - (a) 1996-97; and
  - (b) 1997 -98?
- (2) What amount of money raised from the asset sales has been used to reduce debt?
- (3) What was the level of debt of each department and agency as at -
  - (a) 30 June 1997; and
  - (b) 30 June 1998?

I asked that set of questions to ascertain whether the Government's claim of reducing debt was brought about by good financial management or simply as a result of selling state assets. If one takes the balance-sheet approach, an asset is worth something on the positive side and a debt is worth something on the negative side. If one transfers one to the other, one does not necessarily obtain a net benefit. One is simply selling an asset worth X and reducing a liability worth X, and the balance sheet remains the same. For political purposes, the Government can attempt to dress up its strategy by claiming it has a miraculous capacity to reduce debt. Of course, it fails to disclose that while it might have reduced debt by X, it has also reduced the State's assets by the same amount. That is its financial miracle. The Government made great play of that issue in the 1996 state election. It sought to create a false impression that as a result of its prudent financial management it had been able to reduce state debt by \$3.5b during its first term in office. Of course, it failed to disclose that that \$3.5b debt reduction was the result of a \$3.5b sale of government assets.

I wanted a detailed breakdown of government asset sales. I thought there would be no mystique about that and that the Government would be forthcoming. Of course, a whole host of ministers - I have here responses from the Minister for Primary Industry, the Minister for Lands, the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Racing and Gaming, and the Minister for Police - all sent the questions to the Premier's office. I received the standard response from each minister, presumably prepared by a political guru in the Premier's office. The answer from each of those ministers, after collaborating with one another, stated -

The information sought by the member may be obtained by perusal of the relevant Annual Reports. I am not prepared to instruct departmental officers to devote the considerable time and resources necessary to respond to the member's question. However, if he has any specific concerns and raises them with me, I will have them investigated.

Each of the answers from the ministers was in exactly the same terms. Therefore, it was either a pure coincidence that they all answered in that way or they were given that stock answer from the Premier's office to avoid the detail being provided. The question is whether the information is so detailed and so difficult to obtain that it would require a huge amount of work to provide it. As members know, from time to time a publication, which I think is called *Intersector*, is produced in the State which advertises positions in the public sector. It always contains references to and glowing reports about government departments or agencies and the good work they are doing.

In the 9 September 1998 edition of *Intersector*, there was an article under the heading "Repositioning LandCorp". This article was interesting in that it referred to the way in which the Government could identify land assets that it had, that it could sell them and therefore realise the funds through the sale of those assets. Under the heading "From My Perspective", it states -

Ross Holt, Chief Executive Officer of LandCorp, explains his agency's changing role and its responsibility for meeting the State's land needs for the new millennium.

In the first page of that article he states -

We have identified \$150 million of our assets for disposal and between January and June of this year reduced our debt from \$107 million to \$43 million.

Members should bear in mind that this article was written on 9 September 1998 and therefore refers to the 1997-98 financial year. The article continues on page 5 of the magazine and states -

To date, with the assistance of LandCorp, significant Government land holdings have already been disposed of successfully and profitably. These include former hospital land at St John's Wood in Mt Claremont, the State Engineering Works at North Fremantle, a number of police facilities, and the former Westrail marshalling yard at Robb's Jetty.

The article further states -

"There are a number of attractive incentives available to agencies which elect to dispose of surplus land," said John Ellis, LandCorp's Director Evaluation & Planning.

He goes on to talk about other assets that can be sold, and he cited the Mt Henry hospital site, and so on.

It seems that this information, which the Minister for Lands in his reply said would take too many resources and therefore could not be provided to the Parliament, is known by his agency and other agencies because it is well documented; it is referred to in the *Intersector* article. That raises the question of why the Government seeks to hide those facts. Why is it that the Government will not disclose in this Parliament the assets that it sold and the amount for which it sold them? It refuses to disclose that because it does not want that information understood by the public. It does not want a list of assets produced by the Opposition or any other keen watcher of the Parliament. It does not want people to be able to say, "These are the assets that the Western Australian coalition Government has flogged off, and this is the amount of money that has been produced as a result of the sale of those assets." Therefore, the Government's great claim as a financial manager to be able to reduce debt is shot to pieces. It does not want that information to be made available and therefore it does not provide the information when it is legitimately asked to provide it.

Parliament is the place in which the Government is supposed to be accountable and in which ministers are supposed to provide information which they are legitimately asked to provide. This question was not about assets worth 50¢ or \$1 or how many pens and pencils Joe Blow bought; it was a question which sought information about the disposal of assets worth individually over \$200 000. That is not an unreasonable question, yet we find minister after minister gives the stock, standard answer, which is, "Go to hell. We will not provide you with that information." That is an appalling state of affairs. One can imagine how members of the public feel when they seek information from ministers, when that information cannot be obtained through the parliamentary process following the raising of a legitimate question. The ministers have refused to provide the information, not because it is not available, but because it might cause them some political embarrassment. That is the only basis on which they have refused to provide that information.

I will deal with other issues concerning government honesty and accountability. I agree with what the Deputy Premier has often said in this place - certainly it seems to be the Government's hallmark - that politics is not about reality; it is about perception. Dealing with that issue, the Government's Elle campaign has been built around the perception that it has been successful. That perception has been promoted on the basis that it has been said by the Minister for Tourism on a number of occasions that we should look at the increasing number of tourists as a result of the Elle campaign.

Let us consider whether one measures the success of an advertising campaign by, firstly, the number of tourists coming to Australia. I raised a number of questions with the Minister for Tourism. These questions were obviously answered by his bureaucrats, and maybe they were not sufficiently checked by the minders in his office. In question 967 of 1998 I asked -

- (1) In what countries were the Elle Macpherson ads shown in the 1997-98 financial year?
- (2) In what months were the advertisements shown in each country?
- (3) What was the cost of showing the advertisements?
- (4) Was there an increase in the number of visitors from those countries where the commercials were shown?
- (5) What was the increase?
- (6) Was there an increase in the number of tourists from any other countries? . . .

Interestingly, the Western Australian Tourism Commission prepared an answer to that question, and obviously the minister or his minder did not read it too well. The answer that came into this Parliament stated -

. . . WA television commercials featuring Elle Macpherson is to raise consumer awareness of Western Australia as a holiday destination. As such, the WATC does not utilise visitor numbers to measure the effectiveness of these campaigns, but rather consumer awareness.

That is a revelation. The minister has been saying in media release after media release that this campaign has been successful and that we should look at the increase in numbers of inbound tourists, yet we see in this answer that the effectiveness of the campaign is not measured by the number of people who come to Western Australia, but it is measured by consumer awareness. Have we been told the truth in all of that? Have we been told that the question of visitor numbers does not measure effectiveness? No, the minister has been justifying the advertisements on the basis of an increase in numbers of inbound tourists. However, we see from the answer carefully prepared by the Western Australian Tourism Commission that

that is not the measure. I will continue and determine whether the Government has been properly accountable in that regard. In question on notice 2125 of 1999 I asked in part -

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an article that appeared in *The West Australian* on 24 February 1999 concerning Australian Bureau of Statistics figures which showed there were fewer visitors to Western Australia in the eleven months to November 1998 compared to the eleven months to November 1997?
- (2) Are the figures quoted correct?

The minister's response was -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The estimates quoted are incorrect in that they are based on Australian Bureau of Statistics' monthly overseas arrivals and departures, which under-estimate international visitors to Western Australian by up to 30%. The figures therefore incorrectly reflect a downturn in visitor arrivals to WA.

Not only does the minister claim on his methodology that we have had more visitors but he also says the ABS statistics are wrong. The Government has a different formula for measuring. The Government does not measure the success of the campaign by the number of people who come to Western Australia and in any event when the ABS assesses the number of visitors and shows a decrease, it is wrong and the Government uses another formula. If that is not bad enough, I will continue and look at another question I asked. We can see the fabrication. In question on notice 1988 of 1999 I asked the minister in part -

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an interview that took place on the Sattler file on 20 January 1999 in which the caller claimed the high number of British tourists occurred as a consequence of the lower Australian dollar and lower air fares, rather than the Government's advertising campaign?
- (2) What research does the Government have which differentiates between people electing to travel because of -
  - (a) lower air fares;
  - (b) currency appreciation; and
  - (c) encouragement through advertising?

That is, separating the incentive to travel. Currency fluctuations are a major incentive to travel as are lower air fares. The advertising campaign does not matter. They are two key factors. What is the answer? The minister's response was -

- (1) I am not aware of the specific interview referred to.

The answer to the second question is the classic.

- (2) This Government does not have any research that differentiates between people electing to travel as a result of the three factors referred to.

What does that mean? The minister has been saying that the Elle campaign has been a great success in Britain, a huge success. We have reached 100 000 visitors for the first time; the campaign has been a massive success. The Opposition says, "Yes minister but in the height of that one could buy three dollars to the pound" or almost 37p to the dollar. Is the increase because of the lower currency, is it a confluence of factors or is it because of the advertising campaign? The minister does not give any credit to the issue of the lower currency. A Western Australian Treasury document states that tourism would increase as a result of a lower currency but does the Minister for Tourism say that? No, he does not. It would spoil the charade. Does the Government have any research? No, none, not a sliver of evidence to back up its view.

The minister compared what happened in Western Australian to what happened in Queensland and New South Wales. He said Western Australia was doing better and I asked whether the Government had looked at the tourism profiles of the States. The minister pretended not to understand the question. However, if members look at the tourism profiles and examine tourist numbers from Korea, they will see that in the good years we received 1 800 visitors from Korea. In the middle of the crisis we had 1 700. New South Wales and Queensland had approximately 180 000 previously and that number was halved in the middle of crisis. The worst that happened to Western Australia in the crisis was the number of visitors from Indonesia; that figure was down 26 per cent. Does the minister take those factors into consideration when releasing his statement? Does he say that the different profiles of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore influence the figures? No, he does not. The minister conveniently ignores those factors and for political purposes he again uses the figures which he knows are influenced by the economic circumstances in the visitors' countries of origin. I support this amendment simply because the Government is not honest with the people of Western Australia about these matters.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Ripper.

*House adjourned at 6.56 pm*

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### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, MEETING WITH PROFESSOR UCHTENHAGEN

**18. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:**

Will the minister table in the Parliament any notes of her meeting with Professor Uchtenhagen to which members referred earlier today?

**Mrs PARKER replied:**

My report to the Parliament was a comprehensive report of all the activities. I did not make notes at the meeting but I am happy to follow up and see if any notes were taken and will advise the House of my findings.

#### GILLEECE, MR JACK, RESIGNATION

**19. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's claim on the day his right-hand man Jack Gilleece resigned in disgrace that -

"I don't want there to be anything that is not known publicly in relation to this particular issue . . . "

and ask -

- (1) Will the Premier give a commitment to table the report being prepared by Mal Wauchope immediately upon its completion as well as any other documents relating to his former adviser's secret business dealings?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) When does he expect that report to be completed?

**Mr COURT replied:**

(1)-(3) It would be appropriate to make that decision after I have seen the report. I have been asked three questions.

Dr Gallop: I am asking you whether you will table the report.

Mr COURT: I will wait until I see the report and the advice I receive from Mr Wauchope. The Opposition has provided notice of three questions and I thought it might ask one of them.

#### NON-METROPOLITAN COUNCILS, ACCESS TO TRAINING

**20. Mrs HODSON-THOMAS to the Minister for Local Government:**

The minister recently met with the Shire of Meekatharra and one of the shire's concerns was the high cost of training opportunities for elected members. Given the importance of such training, will the minister outline what steps he proposes to take to ensure that non-metropolitan councils, particularly remote councils, are able to access training opportunities?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I met recently with the Shire of Meekatharra. I am down to about the last three or four councils, having promised to meet with all of them; I am slowly getting there although I have probably met some of them too many times. One of the main issues raised by the Shire of Meekatharra related to native title. Members opposite would be advised to notice that native title is causing some concern; something like \$800 000 in potential rates is to be payable by the mining industry but is being held up as a result of native title. However, the question of most importance to the shire was that of training of elected members. It sees that as being vitally important and I am pleased to announce today that I have approved funding of \$1.5m under the local government development fund. Of that \$1.5m, \$160 000 is for a project submitted by the professional development committee comprising the Department of Local Government, the Western Australia Municipal Association and the Institute of Municipal Management. That \$160 000 will focus on the provision of training opportunities in rural and remote areas in Western Australia. Some of those shires need assistance as they have great difficulty attending courses in Perth. We will now be able to spend that money to assist the local government authorities in Meekatharra and east Pilbara, which have both expressed interest and concern about the high cost of attending such courses. It is a great initiative and one that I support. It will be well received by those councils.

#### GILLEECE, MR JACK, BUSINESS DEALINGS

**21. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

As the Premier stated, some notice of this question was given. I refer to the inquiry undertaken by the Director General of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, Mal Wauchope, into the secret business dealings of the Premier's former trusted adviser, Jack Gilleece.

- (1) What legal authority does Mr Wauchope have to compel Mr Gilleece to answer questions or to provide documents, given that Mr Gilleece is no longer a government employee?
- (2) What legal authority does Mr Wauchope have to compel Mr Gilleece's business clients to answer questions or to provide documents?

- (3) Is Mr Wauchope investigating allegations published in *The West Australian* on 1 August that Mr Gilleece conducted some of his private business dealings via taxpayer-funded mobile telephones and fax machines?
- (4) Have any matters relating to Mr Gilleece's conduct been referred to any other agencies for investigation at this stage?

**Mr COURT replied:**

- (1)-(4) When this issue arose, I made it clear that my office must not only be squeaky clean, but also be seen to be a squeaky clean operation.

Mr Ripper: How do you explain your dealings with Mr Fletcher?

Mr COURT: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asks a question about that, I will answer it.

I was very concerned about this matter. Although Mr Gilleece has resigned, I thought it proper that there be a full inquiry into this matter going back to when we came into government. I am advised that there is no legal way in which we can compel Mr Gilleece or any other party to cooperate. However, I am told that all of the parties have fully cooperated with the inquiry.

Dr Gallop: How do you know?

Mr COURT: I will tell the Leader of the Opposition.

The Director General of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet has advised that Roger Watson, a senior investigator with the Ombudsman's office has been seconded to conduct the inquiry into Jack Gilleece's consultancies with private firms while he was employed in my office. Mr Watson has previously worked as an investigator with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, and also served with the Western Australia Police Service. To ensure the integrity of the review, the former assistant Auditor General for Western Australia, Andy Yukich, has also been engaged to subject the inquiry process to a probity audit. Mr Yukich is a Fellow of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants with over 40 years' public sector and audit experience. The inquiry is ongoing and I cannot comment on whether any matters have been referred to other agencies for investigation. I will not know that until that inquiry is complete.

## NALTREXONE, INCLUSION IN PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME

### 22. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the recent decision by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee not to include naltrexone in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. What steps has the Government taken to further progress the inclusion of this drug in that scheme, and what is the nature and extent of the provision of this drug via any state government treatment service?

**Mr DAY replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. It is correct that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has not recommended to the Commonwealth Government that naltrexone be listed as part of that scheme. From the State's point of view, that is somewhat disappointing because Western Australia has made naltrexone available at no cost to those who are unable to afford it through Next Step, the specialist alcohol and drug service.

Mr Carpenter: Are you also making it available free of charge via George O'Neil's service?

Mr DAY: I will come to Dr O'Neil's service in a moment.

It is the responsibility of a drug manufacturer, when it seeks to have a drug subsidised through the pharmaceutical benefits scheme, to provide sufficient evidence of the drug's effectiveness for the problem for which it is advocating its use. The committee has a responsibility to take into account the benefits of the drug compared with its cost. Obviously, the committee came to the conclusion that the benefits of naltrexone did not outweigh its cost. Therefore, it did not make the recommendation to the Commonwealth Government that the State would have preferred.

The Western Australian Government is making naltrexone available at no charge through the Next Step program, and in excess of 150 patients so far have accessed naltrexone in this way. The Government has also made available more than \$1m for the conduct of a number of trials to assess other possible treatments for opiate dependence, including the use of naltrexone maintenance following heroin withdrawal; either naltrexone, methadone or buprenorphine maintenance after heroin withdrawal using buprenorphine; and naltrexone maintenance following methadone withdrawal using buprenorphine.

Funds are being made available to Dr O'Neil's program to assist in assessing the use of naltrexone for detoxification as well as maintenance. In addition to the \$80 000 made available last year to assist Dr O'Neil's program - \$60 000 directly to his program and \$20 000 to the University of Western Australia for assessment of the trial - a further \$100 000 has been made available this year. Of that amount, \$50 000 has been paid to the University of Western Australia to assist in assessing the trial being established. I have always made it clear, as has my predecessor, that Dr O'Neil must set up his program in the context of a properly supervised clinical trial which can be subject to peer review. I am pleased to say that the University of Western Australia and Dr O'Neil have signed a letter of agreement to the effect that a clinical trial will be conducted. It is anticipated that field work in connection with the trial will commence in October this year, following completion of all necessary planning approvals. I also advise that Dr O'Neil is referring patients from his program to the Next Step program for naltrexone maintenance, particularly those who cannot afford his program.

## GILLEECE, MR JACK, TERMINATION PACKAGE

**23. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

Some notice has been given of this question. I refer to the departure of the Premier's former adviser, Jack Gilleece, who was forced to resign for failing to disclose that he was on the payroll of property developers doing business with the Government, and ask -

- (1) What was the total value of Mr Gilleece's termination package?
- (2) How was the payout calculated?
- (3) Was any condition attached to the payout preventing Mr Gilleece from commenting publicly on matters relating to the Government?
- (4) What involvement, if any, did the Premier have in negotiating the package?
- (5) Will the Premier table all details? If not, why not?
- (6) Finally, I repeat the third part of my previous question which the Premier failed to answer: Is Mr Wauchope investigating allegations published in *The West Australian* on 1 August that Mr Gilleece conducted some of his private business dealings via taxpayer funded mobile telephones and fax machines? It is disappointing that the Premier failed to answer that part of the question, although he was given notice of it.

**Mr COURT replied:**

(1)-(6) I had better give the terms of reference for that inquiry. In the last answer -

Mr Ripper: Just say yes or no.

Mr COURT: All those matters are part of this inquiry.

Mr Ripper: Will the use of mobile telephones and fax machines be part of the inquiry?

Mr COURT: Yes. I table the terms of reference.

[See paper No 65.]

Mr COURT: There was no termination package for Mr Gilleece. He received his accrued and pro rata leave entitlements under his contract but there was no notice or whatever.

Mr Ripper: What was the total value?

Mr COURT: I was not involved in that at all.

Mr Ripper: What was the total value?

Mr COURT: In relation to the total value of the package, I do not think it is appropriate -

Mr Ripper: Something else secret!

Mr COURT: No, no. I do not mind if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition goes to Mr Wauchope and gets that information, but there is a bit of an issue here. Many people get termination packages. I can assure the member there is no issue with this one but many people get packages and, quite rightly, that is their private and personal business.

Mr Ripper: It is taxpayers' money. He resigned in disgrace, and you will not tell us how much he was paid!

Mr COURT: No. He has resigned. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants that information, I do not mind his discussing the matter with Mr Wauchope. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants me to table all the personal information -

Dr Gallop: You should look at the questions you have asked in this Parliament over the years. What a hypocrite!

Mr COURT: And I never got an answer! I said that if the member wants that person's personal information -

Dr Gallop: What a hypocrite!

*Withdrawal of Remark*

The SPEAKER: Order! Once again, that difficult word "hypocrite" has been used. If people describe actions as being hypocritical, that is fine by me. However, the Leader of the Opposition is impugning the Premier and I ask him to withdraw.

Dr GALLOP: I withdraw.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

Mr COURT: If the person involved is prepared to have that information made public, I will make it public. Similarly, I said that I am prepared to have Mr Wauchope give the member access to the records. However, my friend opposite might have just set a precedent. If he wants all the personal information tabled, he cannot have one rule for one person and another rule for other people. The member might find he has let himself into a rather embarrassing situation.

## TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION PLACES

**24. Mrs van de KLASHORST to the Minister for Employment and Training:**

I have been approached by several constituents about the availability of technical and further education places next year. Could the minister inform the House of the availability of these TAFE places for the year 2000?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

The technical and further education system has seen an extraordinary growth in the variety of courses offered and the number of places available. In fact, TAFE is Western Australia's biggest provider of vocational education and training through the statewide network of colleges, campuses and centres. It is not only the biggest, but also the most popular, with 56 per cent of last year's school leavers choosing TAFE either full time or through apprenticeships. Some 25 000 students will leave school in the next few months, most of whom will graduate from year 12. This Government has made a pledge that a TAFE place will be offered to every eligible year 12 graduate. That TAFE 2000 guarantee is an integral part of the coalition's employment and training policy. Also, it underlines our determination to ensure that the balance is right between the various post-school options. Places will be available, and 400-odd courses will be offered next year. In the past, 80 per cent of applicants have undertaken their first preference, which is important. Some of the new courses to be offered are aeronautics, pilot studies, film and television, music industry skills, ecotourism and multimedia. If members peruse the TAFE handbook, they will see that it reflects optimism and confidence in the state economy and the prospect of continuing employment growth. That is pleasing. I am delighted to inform the member for Swan Hills, and all other interested members, of the excellent opportunities for people to undertake bright careers as a result of the TAFE system throughout the State.

## GILLEECE, MR JACK, WORK FOR PROPERTY DEVELOPERS

**25. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

I again refer to the resignation of Jack Gilleece earlier this month.

- (1) When did the Premier first become aware that Mr Gilleece was working for property developers who were doing business with the Government?

Mr Court: Is this question on notice?

Mr RIPPER: This is not on notice - another question is on notice - so the Premier should listen closely.

- (2) What action has the Premier taken to determine whether any other members of his staff or other ministerial offices have undisclosed employment outside government?

The Premier failed to answer one point in my last question for which I gave notice; namely -

- (3) Was any condition attached to the payout preventing Mr Gilleece from commenting publicly about matters relating to the Government?

**Mr COURT replied:**

- (3) No, there were no conditions.

- (1)-(2) As I said earlier, I first became aware of the matter when Mr Gilleece advised me of it a week or so ago. Was the question about anyone else in my office?

Mr Ripper: Yes, or any other ministerial office.

Mr COURT: All my staff have been asked, and they have certified to us that they have complied with section 102 of the Public Sector Management Act.

Mr Ripper: Can you give us copies of those declarations?

Mr COURT: All of my staff have been asked and they have verified that matter.

Mr Ripper: What about our ministerial officers?

Mr COURT: Has the Leader of the Opposition done the same with his staff?

## GILLEECE, MR JACK, RESIGNATION

**26. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

Does the Premier rule out engaging Mr Gilleece as a consultant to the Government now that he has been forced to resign in disgrace?

**Mr COURT replied:**

I will not make any judgments about Mr Gilleece until the inquiry has been completed. There did not need to be an inquiry and the person did not have to cooperate with the inquiry. I feel strongly about this issue and instead of just the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet conducting the inquiry, we have asked the Ombudsman's office to conduct it. We have also put in place a probity auditor. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should have the decency to allow that inquiry to be completed.

## WATER, REQUIREMENTS OF SOUTH WEST COMMUNITIES

**27. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Water Resources:**

I refer to the minister's recent commitment to "drought proof" the Perth metropolitan area by, in part, constructing pipelines to enable water transfers from Harris Dam. This proposal has given rise to some concerns in the south west that the water needs of south west communities will be ignored in favour of Perth. Will the minister give an assurance that the requirements of local communities for water in the south west will not be made secondary to the needs of the Perth metropolitan community?

**Dr HAMES replied:**

It has come to my attention recently that concerns have been expressed about this issue. I will reiterate information that has already been provided publicly on this issue: Before any water is taken out of Harris Dam, the local needs will have priority. Those local needs include the water supply system for the great southern towns and for Collie, industrial needs such as power generation, environmental leases and water for salinity management of the Wellington reservoir. Only water in excess of those local community needs will be taken for metropolitan use.

As members may be aware, the State Government, through the Water Corporation, is spending \$175m to take a pipeline to the Stirling and Harris dams in an effort to drought proof Perth. It will be completed at the end of next year or the beginning of the following year. It will provide a significant increase in the amount of water available to the metropolitan area.

The locals have asked why the metropolitan area should have access to the water in the south west. In answering that question we must look at the Mundaring Weir and realise that, although it is a metropolitan dam, all the water in that dam is used for either the goldfields or a large proportion of the wheatbelt. Perth people are not saying, "That is our water; we need to keep it here." That is also a reasonable attitude to take towards water in the south west.

## GILLEECE, MR JACK, TELEPHONE CALLS

**28. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Has the Premier's former adviser, Jack Gilleece, ever been required to refund, or voluntarily refunded, to the State any moneys relating to personal telephone calls made on a government telephone?
- (2) If yes -
  - (a) what were the amounts refunded and when;
  - (b) to whom were the telephone calls made and were they of a personal or business nature;
  - (c) who requested that the moneys be refunded, was the request the result of any formal investigation and, if so, by whom;
  - (d) when was the Premier aware that Mr Gilleece was refunding money to the State;
  - (e) will the Premier table all details and, if not, why not?

**Mr COURT replied:**

(1)-(2) All of Mr Gilleece's records have been given to the inquiry.

Mr Ripper: So you will not answer this question.

Mr COURT: All of the records have been given to the inquiry, which is being conducted by Mr Watson. It would be inappropriate for comments to be made until that inquiry is finished. I have just said that one cannot be more thorough than doing what is being done.

Mr Ripper: Was it related to the immediate conflict of interest?

Mr COURT: After the inquiry we will answer all of the questions and perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can tell us about his personal telephone calls.

## FISHING PLATFORMS

**29. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister for Fisheries:**

The trial of building fishing platforms on the north side of the Dawesville Channel for seniors and disabled recreational fisherfolk has been an enormous success, so much so that the people in my electorate are asking for four more fishing platforms. Have similar platforms been built in other regions and is there any government assistance for these platforms?

**Mr HOUSE replied:**

I do not know about building four more in the member's electorate! There are a couple of recreational fishing platforms for disabled people around the State; for example, one is located in Augusta. They have served a useful purpose for not only disabled people, but also those recovering from operations and those who are incapacitated temporarily. Of course, it is a lot safer for people with those disabilities to fish from those platforms than from the rocks or any other area. Ten or a dozen

recreational fishing advisory committees around the State get an allocation of about \$5 000 each a year. Along with some help from local government authorities, that funding is put to some innovative uses, one of which is to contribute to the platforms which the member for Dawesville is seeking. Working with Fisheries WA, I am sure the program can be expanded now that the pilot program, particularly at Dawesville, has been successful.

WHITTAKERS LTD, SUPPORT PACKAGE

**30. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for the Environment**

- (1) Can the minister explain why she did not take the opportunity yesterday or today to outline to the Parliament the support package for Whittakers Ltd, which she developed with the Department of Conservation and Land Management and which leaves the State with a financial liability?
- (2) What elements make up the package?
- (3) What is the liability to taxpayers?
- (4) Why did the minister not take that to Cabinet for approval?
- (5) Was it taken to Treasury before being finalised?

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

- (1)-(5) Cabinet was kept informed on a regular basis; it was also taken to the cabinet subcommittee on legal relations from time to time as legal issues arose.

Dr Gallop: The support package?

Mrs EDWARDES: The Leader of the Opposition is talking about the special redundancy package, and it was taken to Cabinet and a decision was -

Dr Gallop: The minister knows the package I am talking about.

Mr Ripper: What about the forgone royalties involved?

Mrs EDWARDES: There are a couple of issues relating Whittakers: One is that Whittakers had insufficient funds to pay its obligations to its employees. As a Government we had a commitment to ensure that those workers were not out of pocket as a result of its closure. Following the decision to close the Whittakers plant because of the impact of the Regional Forest Agreement on its ability to sell the operation as an ongoing concern, the Government took immediate steps to ensure payment of those amounts as well as providing the top-up - that is, the special redundancy package - in the event that the receivers were not able to pay. Whittakers owed the Department of Conservation and Land Management \$3.7m. CALM is a secured creditor, with a fixed and floating charge over \$2m of the company's assets, of which \$1.5m has first ranking. In March, CALM seized all timber on which royalties had not been paid. That power was exercised under the Conservation and Land Management Act, which provides for seizure of forest produce on which royalties, dues and charges have not been paid. Consequently, the department has retained ownership over a significant quantity of sawn timber, which is located at Greenbushes, valued at up \$1.7m. As a Government, we have done everything possible to assist Whittakers to operate as an ongoing concern. When it was not able to do so, we took the appropriate action, with all the necessary steps. We supported the workers, but not in line with the Opposition's policy, which would have put them last.

WHITTAKERS LTD, SUPPORT PACKAGE

**31. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for the Environment:**

I ask a supplementary question. Did the royalty relief package go to Treasury before it was finalised and approved?

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

All proper approvals were taken, including legal advice.

FILM INDUSTRY, FUNDING

**32. Mr BAKER to the minister representing the Minister for the Arts:**

Can the minister provide the House with a brief report about the nature and extent of any assistance provided by the Western Australian Government to the Western Australian film industry?

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

I thank the member for notice of the question. The Minister for the Arts has provided the following answer -

ScreenWest is the agency for the funding and development of film and television. ScreenWest annually receives \$900 000 from Treasury and \$97 000 from the Ministry for Culture and the Arts by way of services. Two other programs also provide funds; namely, the funding program and the industry services program. The funding program provided about \$2.3m by way of loans, grants or investments to eligible Western Australian projects for 1997-98 and 1998-99. The industry services program supports infrastructure developments and other such operations, promotions and productions. Two recent initiatives were the establishment of Granada West and the Screen Industry Taskforce. Granada and ScreenWest will jointly contribute up to \$12m over the next five years to this venture. In 1999-2000, the Government has allocated \$500 000 to that initiative. The Screen Industry

Taskforce will develop a broad-based strategy for the structural development of the screen industry. The total commitment is up to \$6m over five years, which is in addition to ScreenWest's recurrent funding.

SAWMILLS BUY-OUT, MR WALTER JOHNSON

**33. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for the Environment:**

- (1) Can the minister provide details to the House of her proposed buy-out of the three sawmills owned by Mr Walter Johnson?
- (2) What does the Government intend to purchase - the mills or the contracts, or both?
- (3) What provisions are being made to protect the interests of workers affected by that buy-out?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! It really did provoke something, did it not! All the government ministers got upset, and then we brought in the member for Bassendean! Perhaps we can hear the Minister for the Environment.

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

- (1)-(2) We have put in place a special redundancy package for workers, but unlike members opposite, we are interested in job growth. We want to encourage investment, not only in terms of timber restructuring but also in terms of other industry, to provide alternative employment opportunities.

Mr Brown interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Bassendean!

Mrs EDWARDES: Under the Regional Forest Agreement, the forest industry structural adjustment package, which includes both federal and state funding, will provide assistance for businesses that wish to exit -

Mr Brown interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call the member for Bassendean to order for the first time.

Mrs EDWARDES: Some discussions are under way on the Worsley operation. I have not been involved in them, but obviously during those discussions Mr Johnson has made his intentions known by putting the mills onto the market. Anyone who approaches the Government for funding under the FISAP process will be considered.

SAWMILLS BUY-OUT, MR WALTER JOHNSON

**34. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for the Environment:**

I ask a supplementary question. What is the framework of those discussions? What is the minister seeking to buy?

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

As I indicated, discussions are under way, and at present no proposal is on the table.

Mr Kobelke: It is true! The Court Government does not know what it is doing!

Mrs EDWARDES: Not at all. We know exactly what we are doing. Under the Worsley project, there are three mills. Two companies are involved. There is also the timber quota. They have a small karri quota and also a small jarrah quota. Obviously the concern with all business exiting packages is the welfare of the workers, and that is something to which this Government is committed.

TRANSPORT LICENSING OFFICE, JOONDALUP

**35. Mr BAKER to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Government's general philosophy of taking its services to where the people are. With this in mind, will the minister consider the merits of locating a transport licensing office within the Joondalup regional city centre?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

Transport supports its customer requirements for a licensing centre in Joondalup. Strategies for funding a centre in the Joondalup regional city centre are under consideration.

ROAD BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

**36. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Leader of the National Party:**

My question relates to the National Party's transport policy and the Deputy Premier's attempt yesterday to dispute the massive blow-out in the cost of road building and maintenance under his Government. Is the Deputy Premier aware that

the latest published annual report of Main Roads WA shows that the cost of constructing one kilometre of metropolitan road has increased from \$443 000 in 1992-93 to \$1.2m in 1997-98? In light of the Government's published information detailing this massive cost blow-out, how can the Deputy Premier defend the privatisation of Main Roads WA?

**Mr COWAN replied:**

The answer is very easy. The fact is a number of matters need to be taken into account. One is land acquisition.

Ms MacTiernan: Has the cost of land gone up threefold?

Mr COWAN: I imagine that over a seven or eight-year period, there would be a substantial increase in the value of land, and I would be interested to know whether the report refers to that. I am also sure I am on firm ground in saying that -

Mr Brown: But not positive!

Mr COWAN: I am very positive that the actual construction requirements or the standards that are set with regard to load bearing and all of those issues have increased substantially.

Mr Brown: You must be joking! What about the construction of Gnangara Road? It is woeful - a bit of sand and a bit of clay!

Mr COWAN: I cannot help it if the member for Bassendean keeps demonstrating his ignorance of road construction processes, but nevertheless I am positive that I am right when I say that the standards set for roads that have been built have increased markedly. Those are two of the reasons that construction costs have expanded. All I can do is repeat what I said yesterday -

Ms MacTiernan: All you have is an ideological commitment to privatisation. You cannot quote a single fact to support your policy.

Mr COWAN: I just gave two. One of the lessons that members opposite need to learn is that when they ask a question, they cannot really expect us to answer that question and the 27 other questions that come in the form of an interjection. I conclude by saying that we are very proud of the fact that we have trebled the amount of funding for road building in this State.

Ms MacTiernan: I ask a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no supplementary.

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