



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18 August 1999

Legislative Assembly

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THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bloffwitch) took the Chair at 12.00 noon, and read prayers.

JOONDALUP TRAIN STATION, PARKING AREA

Petition

Mr Baker presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 246 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 23.]

BILLS: INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Acts Amendment (Fixed Odds Betting) Bill 1999.
2. Totalisator Agency Board Betting Tax Amendment Bill 1999.

Bills introduced, on motion by Mr Cowan (Deputy Premier), and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 17 August.

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [12.06 pm]: I will continue the remarks that I was making last night, when I raised four issues that I believe are associated with genetically modified foods. I will move to my final concern; that is, community concerns.

The whole issue came to a head early in 1998 when a Scottish research scientist went public with concerns about research that he was doing. The research involved feeding genetically altered food to rats. The scientist told the public that the experiments that he had been doing with a type of potato resulted in a shrinkage of the heart, liver and brain, which caused huge concern. That concern was fuelled because he went public on a number of subsequent occasions to say that the rats which had been fed the potatoes showed obvious defects in their hearts, livers and brains. As members can imagine, in Britain where the public was already very concerned about mad cow disease, the scientist's claims fuelled the public's mistrust of government and food corporations. It also fuelled their mistrust of the way that the whole issue of food safety was being handled. Earlier this year the same phenomenon occurred when 68 scientists came out in support of the Scottish research scientist. Unfortunately, it appears that the scientist was misinterpreting his results. From readings I have done on the issue I understand that although the rats were fed genetically modified potatoes, there was also a chemical in the potatoes that is poisonous to rats. Therefore, although the rats exhibited shrinkages in various organs, those shrinkages may have been linked to the poisonous chemical rather than to the genetically modified potatoes. Nevertheless the issue suddenly became part of the consciousness of the general community and changes were made. For example, Sainsburys, which is Britain's leading supermarket chain, and which has 20 per cent of the European Union market, has now said that it will sell only genetically-modified-free food in its own brand lines. Therefore, any Sainsburys brand line will not have genetically modified genes in it. This is a huge statement on its part because, as it has such a large share of the market in Britain and the European Union, it has sent a strong signal to consumers about what corporations can do. Sainsburys has done surveys of its consumers and it markets a lot of what it calls organic food, and this is along those lines. However, it signals that the concerns that communities have in Britain and in Europe are being responded to by some of the big corporations. Similarly, Heinz Wattie has banned genetically modified soy from its high-protein baby food. There is a lot of soy in a number of foods and soya beans have been extensively genetically modified. Therefore, it was a big move for Heinz Wattie to take that step.

Mr Cowan: What do you determine is genetically modified if there is no end difference in the characteristics of the product? Do you still have to label it as genetically modified if it happens to be pesticide or insecticide resistant?

Dr EDWARDS: That is a good question which I cannot answer. One would wonder how, over time, Heinz Wattie will get a product that it can guarantee is totally free of genetic modification.

That leads me to the next issues to which I will refer. The question is really: Where to go from here? The Deputy Premier raised a valid concern; that is, how does one figure out what is going on; to what extent does one inform the public; and how do we make sure that the public makes educated decisions? For example, questions which appeared to be facetious were

asked in a survey conducted in different countries. One of the questions was: Is it true that only genetically modified tomatoes contain genes? The answer is obvious - all tomatoes have genes. Anything containing DNA has genes. There were different responses from people of different countries. In parts of Europe where there is a lot of concern and where there is not the same level of education in science as there is in other parts of the world, a huge proportion of the population thought that genetically modified tomatoes had genes and other tomatoes did not. I can see cartoons of tomatoes wearing little pairs of jeans! That demonstrates what has to be dealt with. There were similar questions such as: If people eat genetically modified food, will it change their genes? Of course it does not. We have all eaten genetically modified carrots and none of us has become a carrot!

Mr Cowan: Some might become carrot topped!

Dr Edwards: I am working on it! The question is how literate the community is about understanding basic scientific concepts. We have reached a significant crossroad. Australia has 7 per cent of the world grain trade. We could decide that, upon considering what Sainsburys did in Britain and what is going on in the European Union, Australia's grains will be free of genetic modification and Australia could fill a niche market. However, there are a lot of questions to be asked. Could that be done; is enough known about the grains we already have; who is setting the barriers; and what sort of tests would it have to pass? The most important question is whether we should do it. The world population is growing much faster than the world's food supply. That is a worry for Western Australians given the State's salinity problems because a large percentage of WA's arable land, almost 20 per cent, may be affected by salinity. From an altruistic point of view, and the view of the farmers, we need to know that all the land available is being used in the most sustainable way and that it is providing products to other people of the world.

Mr Johnson: Am I not right in saying that salines are genetically modified?

Dr EDWARDS: No, you are wrong. Saline is salt.

Mr Johnson: What about substances that go into a saline drip?

Dr EDWARDS: I am not sure. I do not want to go down that track as I do not have a lot of time left. At the moment, the only widely grown genetically modified crop in Australia is BT cotton. However, it is likely that the first genetically modified food crops will be grown in Australia in the next few years. All over the world large corporations have huge financial resources to invest in research and development. I gave the example of Monsanto with a research investment of \$1.75b in 1997. It wants a return on its investment. All over the world genetically modified food is being grown at an enormous rate. In 1996 in the United States, there were only 3 million acres of genetically modified crops. By 1997 that figure had risen to 24 million acres and by 1998 it was 55 million acres. I think it is amusing that the United States' standard is acres while we use hectares. The total area of arable land in the United States on which crops could be grown is approximately 71 million acres. Therefore, genetically modified crops are being grown on a large percentage of arable land in the United States.

We need to have this debate in Western Australia as soon as possible. We need to find out what are the benefits. Undoubtedly, there are some. However, we also need to be clear about the disadvantages and risks. Markets are available for genetically-modified-free food if we wish to take advantage of them. If that is so, we must move quickly to ensure our reputation is consistent with that. Perhaps there is an opportunity for farmers and the agricultural industry to be involved in the supply chain in a way that is more productive to them and over which they have more control. One of the fears that I have is that, because of the involvement of multinational companies and because they have so much money, WA will be overtaken as it has a small population and it will be left as a victim of the multinationals.

The debate can be summed up by the phrase: Are we looking at Frankenstein foods or functional foods? We have seen examples from elsewhere of these products affecting ecosystems. As time goes by there may be instances of these substances affecting health. We have the dilemma of whether to act quickly to defeat the multinationals on our own territory, or take the time to inform the community, have a proper debate and consider in a truly scientific way the negative points of this issue.

I now raise issues of concern in my electorate. The first issue is the need for infill sewerage in parts of Dianella and Yokine that are in my electorate. These suburbs have had different members look after their interests in the past few years. I inherited these areas when the boundary of my electorate was changed at the last election. Before that, they were covered by the member for Dianella, who is currently the Minister for Water Resources, and before him the Labor member for Dianella had responsibility. For many years people in Dianella have been demanding infill sewerage. It is yet to arrive despite the Premier's \$800m in-fill sewerage program. In 1992, the then member for Dianella, Hon Keith Wilson, was concerned about the impact of polluted ground water from leaking septic tanks on people's bores. They were tested. The current minister for Water Resources followed up that issue. People in Dianella have long believed that they were about to receive infill sewerage. We have been told that the earliest something will be done is next financial year. Given delays, no-one is waiting with bated breath for it to happen on 1 July 2000. It will happen after that. I recently surveyed people in the area to find out their concerns and how they are being affected. I shall tell the Parliament about the difficulties that people in this block of land in southern Dianella and parts of Yokine are having as a result of this lack of infill sewerage. The comment in one of the survey forms is -

We have plans drawn up to extend our house. We have been told if we go ahead with our extension we have to upgrade our septic system (\$4000). Then in 3 yrs time sewerage goes through and we've wasted \$4000. When we bought the house 2 ½ yrs ago we were told sewerage would go through approx yr 2000.

It is unlikely to be in place in 2000 unless something dramatic changes.

Dr Hames: I heard a few things you said that are not correct. The testing done by Keith Wilson was not in Dianella; it was in Yokine. We still have those tests. They show only one bore had any degree of contamination. Under your Government there was no infill sewerage proposal, you were spending something like \$3m a year on infill sewerage.

Dr EDWARDS: I have only four minutes left in which to complete my speech, and I have made no criticism of the minister; in fact I have acknowledged his efforts.

Dr Hames: I have brought it forward when it was not on the program. It was on the 10-year program but in the latter stage. It is now on the shorter-term program and it will be done in the next year or two.

Dr EDWARDS: The difficulty is that people who live in that area believe it will happen at any minute. I will indicate what is happening in another case. These people need to pump out their septic system every 18 months to two years. They had to replace a well recently and the average cost over the last eight years has been \$200 a year, excluding the well renewal. I am receiving many complaints and I am sure the minister received them previously because he covered the same part of the electorate. Another complaint states -

I have spent over \$4,000 in the past 3 years on replacement tanks and regular pump outs.

A further comment on a survey form was -

I have lived in Dianella since 1961 and the septic tank system is a terrible burden.

These people say they are waiting with "bated breath" for the infill sewerage. Yet another household must pump out their septic tank system every two years and complains about the tip fees, as did many other people in the survey, which are "extremely high".

Dr Hames: That is why it was brought forward. You must appreciate, as shadow Minister for the Environment and as a member of the Bayswater catchment management committee, that areas which are on the Morley drain are much more important than those in higher areas, such as that portion of Dianella.

Dr EDWARDS: It is an extremely important area and these people feel duped. They have sent me copies of the letter and pamphlet sent to them by Richard Court a number of years ago. Every time they ask about the progress, they are promised that they are on the rolling rota and it will happen soon, but nothing has happened. Some pensioners want to subdivide their properties, and others feel they cannot invite their relatives to visit them because they are not sure that their septic tanks will last during the course of a party. When people have plans to build patios and cannot get building approval because of the sewerage problem, something urgent needs to be done.

Dr Hames: You should tell these people how very lucky they are to have a Government that will give them a sewerage system within six years. They would have waited longer under the previous Labor Government.

Dr EDWARDS: I will tell them how lucky they are to have me as their local member, rather than the previous local member who cannot provide that service quickly enough. It is an urgent problem in Dianella. The minister is seeking to make mileage from this issue. When the former member handed his files to the minister, the minister wrote to those people and said he was working on the issue. Yet, now they must complain to a Labor member of Parliament.

Dr Hames: That was in Yokine.

Dr EDWARDS: I cover parts of Yokine.

Dr Hames: Every one of those has its sewerage system.

Dr EDWARDS: No they do not. People from Yokine complain they do not have access to a sewerage system, and presumably they would not have written to me in the past week if that were not the case.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [12.24 pm]: In rising to support the Address-in-Reply motion and thank the Governor for his presentation last week, I advise the House that I will spend my allotted time on the topic of media responsibility in a western democracy.

Until recent decades in human history, information and news have taken considerable time to pass from village to village, town to town or country to country. People were generally given information at a rate at which they were able to consider, digest and accept or reject the information presented to them. Today, it is commonly accepted that we suffer from information overload, with the various forms of media now present in a modern society such as that in Western Australia, and that we are generally unable to consider the full meaning and implications of that huge volume of information presented to us.

The communication revolution has brought many benefits; for example, the fall of communism in eastern Europe and the former USSR was undoubtedly hastened by the inability of the communist regimes to suppress the truth about the social, economic and environmental costs of their failed political systems. To give a personal example, in 1988 when I was working in south east coastal China, I asked my American host, who had ties with China going back to before the 1938 Shanghai communist rebellion, what future he saw for the most populous nation on earth. In reply he pointed to the presence of at least one television set in every small village we had visited and asked what I thought the Chinese wanted when they could receive Hong Kong television stations and look in awe at the fabulous wealth and luxury displayed in programs such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. He said, "Clearly, they want the same things that they see on American television programs and, whether under a communist Government or otherwise, they will be the hardest working capitalists one could imagine." Ten years later, China continues to have one of the highest economic growth rates of any nation on earth, which is an example of the power of modern communications.

The influence of modern communications in general, and of the media in particular, is profound. In my view it is close to being the dominant force or influence on most Western Australians. Studies have shown that all Australians are today enjoying more leisure time than in the past. Even those in the lower socioeconomic groups are devoting as many hours each week to leisure and recreational activities, such as television, movies, sport, Internet surfing and computer games, as the richest Australians. Therefore, the mechanisms to influence people exist via the media, and the opportunity to readily and repeatedly reach the ordinary Australian via the media is beyond doubt. With the media holding such an important position in all our lives, it is crucial that the responsibility of the media for that influence on our thinking, attitudes, product purchases and political preferences be recognised, brought into the open and discussed in the wider community. Why? So that whenever the media attempts to influence us in ways that are not fair or reasonable, we will recognise that attempted coercion.

Mr Carpenter: Who will?

Mr MASTERS: We, the community, will recognise it and judge its message accordingly.

I need not remind members that John Laws is currently subject to seven inquiries for his deals with the banks, through which he and his radio station were paid \$1.2m to make favourable comments about the banks. It is gratifying that some sections of the media have accepted the challenge presented by the term "investigative journalism" and are delving into the dealings of some of their colleagues to discover what other "bought favours" exist within their industry. In my discussions with ordinary Western Australians, they express abhorrence for this type of cheque book journalism. In their busy lives, they prefer a reasonable degree of honesty and integrity to be displayed by the media. It is, therefore, a sad reflection on certain sections of the media that I am unable to express much confidence in the acceptance by the media of a high degree of responsibility to meet the reasonable expectations of our society. It may therefore be instructive to give a few examples.

On a lighter note, I start by talking about *The Mirror* newspaper, which closed its doors in the 1950s. It had a reputation as a rag - as a paper that deliberately tried to humour or amuse its readers. No-one took it too seriously, since it used to create stories where none existed. A classic example is that, over the years, it sent wreaths to the funerals of high profile, carefully chosen targets with an unsigned card bearing the words "I will always love you" attached to the wreath. The newspaper would then follow up with a major news story the following day, trying to generate a story about the mystery lover or acquaintance that no-one knew about. More seriously, on 13 August 1994 *The Economist* magazine reported the following quote from the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*. It quoted Rupert Murdoch, media baron and one of the world's richest men, as saying, "Only last year we helped the Labor Government in Canberra." Members may recall that 1993 was the year of the federal election when certain sections of the media ran major scare campaigns against John Hewson's Fightback package, which happened to include the GST proposal. It certainly causes me a great deal of concern to see one of the most influential media barons in the world saying that he was pleased to help the Labor Government in Canberra.

In *The West Australian* of 28 April 1998 the following article appeared -

The Federal Government has accused the ABC of political bias in its coverage of the waterfront dispute.

The acting executive producer of the ABC's Country Hour program, Bruce Reynolds, issued a written directive to regional news rooms banning coverage of a New South Wales farmers' rally to protest against the actions of the Maritime Union of Australia.

The ABC defended its decision on the basis that the farmers' rally was a political event.

But on Brisbane radio yesterday, [27 April 1998] the ABC aired an interview promoting a Roman Catholic Church rally in support of the MUA and critical of the Government.

I must submit that the ABC, at least in that instance, showed double standards if not political bias. On 21 September 1998 *The West Australian* ran a photograph with an article reporting Opposition Leader Kim Beazley's claim that used cars would cost more under a GST. Remember that this was in the lead-up to the 7 October federal election. The photograph and article supporting Kim Beazley's claim ran to 60 column centimetres.

Mr Carpenter: Did you count them?

Mr MASTERS: I did indeed. The following day a report from Western Australian car dealers stating that this claim was absolutely false attracted only 30 column centimetres, exactly half the amount of the previous day's article.

Most of my examples of media bias - they may be little more than just plain, ordinary, poor journalism - relate to the past two years of debate on the Regional Forest Agreement. My first example on this issue relates to Liam Bartlett's morning program on ABC Radio. It is bad enough to hear people from the Forest Protection Society complain that as soon as they announce who they are, they are told, "Sorry, we have no time left to let you have your say," yet anti-logging supporters comprise the overwhelming majority of subsequent phone-in speakers; or the claim by Mr Bartlett some months ago that he could not find anyone with a scientific background to come out on his radio program and speak in favour of the RFA. Mr Bartlett was not courteous enough then to reply to my phone message or then to my fax advising that I was not only a member of Parliament but also a professional zoologist to boot with extensive experience in the south west environment. I must say that I was not convinced after that that Mr Bartlett wanted someone with a scientific background to talk on his program in support of the RFA.

My real criticism is reserved for *The West Australian*. I cannot recall how many letters to the editor or media releases I have submitted to that newspaper, with a near 100 per cent rejection rate. It is the dishonesty or bias, or both, of the reporting that has occurred in *The West Australian* that I find unacceptable and irresponsible. Let me give members just two examples.

Last year, *The West Australian* ran an article stating that scientists in general, including some employed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, were afraid to speak out against the RFA for fear of disciplinary action or for fear of losing their jobs. Being a scientist and having a deep interest in the RFA issue, I responded with a media release, which I sent to *The West Australian*, in which I offered the protection of parliamentary privilege to anyone who would take the trouble to contact me if he or she was concerned about the risk of losing their job. I offered to raise the concerns in Parliament in a way that protected his or her anonymity but brought the concerns to the public's attention. What was the result? Essentially none. Not wanting to apply undue pressure on the responsible journalist, I waited for two weeks to see whether I would get any media coverage of my media release. I then phoned Geraldine Capp and asked why my release did not receive coverage. She admitted that she had seen it. After some hesitation the words she used to me were along the lines of "It was just not a headlining thing." With respect to Ms Capp, a politician with a science degree is unusual enough; one who knows a fair bit about a contentious topic is also a bit unusual; but an MP willing to use parliamentary privilege to raise major issues of concern that could result in professional scientists otherwise losing their jobs, surely is a newsworthy item. More recently, when, after the original RFA was announced, the Government was severely criticised for daring to admit that heath, scrub, rock outcrops and water courses - in other words, non-treed ecosystems - were included in forest reserves, within hours of that article appearing in *The West Australian* I sent a media release directly to the responsible journalist, Anne Burns, pointing out the environmental necessity for such ecosystems to be included in forest reserves so as to protect all biodiversity. The result - no article.

I then raised the same issue at the Liberal Party State Conference in July and, in front of several journalists, I quoted from the *Forest Information Resource Kit*, published in February of this year by the Conservation Council, the WA Forest Alliance and the Wilderness Society. On page 13, under the heading "WA's old growth forest - a guide", it reads that the old-growth forest of WA's south west also encompasses other ecosystems that are not tree-dominated, such as heathlands and wetlands. There was the conservation movement, the anti-logging groups, agreeing with the Government that it was absolutely essential to have non-treed ecosystems in forest reserves to protect their biodiversity. I gave an extract of this publication to Jennifer Grove from *The West Australian* but, no surprise, there was no coverage.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Carpenter interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Willagee! It is just not acceptable for people to be having their little say across this Chamber when another member is addressing the Chair.

Mr MASTERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I could continue giving further examples of what I consider to be either biased or poor journalism, but a more important question remains to be answered: Why do some sections of the media display bias, or, at the very least, a failure to report in a responsible manner? To try to answer this question, I refer members to an article that appeared in the April 1995 journal of the Australia New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, or ANZAAS. The article was entitled "Who are Australia's science journalists?" The article was written by John Henningham, foundation professor of journalism at the University of Queensland. The article included an analysis of the ideological positions and federal voting intentions of almost 1 000 non-scientific journalists around Australia. The findings are interesting to say the least. Although 43.2 per cent of those journalists described their ideological position as middle of the road, 39.7 per cent placed themselves to the left of centre, with only 17 per cent placing themselves to the right of centre. In relation to their federal voting intentions, 36.6 per cent indicated that they would vote for the Australian Labor Party and 32.1 per cent indicated that they would vote for the Liberal and National Parties. It is possible to manipulate those numbers to allocate the votes of the Democrats and the Greens, and the other votes, in a number of different ways, but in the fairest possible way that I can allocate the entire voting intentions of those 1 000-odd journalists on a two-party preferred basis, the end result is that 53.9 per cent would have voted for the Australian Labor Party and 46 per cent for the coalition. It is important to understand that even using this 54-46 per cent distribution of preferences or voting intention, it is clear that journalists have a strong preference for the non-conservative parties.

In trying to draw some conclusions from what I have said today, I hope I have demonstrated to a reasonable degree a number of points. Firstly, that media bias occurs is beyond dispute. Secondly, journalists as a group are generally more supportive of the ALP and left wing parties than of the coalition parties. Thirdly, as evidenced by Rupert Murdoch, the media has the power, and at least in the 1993 federal election has used that power, to make a difference at election time. However, it is also important to point out - and I base this on my personal experience - that most journalists are honest, hardworking and dedicated individuals who are genuinely trying to do the right thing by the communities which they serve.

I submit that the question of why there is bias or poor journalism, or any other problem, in the media is not the most relevant question that I can ask. Instead, what is of greatest importance is that all journalists and others involved in the media at all times recognise their positions of influence within our essentially free and democratic society and strive to keep their innate bias, be it supportive of the left or the right, to an absolute minimum. We are all human and we will all occasionally breach the standards that society sets for us; and this applies to politicians as much as it does to journalists and other media players. We must acknowledge our weaknesses, our preferences and our other human features and failings and try to work not for our personal goals but for the goals that serve all Western Australians. The media has a critical responsibility to balance and fairness in a society such as ours. I charge journalists with the challenge of accepting that responsibility to the fullest possible degree.

I conclude by quoting Richard C. Halverson, who was the chaplain to the United States Senate in 1992, when he made the following prayer on the floor of the Senate -

Thank you, Lord, for a free press. . . . But gracious Father, investigative reporting seems epidemic in an election year - its primary objective to defame political candidates. Seeking their own reputation, they destroy another's as they search relentlessly, microscopically for some ancient skeleton in a person's life. Eternal God, help these self-appointed "vacuum cleaner journalists" to discover how unproductive and divisive their efforts are.

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [12.43 pm]: I will make some remarks about the Address-in-Reply, and as is traditional will refer principally to my electorate and the difficulties that confront my electorate at this time. From time to time, country members in this place feel that there is - the member for Geraldton is already nodding his head, which is a good sign - an emphasis on the city, and it can be argued, rightly so, that the bulk of the population lives in the capital of Western Australia, the city of Perth. However, I live in the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, along with some 35 000 people, and it is certainly the view of the people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder that our problems are every bit as important as the problems that confront the larger metropolis of Perth.

The issue that everyone in Kalgoorlie-Boulder is talking about at the moment is not the forests. The people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder are not really interested in the forests. They have a view, if asked, about what should happen, but they will not decide how to vote on the basis of the forest issue, and they are not terribly happy with some of the outcomes that are occurring with regard to this issue, because there is a strong feeling that the Court Government has a particular view about the jobs of timber workers but has another view about the jobs of mining industry workers. A huge number of people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder have been retrenched or have had their job security threatened. Job security is already a big issue in Kalgoorlie-Boulder because of the changing working environment, where workplace agreements often mean that people cannot be confident about their future in particular jobs, and that is one issue that people are talking about.

Commodity prices is another issue that people are talking about. The gold price is currently at a 20-year low. While one of the great things about the goldfields community is that we like to be optimistic, and we are optimistic about the future of the gold price, among other things, Kalgoorlie-Boulder is experiencing some economic pain, and many people whose jobs may be secure at the moment are not prepared to stay in the home in which they have principally invested their life savings and run the risk that they may need to put their home on the market at a later stage when perhaps the economy has declined even more. Having said that, I do not want to be held up as being a gloom and doom merchant, because quite to the contrary I believe that Kalgoorlie-Boulder has a vibrant future. However, we are concerned that there be adequate government intervention where appropriate. While a huge number of issues confront the mining industry, many of those are federal issues and relate to the current Ralph taxation review, and we hope the Court Government is having some input into the federal decision making about those issues, but we do not see a great deal of evidence of that.

I do not want to spend my whole speech talking about those issues, because by and large members know what those issues are. I want to spend some time talking about the way in which the drop in the gold price has affected my community, and about how that has emphasised the issue of native title. I want to talk about some positives that are occurring in my electorate with regard to native title, some negatives, and some absolute misnomers that are being peddled around my community by the Court Government and its representatives.

The Youth Parliament was held in this place on Monday. Unfortunately, I could not attend that event due to electorate commitments. James Calvert from Eastern Goldfields High School was the youth member for Kalgoorlie in this House, and Jade Orazi was a youth member for the Mining and Pastoral Region in the upper House. I am sure those two gifted young students made a terrific contribution, and I have received very good feedback from those in charge of the program about their contribution. James told me yesterday that when he gave his Address-in-Reply speech - and I admit to being a bit miffed that the youth member for Kalgoorlie made his speech before I did - it so happened that he talked about the gold price, overcrowding in the Eastern Goldfields High School, and the shortage of general practitioners which is hitting my town and many other country areas. It is interesting that health, education and the economic future of our community were the issues that James spoke about, and they are also the issues that I will speak about, but with an emphasis on native title. Once again, I applaud those who organised the Youth Parliament because it is an extremely valuable way of introducing to the wider community what parliamentarians are all about. That is essential, and it should be done in a bipartisan fashion. The role for all parliamentarians is to get together and work out how we can talk to the community about what our jobs involve, because we have an ever-declining status in the community.

I return to the positives concerning native title. Last year the Governor delivered an address in which he referred to native title and the Native Title (State Provisions) Bill as being the single most important piece of legislation that would be dealt with. I was surprised that in this year's speech the Governor did not make the same mention of native title and it has not been given the same priority by the Court Government this year. I wondered why that could be, because clearly a year has passed and we are not much closer to sorting out this issue legislatively. What is forgotten by the community at large, and perhaps by members opposite, is that whatever piece of legislation passes this State Parliament must go to both Houses of the Federal Parliament for approval. There is no point in passing legislation here if it is unlikely to pass the Federal Parliament.

I have been examining what is acceptable to the political parties in the Federal Parliament. The Queensland legislation is yet to go through the Senate, but on present indications it will be passed by all of the parties in the Federal Senate. Therefore, I wonder why the Court Government is not examining more closely the text of the Queensland legislation, with particular emphasis on the way in which the Queensland State Government has dealt with the issue of exploration access; that is, a distinction is made in the granting of mining leases, there being prospecting and exploration leases as opposed to mining leases. Our legislation does not make that kind of distinction. Anybody could see that it is most important that we deal with this issue of land access for exploration as a priority. In 1998, native title was the single most important piece of legislation in the speech written for the Governor by the Government, and I wonder why in 1999 it is not.

During the last 12 months in my electorate there have been some extremely positive developments in dealing with native title. That has occurred in spite of the legislation and in spite of the fact that there does not seem to be a great deal of willingness by this Government to enter into proper negotiations with all of the stakeholders to find a solution. That puzzles me continually. I watch reports on the television news at night and read stories in the newspaper about the war in Kosovo, for example, where dreadful atrocities are being committed. However, there is dialogue between the warring parties to try to find a resolution. I see what is happening on the world stage in the old Northern Ireland conflict. One would assume that to be a fairly intractable conflict, yet again there is dialogue. All the relevant heads of state put a great deal of effort into ensuring there is dialogue. I am not suggesting a war is going on in relation to native title, but no dialogue is occurring. Why is that?

I speak to my constituents about this issue and they are upset about it, in the same way as the timber workers who are at our front doorstep are extremely concerned about their livelihood. I have every sympathy for them because if I were in their position I would probably be doing exactly what they are doing. In my electorate, drillers, geologists, mining surveyors and samplers are equally concerned about their livelihoods, and they are continually on my doorstep asking me why they are being told they cannot have access to land. Essentially, they tend to ask why the Court legislation cannot be passed, because if it were, the situation would be rectified and they could return to the backblocks and look for gold forthwith. The difficulty is that even if the Court legislation were passed unamended tomorrow, they would not be out in the scrub looking for gold; they would have to wait for the legislation to go to the Federal Parliament and be passed by both Houses there.

Therefore, it is shortsighted in the extreme to think that legislation will suddenly go through this Parliament and then, hey presto, things will be fixed. For that reason the Opposition has expended a great deal of effort to have workable legislation presented and passed. The Titles Validation Amendment Bill could have been passed in this House, as amended in the other place, in December last year. We had a special sitting on 23 December last year and that legislation could have been passed, but it was not. It was eventually passed much later, this year.

Some politicking has been occurring concerning residential and commercial leaseholders, particularly those in my electorate. The reason those residential leaseholders risk losing their homes is not native title claims. The native title claimants have excised residential leases from their claims. What is confronting them is a problem with spiralling Department of Land Administration rents. They have experienced up to 2 000 per cent increases in their rents, and they simply cannot afford them. These people own the residential properties but they do not own the land; they lease it. A lady in her fifties, who was born in a particular home, was paying about \$100 per annum for the rent of the land. That amount has now skyrocketed to about \$1 500 per annum. That might not sound a lot to us, on our salaries; however, it was \$100 per annum and it is now \$1 500 per annum. Another family pays \$2 600 per annum for rent. Therefore, these families will not be able to sell the improvements to the properties. I suspect that other country members would have constituents in similar situations. In any event, that issue became a political football. The real problem is that people cannot afford to pay these rents, particularly in times of economic pain and job uncertainty. That issue has been largely ignored by the Minister for Lands, who is the minister responsible for it. I will continue to work on that issue.

I said I would talk about some positives. I refer to a meeting which I attended on 19 July 1999 and which basically came out of a desire to have all the local stakeholders present to start to talk about how, at a local level, we can ensure that indigenous land use agreements are forthcoming and that some dialogue takes place at a local level. People in my electorate are sick and tired of waiting for politicians - I use that word collectively; it does not matter to which party they belong - who cannot sort things out. What they want inevitably is for us to come together in a bipartisan fashion to sort things out. That is why I appeal to the Premier to have some form of round-table discussion and dialogue between all the relevant parties to this issue.

We have three choices on native title: Litigate, legislate or negotiate. Those three choices will not change. Litigation is expensive, involves long delays and is not the best option. If there is legislation that the parties do not like, they will go back to the litigation option. Negotiated outcomes are by far the best. We can do that locally, and that is why this meeting on 19 July was a positive step, because the major land council as well as other representative bodies were present. Clearly, there was goodwill from the Aboriginal groups who were present as far as wanting dialogue in order to forge ahead to achieve negotiated outcomes. However, I am disturbed to inform the House that there has not been a meeting since 19 July.

Some people present at that meeting, most notably representatives of the Australian Prospectors and Leaseholders' Association, have taken the initiative and are having ongoing dialogue with the Goldfields Land Council. One positive development is that the north east independent body has granted a blanket exemption to prospectors and said that they can have access for prospecting purposes to all the land that falls within the area of that representative group. The north east independent body represents about 20 claimant groups. Prospectors now have open access to all that land. Objections will not be lodged over prospecting licence applications. This is the way to go. The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, under the auspices of Mayor Paul Robson, is extremely enthusiastic and willing to get behind and sponsor these talks. There was to be a further meeting. I note the minutes record that it was the intention of the meeting to invite the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to Kalgoorlie. I do not have any difficulty with that. It is a good idea because it might be a way of getting -

Mr Cowan: Nor do I.

Ms ANWYL: I am pleased to hear that the Deputy Premier thinks it is a good idea. If the political leaders are present, perhaps they can start some dialogue, and that is what is missing in this entire debate. I keep asking this: Why is the Premier not asking for there to be dialogue at a state level? I do not understand that. Why not get the sectional interests together around the table in the same way as occurs diplomatically around the world in much more complex and difficult problems?

Mr Cowan: Knowing the Premier, as I do, I am very confident he will attend a meeting if one is arranged.

Ms MacTiernan: Unless the real aim is to play the race card for electoral advantage.

Ms ANWYL: That is one thing people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder are starting to ask now.

Mr Cowan: That's not the case, and you know that.

Ms MacTiernan: We don't know that.

Mr Cowan: Yes you do.

Ms MacTiernan: In fact, we believe the exact opposite.

Mr Bradshaw: You're the ones who are using race to try to win a few votes.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McHale): Order! The member for Kalgoorlie has the call.

Ms ANWYL: I am very pleased to -

Point of Order

Mr COWAN: Madam Acting Speaker, I would like very much to have you seek some advice from the Clerks, to clarify whether the interjection made by the member for Armadale is contrary to Standing Order No 132. If it is, that interjection should be retracted, if it was recorded by the Hansard reporter.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Perhaps the Deputy Premier might like to explain Standing Order No 132.

Mr COWAN: Standing Order No 132 states -

All imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

For someone to make that claim, as the member for Armadale did, is an imputation. It is quite improper and, in my view, it is highly disorderly. I think it should be retracted.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Does the member for Armadale wish to add to the point of order?

Ms MacTIERNAN: If I may respond -

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member can take a further point of order.

Ms MacTIERNAN: If that very broad interpretation of that provision is accepted, there simply would be no debate in this House. There are continual references of this sort, such as we had from the member for Murray-Wellington, who imputed that we were supporting native title for the base purpose of simply trying to win votes. Members on the other side continually suggest that the policies we develop are simply to kowtow to union leaders, for example. That is a frequent refrain. If we are to adopt this absurdly broad -

The ACTING SPEAKER: I do not think the member for Armadale is taking a further point of order, but her comments are well made. I listened to what the member said and I do not believe there was a deliberate imputation of improper motives. I take the opportunity to remind members that we do have a set of standing orders and that it is not proper to impugn members. In this instance I do not believe that was the case.

Debate Resumed

Ms ANWYL: In any event, I am pleased to hear that the Deputy Premier would like to participate and believes the Premier would like to participate, too. Maybe this will be a way for some dialogue to ensue. All the people who elected us to this place want dialogue and adequate discussion to occur so there can be some resolution of this matter. It is not much good just having politicians talking, but that would be a start. Clearly, it is open to the Premier and the Deputy Premier to sponsor talks to include all the relevant interests.

On the positive side, we have seen encouraging advances in both the goldfields and Western Australia generally, and I will spend the bulk of the remaining time available to me in this debate talking about those. As I said, there has been a meeting of the land access group; however, I am disturbed that it has not met since 19 July. There is plenty of room to continue to talk about local agreements. We do not need the three most senior politicians in Western Australia to be there to do that. That can be done in Kalgoorlie-Boulder with the local groups. The goldfields are well known for leading the mining industry, not just historically but also now, and for seizing the initiative, taking the opportunity and developing real outcomes. We can continue to do that. For my part, I intend to attempt to convene another of these meetings. I was very pleased that all the parties were present and there was a general consensus that there can be a push for some outcomes on the issue of freeing up land access.

As I said before, the prospectors of the north east independent body have reached an agreement. There is no reason for that not to continue. There is no reason that the agreements of the type announced recently in the Kimberley, and more recently in the south west, cannot continue. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia had a role to play in those agreements. The south west agreement covered 34 exploration tenements. There has been agreement that soil sampling and survey work does not require a clearance, that it can go ahead forthwith on the basis that there is an understanding about an expedited process as to more invasive surveying work.

As to low-impact exploration, earlier I spoke about the Queensland regime. I would like to hear from the Government not only how we proceed in relation to the State legislation, but also the fact that this must go through Federal Parliament. There must be an opportunity for consensus at that level, too. This is not just a state issue as people might think. It will inevitably be a federal issue shortly. As soon as the Northern Territory and Queensland legislation, and I am sure that of other States, is before Federal Parliament, this will again be regarded nationally as a federal issue by us, and by our constituents, too.

The south west agreements and the Kimberley Land Council memorandum of understanding are not solutions on their own but they are a big step towards finding solutions to the issue. There has been a massive decrease, from more than 80 to less than 30, in the number of claims in the goldfields, largely as a result of the federal registration test. In two registration test instances 30 claims were amalgamated into one and another 16 claims were amalgamated into two. The registrations were approved by the Native Title Tribunal and the State Government has appealed those decisions. The State Government has appealed against 30 claims becoming one and 16 claims becoming two. Why is that? I would have thought that was a good question and I would like an answer sooner or later from the Government about that. I cannot believe that when 30 claims are reduced to one the State Government can say to the tribunal, "We do not accept this, we want to appeal." Obviously the Government is trying to knock out that one claim. Instead of embracing the positive result that has occurred with the amalgamation of so many claims into one, there will be a further holdup in the proceedings with appeals being lodged by the very party, the State Government, which says, "We are very keen to progress all this, we want this fixed." I would like to know why these appeals have been lodged. Federal funding has been granted to the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders Association. As I said, it seized the opportunity to continue talks and I hope the parties will continue to have more talks in Kalgoorlie. We had a meeting on 19 July but there has been nothing since. I am keen for there to be urgent talks and I hope the Deputy Premier will be able to attend some of those talks.

I spoke previously about the Government's actions on the Titles Validation Amendment Bill but other issues are creating difficulty. These other examples do not augur well for the Government's true intentions on native title. The Department of Minerals and Energy is understaffed, which is blamed on the processing of exploration licence applications. Obviously there are other types of prospecting and mining applications; however, at 1 May 1999 there were 890 exploration licence applications awaiting submission into the process; they had not even entered the process under the Department of Minerals and Energy's section 29 procedure. I have been told by more than one land council that what occurs next is a flooding of these applications when they enter the system all at once. Instead of an orderly progression of these licence applications into the section 29 procedure, as occurs in most administrative procedures, there is a sudden flooding of the land councils which, by and large, are not well resourced. This flooding effectively forces the land councils to lodge blanket objections to exploration licence applications, which is not a good thing.

In response to these negative aspects, a petition calling for the abolition of native title has been circulating in my electorate, published by Graeme Campbell and bearing his photograph. That is not the way forward. Even if it were legislatively possible, which I do not believe it is, it would lead to litigation. As I said, we have three choices - litigate, legislate or negotiate. Negotiation has to be the preferred option. It can occur, and has been occurring, at local levels. The south west and Kimberley agreements are examples of that negotiation. Why is negotiation not occurring at the state level? The reason for that is the Government does not want this problem to be fixed. The Government is not serious about achieving a proper resolution of this issue. The Premier has not made an attempt to bring all of the Aboriginal interests together; he does not have dialogue, nor does his office, with the native title working party. He does not have proper dialogue with all of the interested parties. That in itself is an answer to the question. It establishes that the Government is not serious about clearing up this issue. If the Government wanted to move forward, and if the Premier was a statesman, it would have at least conducted sponsored talks. People in my electorate want this matter fixed and they want it fixed now. I want the Opposition to be part of that dialogue. I took the opportunity when the federal opposition leader visited Kalgoorlie to impress upon him that there must be dialogue at a federal level. There must be dialogue at a state level and the Opposition must be part of that. Why is the Government not prepared to engage in dialogue? Why is the Government not prepared to bring all of the relevant parties around a table and thrash out this issue? It is because it wants this matter to be an election issue. It wants to make up for the city seats it knows it will lose at the next election and it thinks it can win country seats by this course of action. The tide is turning on this issue and the Government will be proved wrong.

Amendment to Motion

Ms ANWYL: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Government has consistently misled the people of Western Australia about road funding including falsely claiming that all money collected for the State from fuel levies goes into road funding and by understating the federal contribution to Western Australian roads.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [1.16 pm]: It is unfortunate that only the Minister for Works and Services is in the Chamber. The Australian Labor Party wants to raise some serious issues about road funding and I was hoping that we would be able to get some decent responses.

Mr Bradshaw: Just relax, we will have someone here shortly.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I would hope that the Government would take parliamentary debate a little more seriously and would ensure that someone was present to take heed of the points that we make and attempt to justify the lies and deceit that have been occurring for some time on road funding. I suppose it is just a sign of the contempt in which the Government holds this Parliament and the people of Western Australia that ministers are not present to respond to these various and detailed allegations that we will raise in this place.

The first issue I want to raise relates to the fuel franchise levy. There are certain agreed facts: We all know that a fuel levy of about 9.2¢ per litre was in place in Western Australia. There was then a massive hike in the levy by this current Government on the promise that it would build more and better roads.

Mr Bradshaw: We are.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Government is not; it is building roads that are falling apart. However, that was the promise and on that basis a number of people signed up to support the Government on that levy. Then there was the unfortunate - I acknowledge unfortunate - High Court decision that prevented this State from gathering the fuel franchise levy. It was held that this was a tax and not something that the States were capable of collecting. There was an agreement with the Commonwealth that it would collect the levy on behalf of all the States and hand it back to the States. However, because of the provisions of the Constitution, it had to be levied at a uniform rate around Australia and the rate agreed on, for a whole variety of reasons, was 8.1¢ per litre. Therefore, the fuel levy went down considerably because of that requirement. Under the previous system, the Government by law - I understand introduced by the Labor Government - was required to pay these fuel franchise levies directly into the transport trust fund.

Legislation exists which hypothecates those funds so they cannot be siphoned off for general revenue. Of course, when the High Court decision was handed down and the State was no longer able to collect those revenues, the whole ball game changed. The money received from the Commonwealth, while clearly substituting for the money previously collected by the State, was not subject to that legislation. No longer was it necessary to put that money through the transport trust fund. The then Minister for Transport, the Tammin tiger, raced around the countryside saying the Government would do the right thing and would put all this money back into the transport trust fund and all of it would be spent on roads. Many statements to that effect were made and many undertakings given.

The Opposition has discovered that, for the past two years, that agreement with the people of Western Australia has been breached and the amount of money put into the transport trust fund was considerably less than it should have been. The Government creamed off \$36m in 1998-99 and expects to cream off \$43.8m this year. When the Opposition initially asked questions, it received answers from the bureaucrats. The answers indicated that the Government received more money than expected for two reasons: Lower than expected off-road diesel subsidies and a different rate of growth for the fuel franchise fee - it has grown more than expected. The Government got more than it projected and thought it could pull a swiftie on the people of Western Australia by ripping that money out of the system and putting it into consolidated revenue to help cover the hole in the budget. Quite simply, it is not good enough for the Government to go out time and again and tell the people of Western Australia that it is putting all this money into roads when it is in fact taking money off the side on the sole justification that it received more than it thought it would and decided to keep the rest. It is not good enough.

Even after the Opposition made these revelations, the Premier was shamelessly prepared to continue to misrepresent the case to the people of this State. Eoin Cameron, on ABC radio, questioned the Premier about this matter and asked -

This is a report on money that was supposed to going into being spent on roads has gone into internal revenue. Consolidated revenue.

Mr Court replied -

Oh no, I mean, in relation to petrol taxes, as you know the state lost a High Court decision and . . . we can . . . the states can no longer collect those revenues so they are being collected by the federal government, and we made a commitment that the additional funds that were flowing through were going back onto roads, and that's what's occurred.

That is what he said, "We made a commitment that the additional funds that were flowing through were going back onto roads, and that's what's occurred." Mr Cameron asked -

Every single cent?

The Premier replied -

Every single cent of those additional revenues has gone back onto the roads.

Mr Cameron then said -

Premier, thank you for your time . . .

There was not even any attempt on the part of the Premier to modify his initial misrepresentations. He is still out there claiming that every cent of the money being collected by the Commonwealth on behalf of the State is going into that fund.

We learnt yesterday from the ramblings of the Minister for Transport that the situation is even worse, that another \$7.8m has been sidelined to pay for the running of the Department of Transport in addition to \$79m which has been taken out over the past two years. The minister's explanation for that \$7.8m going into the transport trust fund and not being spent by Main Roads Western Australia but being warehoused and used in the Department of Transport was that it is a traditional amount. A traditional amount of \$7.8m a year is not being spent on roads. When we add it up, a grand total of \$94.8m has been taken out of road funding over two years - \$94.8m which has been taken by this Government and placed into consolidated revenue or the Department of Transport. At the same time, this Government will borrow \$221m to fund its road pork-barrelling for the next financial year. It will be hypothecating the State's revenue for the next 10 years to pay off that pre-election debt. I note that the minister representing the Minister for Transport has just entered the Chamber. Unfortunately, he was not here

to listen to the detailed arguments put by the Opposition, so we will get what we always get in this place; that is, a recitation of a set of irrelevant facts which do nothing to answer these serious charges. The minister is not even taking notes. He receives a handout from the Minister for Transport who in turn gets it from a bureaucrat, and this is supposed to be parliamentary accountability. Give us a break!

Mr Bradshaw interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Government should not have four ministers in the upper House. The member knows as well as I do that the only reason the minister has the job is that the National Party could not possibly allow someone else to go in there and see what a mess was made by the former Minister for Transport. Basically, the current minister has the portfolio as a nightwatchman.

However, the level of duplicity deepens. The Government has also ripped off local government. It has ripped off the Western Australian Municipal Association and local governments in this State because when the Government introduced its 4¢ a litre levy and its Transform WA program, it received the support of WAMA on the basis that 25 per cent of the road funding attracted from the fuel franchise levy would go into local roads and that, in particular, 10.5 per cent of that money would go directly into the hands of local governments for them to spend according to their priorities. By even the most conservative estimation - and before we take the Department of Transport money into consideration - we can see the sheer ripping off of money into consolidated revenue. Over the past two years, the Government has ripped \$12m off local government in this State. After the Opposition raised this issue, the President of WAMA, Jamie Edwards, sent a very strong "please explain" letter to the Premier dated 30 July. He asked the Premier whether he could explain how he could justify this rip off and whether he could tell WAMA why local governments were losing out on this \$12m when they were strapped for cash. To date, WAMA has not had the courtesy of a reply. Members in this place deserve an explanation, as does the Western Australian Municipal Association. We need an explanation that goes a little further than, "We just have more than we thought, so we will just keep it." That does not wash with anyone. That is certainly not what the Premier has been saying in the community. He has been saying that every cent we get from the Federal Government's collecting on our behalf has gone into roads. We know that is a nonsense. We know that he has lifted at least \$94m out of that system.

Aside from that issue, the next deceit is the claim that the Government is putting \$43m from consolidated revenue into road funding in this State. We have worked out that it is simply not putting any money whatsoever into road funding; in fact, it has systematically lied about and understated in its budget papers the contribution of the Federal Government. We have compared what it says it received with what the Federal Government budget papers show it received; for example, in the budget papers Mr Criddle claimed that the total commonwealth contribution was \$65.94m. He then detailed how that contribution was broken up. If we look at the federal budget papers, we find that he has understated that amount by about \$43m. He has taken money that was allocated through the financial assistance grants, put it into consolidated revenue and then taken that money from consolidated revenue and claimed that it was a contribution by the State. It is very shoddy.

After going through the funds that are available, our calculations demonstrate clearly that no funding for roads is coming from the State Government. All of the moneys that are spent are either hypothecated sums from the fuel levy, money from motor vehicle registrations or money from the commonwealth grants. No money is coming from the consolidated fund. It is a smokescreen that the Government has put up to make it look as though it is contributing a vast and substantial amount to road funding, whereas it has not been prepared to put any money from consolidated revenue into the system. We have added the various elements - the national highway, the roads of national importance, the black spots and the FAGs money - and the total commonwealth money is not \$65m, as Mr Criddle claimed, but \$108m each year. When we add to that the money from the fuel franchise levy, the permit fees and a few other small, miscellaneous sources of revenue, the total is \$807m. The Minister for Transport said that the Government is spending about \$806m.

Mr Omodei: Can you say that again?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Minister for Transport said that the total spending on roads is about \$806m. When we add up all the sources of funding, excluding the consolidated revenue, and when we add the \$108m given by the State, the money from the transport trust fund - this is leaving aside the \$43m that the Government has ripped out of the system - and the money we attract under the Road Traffic Act through motor vehicle registrations, the total is \$807m.

Mr Omodei: Minister Criddle said that it was \$806m. Are you saying it is more than that? How much is the Labor Party spending?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, I am not saying what the Government is spending; I am saying what it is receiving. I am adding up its sources of revenue. Whether it is \$806m or \$807m is not the point; the point is that all those sources of revenue, without any involvement from consolidated revenue, add up to \$807m. If the Government is spending \$806m, it could not possibly be putting in any money from consolidated revenue. As I said earlier, it is borrowing \$221m this year in order to pork-barrel the electorate of the Minister for Local Government.

Mr Omodei: Are you saying that spending money on roads is pork-barrelling?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The pattern of borrowings for roads indicates that it has been level at around \$60m to \$70m a year, but in one year it will increase from that amount to \$221m, and thereafter it will decrease to \$60m a year. The real problem is that any future Government will have to spend all its money paying off the debt that has been incurred; that is, a debt which simply comes out of nowhere and which has been incurred in one year, because a massive peaking in borrowings will go on over that year. I hope that the members on the government side take note of what has been said. I do not expect them to support the amendment, but these are serious allegations of misleading the public.

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Local Government) [1.36 pm]: I find it quite strange that this amendment has been raised in this House. I understand that a similar motion was debated in the other place yesterday.

Ms MacTiernan: You were not here listening to it.

Mr OMODEI: Talk about repetition of business! The comments that have been provided to me by the Minister for Transport indicate that under the Labor Party in 1993-94 -

Ms MacTiernan: That is not the issue; the issue is that you lied.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr BARNETT: Madam Acting Speaker, point of order -

Ms MacTIERNAN: I withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McHale): Thank you, member for Armadale.

Debate Resumed

Mr OMODEI: In 1993-94, under the Labor Party, the expenditure on roads was \$329m. This year the Government is spending \$806m. If the Labor Party is against spending money on roads, it should say publicly that it is opposed to the Government's spending money on roads; it is as simple as that. As a result of the fuel franchise levy which was stopped by the High Court decision in 1997, the fuel franchise revenue rates per litre which applied prior to August 1997 were 9.67¢ per litre for petrol and 7.45¢ per litre for diesel. The Commonwealth agreed to collect a safety net revenue on behalf of the States at a rate of 8.1¢ per litre for both petrol and diesel. The revenue which would have been collected in Western Australia today using the rates from the pre-High Court decision would have amounted to \$190.1m for 1 966 million litres of petrol and \$60.2m for 808 million litres of diesel. The estimated collections would have been \$250.3m. The revenue which is collected in Western Australia today using the safety net revenue rates of 8.1¢ per litre amounts to \$158.6m for 1 966 million litres of petrol and \$65.04m for 808 million litres of diesel. The estimated collections are \$223.64m. The State Government is supplementing the estimated collection by -

Ms MacTiernan: All you are saying is that we got more -

Mr OMODEI: The member should keep quiet and listen to what I have to say.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms MacTiernan: I have read that speech. Give us an answer.

Mr OMODEI: I am not quoting from the daily *Hansard*. The State Government is supplementing the estimated collections by \$26.66m, which is \$250.3m less \$223.64m, to bring back the transport trust fund to the pre-High Court decision levels. Of the \$457.8m coming to the State from the Commonwealth, \$250.3m goes to the transport trust fund and \$163.7m is rebated to fuel suppliers. This leaves a balance of \$43.8m.

Ms MacTiernan: Do you understand what you said? Can you clarify the statement that the State Government is supplemented? Can you explain that?

Mr OMODEI: It is supplemented to the tune of \$26.66m. This leaves a balance of \$43.8m of the commonwealth payment, which I understand is the bone of contention with the Opposition. That payment is properly regarded as a temporary benefit to the State and remains in the consolidated fund. It comes about largely because the off-road diesel fuel subsidies are lower than anticipated, although there is also a benefit from the indexation of the surcharge. If this temporary benefit recurs, it will be eroded over time by the Grants Commission and this erosion will affect the consolidated fund and not road funds.

Of the \$250.3m safety net revenue which goes into the transport trust fund, \$7.8m is retained by the Department of Transport, and Main Roads receives \$242.5m for road works. Road funds are what would have been expected had the High Court decision not been made. Growth in fuel sales is also accounted for.

The Opposition is trying to make an issue of road funding in Western Australia. If the member for Armadale wants to know the reaction from the community to the State Government's performance on road funding, in her travels around the State she should ask local governments what they think about the allocations made by the State Government. The reaction I receive from local governments is very positive. The Labor Party in Western Australia must make up its mind on whether it wants money expended on roads.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [1.42 pm]: The minister representing the Minister for Transport has adopted the standard tactic of this Government; that is, he has tried to duck the issue. I appreciate that the minister is only acting on behalf of the Minister for Transport in another place and that he does not wish to embroil himself in this situation of deceit; therefore, he is simply ducking the issue.

Members on this side of the House have not opposed the increased expenditure on roads in this State. That is a clear commitment by this Government and the Opposition does not oppose it. This debate is about telling the truth about the money expended on roads in this State and not saying one thing publicly while doing completely the opposite. The member for Armadale clearly illustrated that, and the minister representing the Minister for Transport has avoided entering into that debate. The Premier's comments on Eoin Cameron's radio program on 19 July this year were reported as follows -

COURT:

... we made a commitment that the additional funds that were flowing through were going back onto roads, and that's what's occurred.

CAMERON:

Every single cent?

COURT:

Every single cent of those additional revenues has gone back onto the roads.

The Premier was clearly telling the people of this State that the additional fuel levy would be used totally to fund roads, but that is not true. The minister said that because of a High Court decision, the State lost control of the tax on fuel. That is not an issue in debate, because the Commonwealth subsequently continued to collect revenue on fuel and pass it to the States, in different percentages because the rate varied from one State to another. The Commonwealth continued to impose an excise on fuel and remitted it directly to the States. The Premier said on Eoin Cameron's program, and has said on other occasions, that every additional cent of that fuel tax would be spent on roads. That is not true. It is a complicated issue, and the member for Armadale has clearly set it out so I will not attempt to do that.

We know that different buckets of money are used for road funding. The Premier would be lying if, in saying every cent was spent on roads, he meant that every cent from excise is spent on roads but that other money dedicated to road funding is being spent elsewhere. The Premier clearly intended to convey that in addition to the funds from other programs specifically for roads, the money from the fuel excise would be spent on roads. That is not happening. As the member for Armadale said, there are a number of areas in which the Government has misrepresented the use of those funds. I will concentrate on the special fuel tax which the Government says is dedicated to roads.

In 1998-99 the Commonwealth collected and remitted to Western Australia \$436.8m from that fuel tax. What did the State Treasury do with that money? Through the State Revenue Department \$156.2m was allocated to diesel concessions, and \$244.6m was used for road building via the transport trust fund. What happened to the other \$36m? It simply does not add up. It disappeared into the black hole of consolidated revenue and may have been caught up in some of the other programs for roads. The Government and the minister have been totally unwilling to explain what happened to that \$36m that disappeared into the black hole of government revenue.

In 1999-2000, according to the budget papers, it is anticipated that the Commonwealth will remit \$457.8m to the State from this tax on fuel. Of that, \$163.7m, through the State Revenue Department, will pay for diesel concessions, and \$250.3m will go to the transport trust fund for road building. What will happen to the balance - \$43.8m for which the Government will not account? Where does it go? It may be spent on roads but, if it is, on the basis of figures in other parts of the budget, it means the Government is not spending other money given by the Commonwealth for road funding. The other buckets of money include the national highway program accounting for \$50.3m; the roads of national importance program, \$10m; the black spot program, \$4.3m; and interstate road transport, \$0.7m. All those additional sources of funding come from the Commonwealth and are directed to expenditure on roads in this State. The Premier and this Government would have people believe that every single cent of the fuel excise levy, in addition to funds under these other programs, will be spent on roads. However, last year it creamed \$36m off the top and this year it will cream \$43.8m off the top of those funds, and it will not explain what has happened to that \$80m over the two-year period. Is that being used in other programs which the Commonwealth is already funding?

The State Government could be taking money from the Commonwealth and not spending it in accordance with the arranged programs. It may be taking money from the Commonwealth for a particular road program and using that money for its own purposes without providing any explanation. That gives the Opposition reason to believe that the money is not being expended on roads. The Government is not willing, and the minister today has not been able or willing, to explain what happened to the \$36m last year and what will happen to the anticipated \$43.8m that will be poured into its black hole in 1999-2000.

That is another issue where the Court Government has been found not to be telling the truth. The Premier can go on radio on various occasions - I have mentioned one - and can talk at public meetings to the effect that every cent of the additional fuel levy will be spent on roads. Everyone hearing that assumes that "additional money" means that the Government is not taking out of other road programs commonwealth money that has clearly been allocated. However, that is what this Government is doing; it is shuffling money around so that some falls off the table and is used for other purposes which are not designated as having anything to do with the construction and maintenance of roads in this State. That is clearly being deceitful. It is telling people one thing and doing something quite different. As the member for Armadale quite clearly pointed out, this has not gone unnoticed. The Western Australian Municipal Association wrote to the Premier last month. I understand that WAMA has not received a reply. Is the minister aware of the letter?

Mr Omodei: It has probably come to my office. I am not aware of the specific letter. WAMA writes to me on a whole range of things.

Mr KOBELKE: I will not go through the whole detail of the two-page letter. In simple terms, because the State Government has shifted around the amount of road money in the different buckets, the allocation that goes to local government has been directly affected. The local government percentage comes out of a particular bucket of money that is designated to roads. By the State Government's putting less money into that bucket, there is a shortfall to local government. The letter from WAMA suggests that that tactic is depriving local government in this State of \$12m for roads. I thought that would be a

matter of concern to the minister responsible for local government. He and his Government have largely had local government authorities on side.

Mr Omodei: Why?

Mr KOBELKE: I am telling the minister. Local government authorities have been very strong supporters of the Government's road program. They were committed to supporting its road program. What have local government authorities found? They have found that the Government has duped them as it has duped everyone else. The Government has told them one thing and has obtained strong local government commitment for what was a good program. However, when they turned their backs, the Government took the money out of their pockets. That is the way this Court Government deals with people: It promises one thing and before people can turn around, it takes it away. That is what the Government has done with road funding to local government. I thought that the Minister for Local Government would take the matter a little more seriously.

Mr Omodei: I have asked local government what it thinks about road funding.

Mr KOBELKE: Why has the minister not pursued this matter with the Premier?

Mr Omodei: I pursue with the Premier all the matters that WAMA raises with me. We meet the Premier on a quarterly basis and I meet WAMA on a bi-monthly basis. We have a very good relationship with WAMA and local government.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the minister telling us that he has pursued with the Premier the matter of the \$12m shortfall?

Mr Omodei: No, I have not.

Mr KOBELKE: At least we have that. He is not interested enough to take up the matter with the Premier.

Mr Omodei: You are suggesting there is a shortfall. We have increased road funding from \$390m to \$800m.

Mr KOBELKE: A huge amount of that is debt that the Government will leave this State. The Government is building roads on Bankcard. Regardless of what this Government might say about financial propriety, it is putting this State into hundreds of millions of dollars of debt in order to construct roads. We on this side of the House might wish to support that if the Government had proper accountability and if the programs could be justified, but the Government is not willing to do that. It is merely willing to run this State into hundreds of millions of dollars of debt for the construction of roads. When we ask the Government to come to account and say where the money is going, the minister and the Government duck for cover because they have been caught out.

The member for Armadale has put before the House a very clear case of this Government, yet again, being found out. It has said one thing publicly, but has done something quite different. It is a Government of deceit. The Government is deceiving not only the general public but also quite specifically local government authorities which entered into a very close relationship with the Government and supported its road program on the basis of certain funding. The Government has not gone back and said that it has changed the situation; it has simply fiddled the books and removed money that should have gone to the local government authorities' road building program. It is a disgraceful situation. What compounds the disgrace and deceit is that this Government is not willing to enter into a rational debate and explain where the money has disappeared to in the black hole of Treasury.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [1.56 pm]: I oppose this amendment. The hypocrisy of this Opposition is unbelievable.

Ms MacTiernan: Should we simply let you lie?

Mr BRADSHAW: We do not lie. If members look back to the 1980s when the Labor Party was in government, they will see that Main Roads WA went to the Government and said that more money must be put into roads. The Government increased fuel tax, but what did it do? It put half of the money it received from that source into running Transperth. It was prepared to fleece the poor old motor vehicle owners and put the money into running Transperth.

The roads in Western Australia are atrocious. The South Western Highway is a total disgrace. The good aspect is that things are starting to happen and the roads are being upgraded. The road from North Dandalup to Pinjarra was fixed up last year. In the coming summer work will begin on the road from Pinjarra to Waroona and will be completed over two summers. Money will be spent because the Government has had the gumption to get out and get funds to spend on roads. We have put all the money from fuel tax back into roads. We increased the tax against the will of the people, but one must make decisions that are not always popular or pleasant. As a result of the High Court decision, we decided to increase the licensing fees for vehicles and the revenue from that increase would be used to pay for the roads. The money must come from somewhere. Because of the Labor Party's neglect when in government, the roads deteriorated badly.

Ms MacTiernan: Why are you not putting all of the fuel levy into roads?

Mr BRADSHAW: More money is going into our roads.

Mr Kobelke: It does not matter where it comes from, even if it involves deceit, as long as the money is there.

Mr BRADSHAW: All I know is that more money is going in than is being received from those receipts. The roads are being upgraded and maintained. Roads are in much better condition now than when the Labor Government looked after them. As I have said, the South Western Highway is a total disgrace. It is an abominable road which needs a great deal of money spent on it. That is now starting to happen. I congratulate the current Government on its ability to get out and start fixing the roads as opposed to what the Labor Government did. Members opposite are total hypocrites. I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (16)

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

Noes (25)

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

Pairs

Mr Grill	Mr Cowan
Mr Marlborough	Mr House
Mr Graham	Mr Prince
Mr Bridge	Mr Tubby

Amendment thus negatived.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [2.43 pm]: I sought the call today because exactly 100 years ago yesterday Western Australian women got the vote, on a motion of this Parliament. I, therefore, take the opportunity in this speech on the Address-in-Reply to reflect on the immense changes in women's lives over those 100 years. I also reflect on this Government's record relating to women. First, a salute to all those courageous women and some men who worked tirelessly to achieve suffrage for women 100 years ago, some of whose names are well known, and others who remain anonymous. They deserve our heartfelt thanks and all women alive today should be deeply grateful to them for their foresight and the hard work they put into this achievement. Well-known people were involved with those campaigns. The Karrakatta Club was involved, as were the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Western Australian Women's Franchise League. Some of the men involved included Mr Traylen, Mr Throssell and Mr Cookworthy, who were members of Parliament, and Walter James, MLA, who was able to get the motion through Parliament. For political reasons, Sir John Forrest changed his attitude on the issue. When Walter James introduced the women's franchise Bill to the Legislative Assembly, it was passed with a majority of 11. On 17 August 1899, the Legislative Council added its approval, and voting rights for women were achieved.

Although I mention those people by name, many hundreds of others were involved. Public meetings were held throughout the interesting decade of the 1890s. I think the first was organised by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. That decade was one of great reform and changes in the country generally, and the one in which the Australian Labor Party was established nationally and in this State. That decade led up to the immense constitutional change which established the founding of the Australian Federation in 1901. It must be said that change was needed.

At the end of last century, women's lives were vastly different from what they are today. Not only did they not have the vote - I remind members that Aboriginal women were to wait a great deal longer - but they could not sit on juries, undertake higher education, practise in professions like law and medicine, own property or have custody of their children after divorce. They were second-class citizens. It was to be many years, with scores of legal changes, before women achieved the equality and status that they have in our society today.

From the beginning, campaigns for suffrage were fought alongside campaigns for better working conditions, equal pay and better social conditions for women and their children. Such campaigns were also waged in the United Kingdom and the United States at the time, both of which were slower than Australia to grant women the vote. A famous suffrage banner of which members may be aware was sent from Australia to the United Kingdom on which was depicted a young Australia appealing to Britannia to "trust the women, mother, as I have done". Somehow this seems peculiarly appropriate when some in Australia are keen to shed ties with mother England.

To give members an idea of the situation with regard to women and suffrage in the last century, I will refer to information from an extremely interesting book written by former senator Margaret Reynolds, *The Last Bastion*. It was written around 1995 and relates to women's political rights in Australia. South Australia got the right to vote in 1895. It was not proclaimed until 1895, although it is generally believed that women got the right to vote in 1894. Women got the right to sit as members of Parliament at the same time, in 1895, and the first woman was elected there in 1959. In Western Australia, women received the vote in 1899, but did not get the right to sit until 1920, and the first woman was elected in 1921. Victoria was the last State in which women got the vote, in 1908; they got the right to sit in 1923 and it was not until 1933 that the first woman was elected to the state Legislature. As I said, non-Aboriginal women could vote for Federal Parliament from 1901 and in all States from 1908, but it was not until 1962 that all Australian women were able to vote. That is some background information to the issue of suffrage. As I said, it was not until the 1920s that women were elected to State Parliaments. Two

further decades were to elapse before a woman entered the Senate in 1943; that was our own Senator Dorothy Tangney from Western Australia.

The figures until 1990 show that in Western Australia 39 women parliamentarians have been elected; the first was Edith Cowan in March 1921, the third woman elected in the British Empire, as it was then, and the second to take a seat. A total of 713 members have been elected, 20 women and 693 men.

Mrs van de Klashorst: That just shows that we have quality rather than quantity.

Ms WARNOCK: Absolutely. Figures have improved somewhat since 1990 but these figures were the most recently available. Now in Parliament there are 20 women in total, 13 in this House and seven in the other place. The figures have improved because around 1970 only 2 per cent of WA members of Parliament were women. By 1996, 20 per cent were women, which is a considerable change although, if I may say so, Mr Speaker, not good enough. We have a way to go yet.

Incidentally, at that time Australia was a social laboratory, as it was referred to in those days. It is important to note that New South Wales was the first Government in the world to introduce child endowment and widows pensions. I believe, when assessing our past 100 years in 2001 and looking back at what Australia has done since it was officially declared a country, we must remember those things. Those few women who were elected to Parliament in the first decades of this century had to fight hard for recognition in politics. As one candidate wryly said in 1949 -

The role of women . . . is to work at all elections to return men candidates.

Women from both parties whom I have read about have said that they frequently resented being the "kitchen angels" and forever making the tea. My late and esteemed mother-in-law, Mae Warnock, who was involved with the Labor Party in times past, used to tell me that one of the things that drove her mad about politics was that they did not get much chance to say anything because they were always out making the tea. However, things change.

One of the things that those few successful women had in common was a commitment to social justice and equity issues concerning women as both mothers and workers. They worked for the sick, for the elderly and for children's welfare when they had the opportunity in Parliaments around Australia, particularly in WA. As an example of that, I will quote briefly from Dorothy Tangney's record. She was in Parliament for a very long time, entering as a relatively young woman, which was then, and still is, unusual. She was very well known for her work on behalf of women and children and worked tirelessly for the recognition of women victims of bigamist war marriages, deserted women and civilian widows' benefits to be brought into line with those of war widows. She was directly responsible for negotiations between the United States and Australian Governments to return women and children isolated by failed or bigamist marriages to Australia and was a guest of the United States Government, which recognised her work in that area.

It is interesting to note that most women who have been in Parliaments have worked very strongly in those areas, bringing their own particular views to Parliament. It has meant sometimes, as women in this Parliament today would probably agree, that women have been given portfolios which are regarded as women's issues; although women today in Parliament would agree that it is extraordinarily important for those issues to be brought before Parliaments. The subjects that were discussed in Parliament changed dramatically when women entered Parliament.

Mr Pental: Interestingly, when Florence Cardell-Oliver was in Cabinet she was given a portfolio in a pretty macho, male-dominated department - shipping and transport. It is interesting that they did not try to off-load to her a portfolio of so-called women's interests.

Ms WARNOCK: That is interesting and unusual. These days, as we know, there are many women who have portfolios like that.

Alas, things went backwards for women in the 1950s after improvements in pay and conditions were won during the war years. I remind the House that during the war women were asked to do men's work because the men in large numbers were away at the war. Women went into factories and onto farms, were performing men's work and were paid men's wages in many, if not most, occupations. After the war years things tended to go backwards. Women in the 1950s were sacked from the public sector if they were married. It is an interesting fact that others were allowed to stay if they accepted the loss of equal pay.

Mr Osborne: That was still the case when I joined the State Public Service Board in 1972; if a woman was married she had to resign.

Ms WARNOCK: That's right, exactly.

Mr Osborne: She was usually re-employed but she had to first resign.

Mrs van de Klashorst: That was the same for me.

Ms WARNOCK: That was what the so-called second wave of feminism was about because although those excellent people who worked so hard at the end of the last century to make changes for women did indeed make enormous changes for women, there was a great deal of unfinished business. Some of that unfinished business was that women had to leave teaching, for example, and many Public Service jobs if they were married, as the member for Bunbury mentioned.

Mrs van de Klashorst: It was not only the public sector. I worked for a private company which had a policy that when you got married you did not work. I had to leave and get another job somewhere else with a company that employed women. I am therefore part of ancient history, by the sound of it!

Ms WARNOCK: It sounds like that now. Let us hope it stays that way. When Ruby Hutchison entered the all-male WA upper House in the early 1950s, a *Daily News* cartoon of the day - and how we all mourn the absence of that newspaper -

Mr Pandal: Hear, hear! It produced some very fine journalism.

Ms WARNOCK: I thought I would give the member for South Perth that opportunity. A *Daily News* cartoon of the day showed her with a broom ready to clean up the House.

Mrs van de Klashorst: That is right; I remember that.

Ms WARNOCK: As Margaret Reynolds said in this excellent book that I have mentioned, *The Last Bastion* -

It was to be a lasting image of women's role - even women elected 30 years later can recount stories of their political careers being described in terms of their family life or womanly virtues.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s change was certainly in the air again, as it had been at the end of the last century. Groups of women, such as the Women's Electoral Lobby, started campaigning for equal pay and equal opportunity. They campaigned for abortion choice, funded child care, women's health care centres and refuges from violence. They also fought in anti-conscription campaigns during the Vietnam War and were early peace and pro-green activists. Others encouraged women to become active in unions. Members should listen to this account in *The Last Bastion* of some rebels in 1970s Melbourne from a woman who remembers being a political activist at that time -

We visited several hotels with the intention of challenging the public bars (which are not public) and the refusal to serve women in the bar. We were ejected from two hotels and served in the third. We pointed out that although 75 per cent of women do not get equal pay, they have to pay more for their drinks in a ladies lounge . . . We went for a ride on two trams through the city, paying only 80 per cent of the fare as a protest against women receiving lower salaries and paying the full price for all commodities and services . . . We conducted our first public meeting during the month of August. There were 45 in attendance. The topics covered were Economic Equality, Abortion Law Reform, the Changing Role of Women in Society and Legal Discrimination.

That was a picture of activities in the 1970s. Other legislative and government-sponsored changes took place in the 1970s and 1980s prompted by such vigorous activists. I remind members of what those changes were about. There were many investigations into that old Sigmund Freud question "What do women want?" and women's groups all around the country were very quick to tell the Government of the day what changes they wanted. The Whitlam Government was happy to respond to those demands. Just to show some things have changed, in 1975 a big national women's political conference was held in Canberra to mark the United Nations International Year of Women. I recall one local paper headlined the conference "Mum's the word as the big yak yak begins". I am sure other members would remember that. Come to think of it, perhaps things have not changed that much. Just last month a London paper, one of the Murdoch stable, ran a screaming headline when a woman, the first to be appointed sports minister in the United Kingdom, was photographed sitting next to a sporting figure and cheering for her football team. The enormous headline - it was about the size of one announcing the outbreak of war - said "Shut up woman". The headline occasioned some flak for the newspaper and perhaps suggested that not everything in this area has changed. Many legislative reforms were introduced at the federal level in the 1980s, all of which were the subject of agitation by women in the second wave of feminism I mentioned. Most of them were mirrored by legislation in the States, including here in Western Australia under the Labor Government. I refer to the Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status and pregnancy in the areas of work, accommodation, education and the provision of goods and services. An Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act in 1986 also sought to break down the barriers for women in public and private sector work. There was enormous resistance to the changes at that time but the sheer number of women in the workforce, in jobs they would not have been able to do before, is evidence that much change has taken place in a relatively short time. Even our language has changed; it is now much more common for people to say he or she in a sentence when referring to a group of people rather than assume that everybody in the entire world is male.

I now turn to the record of the present Government in a year of celebration of the great gains of women's suffrage 100 years ago. Where do women find themselves now? How have they fared under this Government? Despite equal pay campaigns lasting decades and the 1969 equal pay case, at the end of the century women are still paid substantially less than men, on average 83 per cent of the male wage. More shockingly, women in this State earn substantially less than women in other States; they are in double jeopardy. I am pleased that the Minister for Labour Relations has commissioned research into pay equity in Western Australia but it was not before time. The differential in earnings between men and women is some 26 per cent for full-time workers. The gap between Western Australian women and Australian women in general equates to nearly \$21 a week, having deteriorated dramatically between 1992 and 1993. This is absolutely unsatisfactory and the Government needs to work on it. I note that a Western Australian pay equity coalition has been established and obviously further research is urgently needed into this particularly intractable matter.

I now turn to the area of women's health. I have often spoken in this House about my concern for the future of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and what I consider to be its vastly inadequate funding. Although it is an extraordinary centre of excellence for research and treatment of women's diseases and women in childbirth, it requires an immense amount of capital to bring to it up a reasonable condition. I have also spoken of the continued inadequate funding of women's health centres - especially of programs for women's mental health, which is a particular concern of mine - and of the need for proper resourcing of abortion counselling, family planning and sexual health education. This State has the highest rate of breast cancer in Australia so I emphasise the importance of the proper resourcing of a mammography service, properly supervised and subsidised by the Government. Women over 50 years of age need to be tested regularly and the Government should

ensure that its message is well broadcast. The Government may have been ensuring that is done because lately, due to the inability of assessment centres to cope with the number of clients, the Government has closed some screening centres on some days of the week. That is a bad sign for a State with a particular problem with breast cancer. We need to do something very serious about this.

I move briefly to the area of domestic violence. The Government claims it has a well planned strategy on domestic violence and I have received an enormous amount of material from the Government on that subject. However, a brief survey of the field will show that while the men's perpetrator help line is an excellent strategy, no further funding has been provided to help domestic violence organisations deal with the many extra calls they are receiving from women as a result of that men's help line. I am concerned that regional committees have been gagged and told not to speak to the media. Another concern is that when perpetrator programs are not mandatory, men drop out of them. We cannot find a record of how many men continue with those programs and I would have thought that that information was important. I am concerned that women's refuges are not funded for outreach work, only for assisting women in the refuges, which is extremely important. I believe outreach work would be useful preventive work and is what we need in the area of domestic violence. Another concern I have is that the action plan implementation committee contains many people from government departments but does not receive any input from non-government organisations or the community.

As we know from recent headlines in newspapers, several violent family quarrels have had fatal consequences. Earlier this month, the federal Minister for Justice, Senator Amanda Vanstone, said that relationship break-up could, and far too often does, have fatal consequences for women. Men are responsible for 94 per cent of female homicides and most victims had an intimate relationship with their killer. Restraining orders need to be taken more seriously and everybody in the criminal justice system, from the police up, needs to treat this offence as a crime. Will the Government set up domestic violence courts as I believe it proposes to do? Will they have court support services and quick-response crisis services? Far too many women and their children are dying as a result of violent family quarrels. Will the Government set up an inquiry into why these tragic incidents occur and what the community can do to prevent them? Regardless of what we decide to do after the event, we need to try to prevent these incidents. The Government should be very prepared to act on this.

What specific resources has the Government provided to address the horrific problem of family violence in the Aboriginal communities? Just last month, national reports showed that Aboriginal women account for almost half of all domestic violence cases in this State although they make up less than 2 per cent of the Western Australian population. That is a serious concern of mine and it is also a concern of people like Laurel Winder, the Executive Director of the Aboriginal and Islander Women's Congress of Western Australia. She believes that family violence will worsen unless a statewide strategy is implemented to provide indigenous communities with adequate resources to tackle this serious problem.

Mr Sweetman: Stop the drinking.

Ms WARNOCK: I will let that go and simply say that whatever the causes, we know that an extraordinary amount of work needs to be done on Aboriginal health in general. Regardless of whether that is done by the wider community or by the Aboriginal community, if that is the preferred way to handle it, a great deal must be done about that problem.

Mr Sweetman: No-one is indignant enough about the problem.

Mr Osborne: We do not need a battalion of researchers to work out that problem.

Ms WARNOCK: However, we must do something about it because the toll from Aboriginal family violence is terrible, and any Aboriginal person will agree with members on that issue. We must make special efforts to ensure that toll is reduced. It is a scandal in our community that, at the end of the twentieth century when we have such high standards of medicine in this country compared with other countries, we simply cannot handle that problem. We should be prepared to do that.

Mr Bradshaw: I get annoyed when the Aboriginal community asks what the Government will do for them. It is about time they started taking responsibility for themselves.

Ms WARNOCK: I am sure they are very willing to take responsibility.

Mr Bradshaw: They are not.

Ms WARNOCK: The people who work at the Aboriginal medical centre in East Perth, which is in my electorate, would be surprised to hear the member say that they are not prepared to do something for themselves, because I believe they are.

Mr Bradshaw: I am tired of the Aboriginal community saying that the Government should be doing more.

Ms WARNOCK: All Governments should do more, but I am speaking only of this Government. It is an extraordinarily difficult problem for Australia to deal with. After all this time, we are only now coming to terms with this problem. We must face it courageously and we must make decisions in concert with the Aboriginal community. If they decide that the best way for that problem to be solved is for Aboriginal people to work in those health centres throughout Western Australia, and for Aboriginal communities to deal with the problems that arise from substance abuse, that is the way we must handle it. It seems to be an intractable and difficult problem. It is one that will not let us give ourselves too much of a pat on the back at the end of the twentieth century for how we have advanced the cause of women. I could address many other issues. I could ask the Government what has happened to the de facto relationships property legislation, which concerns women; what has happened to the prostitution legislation; and why women are so grossly under-represented on boards and committees.

Mr Bradshaw: If you think legislation will fix up the prostitution problem, you have another think coming.

Ms WARNOCK: I did not say that it would, but it would improve it a great deal. The Government is getting support from the Opposition on this matter. We have said that we will support it.

Dr Gallop: The nervous Nellies on the backbench do not want any support.

Ms WARNOCK: It sounds as though they are getting a bit nervous.

Mr Bradshaw: We are not getting nervous about it.

Ms WARNOCK: We should not be too self-congratulatory because the women in New Zealand got the vote before those in some parts of Australia. Incidentally, a woman is at the head of New Zealand's largest company; a woman is the leader of the Government; a woman is the Leader of the Opposition; and a woman is the High Court Chief Justice. There is also an elder stateswoman of its public service, the chairwoman of the leading national broadcaster is also a woman and some time back there was a female Governor-General, Catherine Tizzard. Let us not congratulate ourselves too much in Western Australia.

Amendment to Motion

Ms WARNOCK: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Government has failed to deliver adequate resources to the Bunbury Regional Hospital, and the House specifically notes with deep concern:

- (1) the breakdown in relationships between the hospital and its doctors;
- (2) the overcrowding of wards;
- (3) staff shortages;
- (4) unacceptable waiting times in the emergency department;

and calls for an immediate review of the delivery of health services to Bunbury and surrounding districts.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [3.14 pm]: We all remember the blaze of publicity that surrounded the launch of the new private-public hospital in Bunbury. Indeed, the Government said that this would be the solution to the growing demand for health services in the Bunbury region and would provide a new range of services for the people in that area. We remember the glossy pamphlets that were put out which told us that we would have a 130-bed public hospital; an 80-bed private hospital; a specialist medical centre; independent management and ownership; public access to all medical facilities; new medical services and equipment; and improved staff training and conditions. We were also told that all public Medicare entitlements would continue and there would be a continuation in the Bunbury area of existing public and private medical services. All of those issues were spoken about in relation to the provision of this new, collocated health campus in Bunbury. Members of the Opposition have visited the Bunbury area and have talked to the local community about these issues. We have spoken to a wide range of people who use the medical services of the new public hospital from the point of view of being part of the medical profession. We have also spoken to consumers of those medical services in Bunbury. What has become quite clear is that we are not talking about teething problems with that hospital; we are talking about some significant issues that must be addressed.

I support the amendment moved by the member for Perth and call for an immediate review of the delivery of health services in the Bunbury area and surrounding districts. Unless we have that review, the danger is that the current situation will continue, and the division that exists in that community between the medical profession and the hospital and the failure to deliver the services required will also continue. I will briefly summarise the points that the Opposition will make about the amendment today. Our health spokesperson will follow up with some of the arguments.

The first and most fundamental issue in Bunbury today is that wards are overcrowded and there are insufficient beds. The old Bunbury regional hospital was equipped with 130 beds and the new hospital was supposed to contain 130 beds. The pamphlet which was provided at the time of the launch of the hospital stated that 130 beds would be provided. We have consulted the medical profession in that area and we have been told that just over 90 beds are available in that hospital. The rationale behind this reduction is that there would be a quicker turnover of patients and therefore fewer beds would be needed. The medical profession is very unhappy with this philosophy, which has seen a reduction in the amount of space available on the premise that people can be pushed through the hospital system more quickly. At the moment, both medical and surgical wards are running at capacity and, indeed, the promises that were made about 130 new beds are simply not being kept. That is the first and most fundamental criticism that has been made to opposition members about this new public hospital.

A second and specific complaint which has been made is that the number of maternity beds being offered has been cut. It was planned to have 15 maternity beds in the new hospital, but 10 beds were finally allocated to the maternity section. This has caused much concern among women and families in the Bunbury area. They were given a promise and it was not kept. More importantly, the implication of that promise not being kept has been indicated in a memorandum sent to the staff by the hospital on 30 November 1998. It states -

As you are well aware, the new Maternity Unit of the SWHC has only 10 in-patient beds. This has been identified as a potential problem by the hospital Board, but for now, this is the space that we have to work with.

I have been requested to ensure appropriate patient through-put by utilising the DRG directives that state, a three day stay for a vaginal birth, and five day stay for a caesarean section. If a woman requires a longer hospital stay, the reason for this has to be documented in the medical records. The event is then recorded as a variance and is subsequently re-coded.

As far as midwifery management is concerned, women are being informed during antenatal education classes of this time frame and are being encouraged to utilise the Community Midwifery Service.

Despite the promises made in relation to maternity beds, those promises are not being kept and this has implications for the delivery of maternity services in that hospital. It is a major concern for women and families in Bunbury and the south west.

The third problem raised is that patients who go to the accident and emergency section for assistance are waiting many hours for their treatment. This has received a good deal of publicity in the local newspapers. The hospital is actively encouraging these patients to go to their local general practitioners rather than use the hospital.

The fourth area concerns staff. We remember the glossy statement that the new hospital would provide improved staff training and conditions, and that extra services would be available in that area. There is now a serious shortage of staff, particularly nursing staff, at the hospital. This, in part, has resulted in longer waiting times for patients and the delay and postponement of surgical operations. Bunbury is not alone in experiencing that shortage of nursing staff, because it applies throughout the State. I recall that when the Opposition drew attention to the shortage of nurses when I was shadow spokesperson on health a few years ago, the Opposition warned the Government of this potential serious shortage. The shortage occurred not just because of a lack of trained nurses, but also because nurses were deserting the system as a result of the terms and conditions under which they were working. They were unhappy with not just the wages and conditions but also the hospital environment in which they worked. That was causing many problems and, as a result, many left the system.

The fifth problem raised at the Bunbury Regional Hospital is the lack of privacy. A security screen which was installed to protect administration staff is proving to be a sound barrier when people are providing personal details to the administration staff. In the foyer of the hospital, new patients and their relatives must shout the details of their illnesses and other information through a small opening in the glass security screen. It is causing consternation in the local community and it should be addressed.

I now move to the sixth concern raised with the Opposition. It relates to nursing home patients. Again, the issue of nursing homes in Western Australia, and indeed Australia, is about to explode. In the mid to late 1980s there was a growing problem in nursing homes and the then Federal Government initiated a major inquiry, which led to a new system of funding nursing homes. Many nursing homes were subsequently upgraded. For a decade, we were in front of the game, but in recent years the nursing home situation has deteriorated significantly and there is major concern throughout the community. The Opposition will work hard in lobbying on behalf of senior citizens and the aged. A specific problem has been raised with the Opposition by the medical profession in the Bunbury area; that is, the hospital's haste to rid itself of elderly patients is restricting people's choice in nursing home access. Elderly patients are being forced out of the hospital before they can obtain a bed suitable for their needs and which is close to their families, and they are being forced to take up beds in surrounding towns. This is a very sensitive issue for families. It is important with nursing home care to provide choice so that families can stay as close together as possible, even though one member of the family may need to go to a nursing home or hostel. The hospital's policy on aged patients is causing real concern to the medical profession and the families of elderly people in the Bunbury area. There is no doubt that the promises made are not being kept. The Opposition intends to pursue the question of aged care in the Bunbury area and surrounding districts. Innovative ideas have come from the health community and we would like the Government to take up some of those ideas, instead of engaging in a ruthless form of economic rationalism which is undermining service delivery.

The final and seventh area of concern I raise probably goes to the heart of the problem in Bunbury at the moment; that is, the division between the local doctors and the hospital. All members who represent non-metropolitan areas know that there must be a good relationship between local doctors and hospitals in their electorates. Local hospitals require a working relationship, a positive commitment from the doctors and an ongoing, almost symbiotic relationship, between the local GPs and the hospitals. That situation has broken down. Some of the GPs are now withdrawing their services from the hospital. They believe the hospital does not welcome them and has withdrawn privileges and facilities enjoyed by country doctors throughout the State. An example of this is the plaster room at the Bunbury Regional Hospital, which used to be available for local doctors. This facility is no longer available, so doctors must set up plaster rooms in their surgeries.

Doctors are also concerned about the general nature of the way the hospital is being managed because of its funding constraints. Their concerns are not just for themselves and how they operate, but also for the broader community. These issues require attention. There is a fundamental, underlying issue of the relationship between the GPs and the hospital which must be dealt with. The minister does not seem to be concerned about it, but it needs direct intervention, mediation and a solution because it cannot be allowed to continue. The overcrowding in the wards, cutback in the number of maternity beds, current waiting times, lack of privacy and staff shortages are the second range of issues that must be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Thirdly, the whole question of care for the aged in the Bunbury area and the relationship between care of the aged and the current practices in the new public hospital need to be addressed.

The Opposition says that the minister has allowed the situation to drift. Enormous public controversy and debate on this matter has been highlighted in the local newspapers. Debate has been initiated by representatives of the staff working in the hospitals, medical professionals and consumers of the service. It has reached crisis proportions because of the conflict between the doctors and the hospital, and a solution is needed. There are many problems in the hospital system that the minister is leaving to the hospital managers to solve. However, some of those problems require political skill and some

political intervention to solve them. Bureaucracies cannot solve all these problems. Therefore, the Opposition is calling for an immediate review of the delivery of health services in Bunbury and surrounding districts to deal with these fundamental problems, so that the people in that area get what they were promised, deserve and need, given the growing demand for services in that area.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [3.28 pm]: We seem to have a fundamental problem in the fact that there is no recognition on the part of the Government of the serious problems at the Bunbury Regional Hospital. We have learned from media statements by the medical practitioners in the Bunbury region that there is grave concern about the delivery of health care in that region.

I start by referring to a comment in the *South Western Times* on 5 August, relating to the health care woes of patients on waiting lists. It is reported that, according to general practitioners, the general health care in Bunbury is suffering because of the region's doctor shortage. General practitioners said that preventive medicine has been forced onto the back burner as doctors struggle to cope with more pressing cases and that effective health care is slipping as patients, admittedly with non-urgent complaints, wait up to three weeks to see the doctors of their choice.

There are other examples of medical specialists using the media to call upon Parliament and the Government to recognise that there are increasing problems in the delivery of health care in the Bunbury regional area. On the other hand, when the matter was raised in Parliament yesterday by the member for Bunbury, the minister's response was essentially along the lines that yes, he had called for a report and that he had come to the conclusion that the claims of an alleged doctor crisis had been initiated by someone with mischievous intent.

Our first problem is, as I have said, not even a recognition or admission that there are problems in health care in the Bunbury area. On the one hand, doctors are saying repeatedly that there is a doctor shortage and problems with the delivery of health services at the hospital and, on the other hand, the claims by the general practitioners are dismissed as if they have some mischievous intent. We have moved this amendment to the Address-in-Reply to document for the Government some of the concerns that it should be aware of relating to the delivery of health care in the Bunbury regional district and to call on this Government to take some action to address the concerns of that community, to review health delivery and to ascertain where the weaknesses are and perhaps where the strengths are, and to address those areas about which there is great concern.

The Leader of the Opposition has identified what we believe are some of that regional community's key pressure points and concerns relating to the resourcing of the Bunbury Regional Hospital. I shall go through some of those points again and perhaps elaborate from the information that we have obtained. First, the working relationship between local GPs and hospital administration: There has been publicity in the past few days, as we saw on the ABC on Sunday night, that individual doctors have withdrawn some of their services from the hospital. The reason that they have allegedly done that is that they feel that the hospital is no longer recognising their contribution to the hospital; in fact, they feel that the hospital does not welcome them any more. The minister in his reply yesterday indicated that was because they wanted to spend more time in their general practice surgeries. What we must look at in respect of his response is that most doctors will do both: They will deliver services to the hospital and they will look after their patients. Members on this side believe that is an indicator of the concerns and difficulties that doctors are facing. They are withdrawing their services because the relationship between the hospital and them appears to have broken down.

The doctors concerned believe that the hospital has withdrawn facilities and privileges usually enjoyed by other country doctors and perhaps their professional colleagues in other parts of the State. Our concern is, by removing incentives to attract doctors to our regional hospitals, what will be the consequences of this sort of action on the breakdown of the relationship between doctors and hospitals? We have read that one example of this is the fact that local doctors can no longer use the plaster room at the hospital. The question goes beyond that sort of example when we talk about the breakdown of the relationship between doctors and the hospital. The doctors are also complaining about something rather more fundamental than their privileges and facilities which perhaps might benefit their general practice surgeries. They are also complaining that patients are being pushed away from the hospital or being refused service by the hospital and that this is putting extra strain on local practices and surgeries. Yet we know from the local media that there is already great pressure on local doctors and that patients must wait considerable lengths of time, certainly to see doctors of their choice; for example, women doctors. Because of the shortage of doctors in Bunbury and because of the trend towards pushing patients back onto local practices, there will be a greater strain on local surgeries. That means that illnesses will not be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as they need to be. We do not see this as merely doctors saying that they are not getting their privileges but more as a serious indicator of the underlying problems of the relationship between doctors and the hospital.

The issue of the number of wards is an interesting matter that we wish to canvass. I understand that the old hospital had 130 beds. The new hospital was supposed to contain 130 beds, and the literature indicated that would be the case. However, the intelligence we have received - the minister will tell us if we are wrong - from both doctors and other professionals working at the hospital, is that in reality there are not 130 beds available and that in reality and practice the number of beds is in the region of 90. It is also suggested that the rationale behind this reduction is that the turnover in the number of patients would be greater, which would mean shorter stays in hospital and that therefore overall fewer beds would be needed. In fact, we know from feedback from patients and doctors that that trend to a shorter stay in hospital is not favoured by the doctors in the area and is certainly seen as a way of freeing up beds rather than a clinical assessment of the patients' needs. We believe that at the moment both the medical and surgical wards are running at capacity. There is also the claim - I am sure the minister will comment on this - that the rehabilitation ward has not been used and that a part of the surgical ward has not opened. If that is not correct, it would be reassuring to the community of Bunbury for those sorts of complaints to be corrected and addressed. These are the sorts of indicators that the Bunbury community is raising with us as measures of service delivery in the hospital.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about the reduction in the number of maternity beds. We know it is a fact. There were supposed to be 15 beds in the new hospital. That number has been cut to 10. Having 10 maternity beds is a real problem for women in the Bunbury region, which has an increasing population and a changing population mix.

It is not adequate for the population of Bunbury to have only 10 beds in that hospital. We know that it is 10 beds because the response to a question that was asked late last year in the other place indicated that there would be 10 maternity beds in that hospital. We have now found out from nursing staff and others who work in that area - and the Leader of the Opposition referred to the memo from one of the maternity nurses - that there are 10 beds and patients are being moved through the hospital more quickly, with a three-day stay for a vaginal birth and a five-day stay for a caesarean section. However, if a woman needs to stay in the hospital for longer, which is often the case depending on the social circumstances of the mother, on whether it is a first birth and on whether support is available, the reasons must be documented in the woman's medical records and that event is recorded as a variance. The fact that a longer stay is regarded as a variance and not as a matter that must be determined by the needs of the patient is, in our view, an indication that the length of stay of mothers in the hospital will be policed carefully and every effort will be made to send them home three days after the birth. We are concerned about why the hospital was planned to have 15 beds and now has only 10 beds.

The Leader of the Opposition has talked about the lack of privacy for patients when they are talking with the administration staff about why they have come to the hospital. In the scheme of things, that may be a minor issue, but when other problems are added to the picture and services are not being delivered adequately, a minor issue like that often takes on a more significant character and adds to the frustration of patients.

The waiting time for emergency services at the hospital is also of concern and has been raised by patients in the media. The trend is that people who arrive at the hospital must wait for four or five hours, or more, not for treatment but for an initial assessment by medical or professional staff. One noticeable letter to the local newspaper reported that because of the waiting time at the hospital, one patient was taken by her husband to Manjimup Hospital for attention because he had been assured that she would be seen there. The drive from Manjimup to Bunbury is considerable, and that graphically illustrates the problems that people are experiencing with the waiting time at that hospital.

Another concern for members on this side of the House is the placement of patients in nursing homes. The protocols for finding nursing home beds changed late last year, and patients must now nominate four residential aged care facilities in Bunbury or the surrounding districts, and if a bed is available in one of the four places that has been nominated, the patient will be moved there. However, doctors are increasingly concerned that in the hospital's desire to move patients out of the hospital because it needs the beds, an elderly patient who lives in Bunbury and needs to be placed in a nursing home, and whose husband or wife is also elderly, may be transferred to a nursing home that is 30 or 40 kilometres from Bunbury, and that may have significant ramifications for the family, let alone the individual, who may be placed in unfamiliar circumstances. We are concerned that that policy for the placement of patients in nursing homes is constructed in part to deal with the inadequate number of beds at that hospital and the desire to move people out of the hospital as quickly as possible.

I will canvass again the staff shortages that are being experienced at the hospital. I have talked about the shortage of general practitioners and specialists in the area. The original response from the hospital to the individual doctors who were withdrawing their services was that it could fill that gap with other doctors. We are saying that there are no doctors to fill that gap. There is also a recognised shortage of nurses both nationally and internationally. It is particularly difficult for country hospitals to find nurses, and the undercurrent of discontent and the concern about health delivery at that hospital is another inhibiting factor in attracting staff to the hospital. Other hospital staff have to suffer working conditions that are less than satisfactory, with no adequate staffroom in the hospital, and a high number of casual staff, which means that permanent staff positions are not being filled and the population of the hospital is more transient, which does not contribute to an effective health organisation.

This amendment raises a series of concerns about what appears to be a lack of awareness by the Government about the problems at the hospital. We are concerned about the community of Bunbury and the surrounding districts and want to ensure that the community and the staff of the hospital have a top quality facility which meets the health needs of the community. For those reasons, I support the amendment.

MR OSBORNE (Bunbury) [3.48 pm]: I enter this debate initially with a sense of absolute amazement, because I come into this place day after day and listen to the Opposition trying to make something out of nothing, but it is now scraping the bottom of the barrel, and the Minister for Health and I were just remarking across the bench what could be the reason for that.

This amendment has nothing to do with health care in the Bunbury and south west region. It has everything to do with an Opposition which is bereft of ideas, which does not have a feather to fly with in the south west region, and which spends its time, in the words of Mark Latham, not setting agendas but lifting scabs. It has everything to do with an Opposition which makes a foray into Bunbury once every several months - the Leader of the Opposition did this a couple of weeks ago - to conduct superficial research, and which then comes back into this place and attempts to elevate its superficial research into something which approaches a serious matter of which this House should take notice.

The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow spokesperson on health throughout their speeches talked about the research they had conducted, the indications from the local media, and other similar phrases, which clearly indicated they did not know what they were talking about and that their research was extremely superficial. It was probably conducted by reading the local paper and, on the basis of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, by talking to just one medical practitioner in the Bunbury region - a medical practitioner who suffers from what Gareth Evans has described as "relevance deprivation".

That would probably be the kindest way to describe the difficulty that this general practitioner now has with the public hospital and the Government of Western Australia.

To quickly recap on the hospital, members have heard many times that the Government is proud of its achievements in the Bunbury region, and rightly so. The former spokesman on this issue, the member for Fremantle, in common with his colleagues, spent a fair amount of time bagging this proposal. I said to him in this place that he should be ashamed of himself but I bet that he would not be so ashamed that he would not turn up to the opening. I was right about that. Although not as vociferously or as unfairly as some of his colleagues, he criticised this proposal unfairly, along with his colleagues, and then they had the brass to turn up at the opening and put it about that they supported the proposal, when everyone in this place and most members of the public in the south west knew that the Opposition had always criticised it.

I have my reservations about the involvement of the private sector in the health system. Unless it is constrained and watched carefully, the mainspring which drives the private sector - that is, the need to make profit - I believe is inimical to health care, because it stands to reason that to make profit people need to be sick. However, that concern does not exist in the south west region. We have the public sector - the role of the public sector in health care is to make sick people well again - and we have the St John of God Health Care system, which has existed in Bunbury for over 100 years. Its mission on earth is the same; it is to make sick people well again. This historical alliance between the State public health system and the St John of God Health Care system in Bunbury will be a marvellous benefit to the people of Bunbury and the south west, not only today but also for many years into the future.

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Mr OSBORNE: I truly wish that we could have many of these sorts of hospitals in country areas throughout Western Australia. I count myself very fortunate to be a member of a Government which has brought about such a historic achievement for the people of the south west. It is galling, to say the least, to come into this place and listen to poorly informed members of the Opposition, who have done no more research than to talk to an extremely limited number of practitioners and traditional whingers, such as the radical fringe of the Australian Nursing Federation, and to read the pages of the local newspaper, when in reality we have an outstanding \$68m health campus, the first of its kind in Australia, a collocation between the public health system and the St John of God Health Care system, located on a university campus, which itself brings marvellous opportunities for improvements in health and health research.

The hospital has brought many benefits. We always claimed that there would be a vast increase in the number and the quality of services that would be available. That has been borne out in practice. Before the campus opened, we were making new and improved services available in the Bunbury region. Over \$26m-worth of medical activity which used to leave the south west and go into metropolitan hospitals, especially teaching hospitals, now stays in the south west. That is a great benefit for patient care, because people can be treated in their local hospital. That means they get better and quicker treatment and they recover more rapidly. In addition, the financial savings that the system achieves by having the hospital in Bunbury and not sending patients to the metropolitan area means that we can do more, not only in Bunbury, but also throughout the health system in Western Australia.

Those are my opening remarks in response to the amendment moved by the Opposition. The Government knows what the Opposition is doing. It is lifting the scabs. It is not prepared to set an agenda for health, and it is criticising a proposal which has almost universal support in Bunbury and the south west. Opposition members are the only ones who criticise it. They have criticised it trenchantly and consistently ever since it was announced by this Government. Frankly, they are out of step with the public of the south west and the public of Western Australia. They do not know what they are talking about because they do not live in those communities. They go there once every couple of months and they come back to this place with ridiculous assertions, half-truths and misrepresentations about what happens in Bunbury and at the health campus.

I came to the debate late so I did not pick up on all of the problems identified by the Leader of the Opposition. However, I picked up on about four of them. I will go through them briefly and rebut them. The first issue the Leader of the Opposition raised related to obstetric beds and the fact that patients in obstetrics have to leave hospital too early. The insinuation that in this hospital system, or in any hospital system, patient care will be prejudiced by asking patients to leave too early or to leave at an appropriate time always amazes me. I just wish that opposition members would stand in front of some of the medical practitioners and people who work in this hospital and say to their faces what they are saying in this place; that is, that they are prepared to kick obstetric patients out of the Bunbury Hospital early because they want to save money. It is a disgraceful accusation, and if opposition members personally knew the people they are accusing of this and the hurt they are causing them - although, presumably, that does not bother members opposite - I think they would be shamed into not making those sorts of statements again. We live in hope, but obviously that hope is likely to be abused.

Lack of privacy was another issue that was raised. The Leader of the Opposition was deeply distressed by the fact that people must speak through a porthole, as it were, to give their admission details. What is the alternative? The alternative is an insecure admissions area. I have been into that admissions area - I doubt that the opposition spokesperson has; if she has, I apologise - and it is not a major issue. The opposition spokesperson said that it was a minor issue. That is a direct quote which I took from her speech. She said it was a minor issue, but it was symptomatic of a whole raft of other deeper and larger problems in the hospital. If it is a minor issue and it is symptomatic of a raft of deeper and larger problems, what are the deeper and larger problems to which she was referring? Why do opposition members come into this place and talk about something as insignificant and foolish as this?

The matter which probably irks me more than anything else is that opposition members talked about the division between local general practitioners and the hospital, as if all local practitioners are in conflict with the local hospital and as if that was what this issue was all about. I sometimes wonder what members of the Opposition believe hospitals are built for. They

seem to think that hospitals are built to provide employment for members of the Australian Nursing Federation and to provide satisfaction for general practitioners. They are not.

Dr Turnbull: I do not think it is the ANF; I think it is the Miscellaneous Workers Union.

Mr OSBORNE: Okay, the "missos". Sometimes one gets the impression that the Miscellaneous Workers Union thinks that the hospital system is established just for its benefit. I have news for it. We take tax from the people of Western Australia and build hospitals to make sick people well again. That is a revolutionary concept for the Opposition. Hospitals are not there to employ miscellaneous workers or to provide a harmonious cash cow for general practitioners either. Some members may know that I grew up in Denmark. My mother worked at the Denmark District Hospital for 35 years, and was the matron for the last 16 years. The local doctor treated that hospital as his private money-making venture. When a new doctor came to the town, some of the staff were outraged. They said, "Dr James can't come to this hospital; this is Dr Stewart's hospital, material and equipment". That was the old way of thinking. We have a different idea - to build hospitals and operate them to make sick people well again. If there is a difference of opinion between local general practitioners in Bunbury and the hospital administration and, through it, the Government, and the people of Western Australia represented by the Government, I say that the needs of the patients have precedence over the needs of the doctors.

That is beside the point anyway. The local general practitioners are not universal on this issue. I know the Usher Clinic that the Leader of the Opposition talks about. I am a patient there. A very good friend of mine, John Gliddon, is my doctor. I know several of the doctors at that clinic do not agree with the statements by Dr Mike Hall and that he, himself, has mixed views about this matter. That does not stop the Opposition. It says that this entire practice is withdrawing all of its services from the hospital. The reality is different: Several of those doctor are overseas at the moment on holidays, and good luck to them. I wish I could be there as well. They are not involved in the dispute and have not withdrawn all their services either. They have made a judgment that they can provide some of those services in their rooms. If I hear this business about the plaster room again, I will scream because it is an absolute furphy.

Nothing had changed in the policy relating to the plaster room. It is the same as that which existed for the old regional hospital in Bunbury. The only difference is that just for a change, we have decided to assert the policy; that is, if a doctor wants to treat a private patient in the plaster room, they go to the private plaster room. That is all that has changed. I cannot understand what is the problem of principle here. If there is a private patient and a doctor wants to treat that person in the public plaster room, what is wrong with the public system charging for that to happen? I cannot believe the Leader of the Opposition would come in here and, by implication, support something that is inimical to the interests of the public patients and ordinary taxpayers of Western Australia, and say that private patients should be treated for free in a public plaster room in a public hospital.

The doctors have made a decision to carry out more procedures in their consulting rooms and will treat their patients more effectively there. That is all to the good. Public hospital doctors are on call and are available. Other doctors will now be working in their own rooms. As far as I can see, this is not a problem at all. It means that services will be improved for the people of Bunbury and the south west. Those are the extent of my remarks. I came into the debate late. I did not hear all of the points the Leader of the Opposition raised, but I do not think it matters. As I said at the beginning of my speech, this has nothing to do with health care in Bunbury and the south west, or with anything other than an Opposition which is bereft of ideas, has no representation in the south west, does not know what it is talking about, and does not represent the people of Bunbury. It has one interest - to get onto a major issue, to see what it can do to shake it up and stir it around, and see what jumps out at the end of it. This one will not fly because those opposite do not know what they are talking about, and when they think they know what they are talking about, they are wrong.

MR DAY (Darling Range - Minister for Health) [4.04 pm]: This is a farcical amendment moved by the Opposition. It simply does not reflect the facts of the situation at the Bunbury Regional Hospital. I was interested to listen to the comments of the member for Bunbury who has spoken with a great deal of authority, knowing the details of the situation in Bunbury very well, knowing some of the players and making what are, no doubt, some very informed observations about the reality of the situation on the ground in Bunbury.

I am absolutely amazed that the Opposition has chosen to criticise the allocation of resources to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. As I will demonstrate in a moment, there has been a very substantial increase in the budget allocated to that hospital in recent years on a recurrent basis. In addition, we now have a magnificent new facility, the South West Health Campus, opened by the Premier earlier this year. It is a \$68m facility, a collocation of the Bunbury Regional Hospital and the St John of God Hospital in Bunbury to form the South West Health Campus. It is the best thing that has ever occurred in the history of providing health services in the south west region of Western Australia. It is a major new facility providing services to the people not just of Bunbury and the surrounding area, but generally throughout the south west. It has resulted in a whole range of services being provided in Bunbury, much closer to where the people from the south west live. In many cases they do not have to come to the metropolitan area for treatment, whether it be for some of the more advanced surgical procedures or for the treatment of a mental health condition, or a range of other conditions; for example, renal dialysis. About two or three weeks ago renal dialysis commenced in Bunbury for the first time ever. Patients do not have to travel to Perth for that form of treatment, similar to the situation if they live in Geraldton, Mr Deputy Speaker, which is a matter in which you have a strong interest. Renal dialysis is now provided in Bunbury. That is a very welcome development in that region, and is something the Opposition should recognise, together with all the other significant increases in the range and quantity of services now provided in that part of the State.

I wonder whether the speakers from the Opposition have taken the trouble to visit the South West Health Campus. I know the former spokesperson for health, the member for Fremantle, has visited, and from what I understand was impressed with

the nature of the facility. I encourage the member for Thornlie, if she has not visited so far, to make the effort in that regard so that she can see for herself what is on the ground there and realise the nonsense that has been said in the debate today about the standard of the facilities that exist in Bunbury. The same goes for the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to know whether he has made the effort to visit the campus. I have no doubt he will be somewhat pleasantly surprised, even if he will not admit it.

I refer to the comment in the amendment to the motion about an insufficient allocation of resources to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. The reality is that the budget has increased substantially over the period. I have figures from 1996-97, when the allocation was \$20.5m, to 1998-99, when it had grown to \$24.8m. We expect the allocation in the current financial year, 1999-2000, to be approximately \$28.1m, a 13.5 per cent increase over the allocation in the last financial year.

Mr McGinty: It opened only at the beginning of the year.

Mr DAY: I am saying that a 13.5 per cent increase is expected in the allocation for the current financial year, 1999-2000, over the last financial year.

Mr McGinty: It has been up and running for only half of it.

Mr DAY: That is a new health facility; however, there was still a significant increase in the resources being allocated to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. As the member knows, a hospital operated in Bunbury before the opening of the new health campus. In this financial year there will be a significant growth in resources which reflects the increase in the quantity and range of services provided in Bunbury.

Much has been made by the Opposition and a few others about some of the general practitioners, who have been providing services to the hospital, withdrawing those services. As I indicated in question time, it is correct that some of the doctors who provide services there have withdrawn some of their services. Fourteen doctors from Foster and Associates have withdrawn clinical privileges in medicine, psychiatry and pediatrics effective from 31 August. However, they have indicated they wish to retain their clinical privileges in obstetrics, anaesthetics and some surgical procedures. In addition, two partners have chosen to retain all of their clinical privileges. This is not a major crisis in the provision of health care for the people of Bunbury, it is a relatively minor change in the arrangements at Bunbury Regional Hospital. This is expected to result in an increased availability of general practitioners in their practices for patients who wish to see them there, which is a welcome thing for the Bunbury area. To explain some of reasons behind the 14 doctors withdrawing some of their services to the hospital, in a letter of resignation dated 18 May, the chairman of the practice, Dr Michael Hall, wrote that the main stimulus came from the practice itself. He said that general practice in Bunbury is significantly undermanned, and the Government agrees with that point. Dr Hall went on to say that hospital visits are, and always have been, an inefficient use of doctors' time - although they felt they were an important adjunct to their patients' care - and that this development would give the doctors the opportunity to serve their patients more effectively and promptly within their practice. As I indicated in question time yesterday, it is clear that the real reason the doctors are changing their arrangements is to allow them to focus more on providing services in their own practice rather than having to split their time between their practice and the hospital.

Mr McGinty: That might be right, but I cannot recall in recent times any comparable action by GPs in withdrawing their services from hospitals. Has there been another occasion when that has occurred while you have been health minister?

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Mr DAY: The member for Avon has given Northam as an example. I have no doubt that doctors around the State change their arrangements all the time.

Mr McGinty: Can you think of an example where it has happened?

Mr DAY: I agree that it is not common for general practitioners practising in country towns to not provide services to the hospital. However, Bunbury is a large regional centre and there are many other doctors, therefore the impact will be minimal or virtually nil. The withdrawal of services by general practitioners in Cunderdin, Narrogin or Kununoppin for example, would be a major issue for those towns. It is not a major issue in Bunbury according to my advice because there is a significant number of other medical practitioners - both specialists and general practitioners - who will continue to provide services at Bunbury Regional Hospital.

Mr Osborne: They told me so themselves.

Mr DAY: As the member for Bunbury says, and he is close to the action there.

Mr Osborne: And I know most of them.

Mr DAY: I will go through some of the points specifically mentioned in the amendment moved by the Opposition. A member of my staff spoke to the general manager of the Bunbury Health Service in Bunbury a short time ago and I have been provided with the following information: First, I am informed that there is no breakdown in relationships between the hospital and its doctors. It is acknowledged that some issues need to be discussed, but these are being worked through. It is perfectly normal to expect a range of issues to arise on a day-to-day basis and even some longer term when we have a complex and large organisation such as the hospital in Bunbury where issues need to be discussed between all of the people who play a role in providing services at the hospital. I do not find that surprising. I am advised that generally speaking the relationship between doctors and the management of the hospital is good.

Mr Osborne: It is very good.

Mr DAY: The member for Bunbury says it is very good and he is in a position to know. Second, the Opposition has claimed there is overcrowding of the wards. I am advised that there have been occasions on which bed space has been limited, but this is associated with normal operations; for example, when doctors have full theatre lists. This indicates that the hospital is being well used by medical practitioners and patients are having their treatment provided locally in Bunbury. It is good for the facility to be so well used; it indicates a high level of satisfaction on the part of the local community. I am also advised that the health service has dealt with and continues to deal with the expected winter impact without difficulty. Increased demand for beds is always expected in winter because of influenza and other respiratory diseases. I am advised that the hospital is dealing with that situation without difficulty. I am also advised that a total of 94 doctors, both public and private practitioners, now visit the campus in varying capacities. Some visit from Perth, some provide out-patient treatment and others provide treatment at the medical centre. With 94 doctors providing services at Bunbury, clearly the withdrawal of some services by 14 doctors is a minor issue.

Third, the claim of staff shortage is not accepted by the general manager. I am advised that in her view, high calibre people work at the campus, and I have no doubt that committed, highly qualified, experienced and competent staff work at the campus. The hospital faces the same difficulties as all health services throughout the State, both metropolitan and rural, with something of an undersupply of medical practitioners; Bunbury is no orphan as far as that is concerned. I am advised that Bunbury does not experience any major difficulties in recruiting medical staff. For example, the new 15-bed mental health unit is now fully staffed.

Fourth, the final point raised by the Opposition concerned unacceptable waiting times in the emergency department. There has been an increase in the number of general practitioner-type referrals, patients who could be more appropriately seen by general practitioners in private practice. This has led to some delays in treatment at the hospital, but the management is looking at how to ensure patients who can be treated by their general practitioners access that treatment where appropriate. The fact that these 14 doctors want to spend more time in their own practice is a welcome development because it results in an increased ability for patients to access treatment outside the hospital where appropriate. I am also advised that no major delays or difficulties in treatment in the emergency department are acknowledged. The reality is that for whatever reason some people turn up inappropriately for treatment in the emergency departments of hospitals. It is expected that treatment will be provided in the order of urgency. All patients who present at any hospital emergency department are prioritised and the urgent cases will be treated most quickly. That is simply commonsense. People with minor problems may need to wait longer for treatment in a hospital emergency department. That is commonsense and what anybody would expect. As somebody who has spent some time in the emergency departments of two of our State's public hospitals in the past couple of days, it is something that I fully understand, support and accept.

The hospital has acknowledged some relatively minor problems in the physical construction of the emergency department, particularly the reception area. It is recognised that it would be desirable to have a greater level of privacy in that area. I am advised that the reception area will be remodelled so patients can provide personal details with a greater level of privacy. This work is expected to commence soon. I am also advised that, wherever possible, staff will obtain initial medical information in the privacy of an interview room. The hospital is keen to encourage community feedback about the services it provides. It has received much feedback which has led to some changes. It is all about the staff at the hospital being customer focused. As the member for Bunbury indicated, these people are not at the hospital primarily to suit the comfort of staff, but to provide high quality services for people requiring treatment. I have full confidence in the commitment of the management and staff of the hospital for that to occur. Some changes have been made, as a result of feedback including the installation of additional public telephones and a water cooler. Many more people are using the emergency department in the South West Health Campus than used the Bunbury Regional Hospital. Accordingly, staff ratios and rosters have been adjusted to better manage the increased demand for treatment. Also, a number of other initiatives were developed to increase patient comfort.

It is impossible to draw any other conclusion about this amendment moved by the Opposition than that it is an absolute beat-up. The standard, quality, range and quantity of service provided in Bunbury is excellent. I have full confidence in the management of the hospital to respond to the needs of the public and to ensure that a proper response is made to reasonable public comment or criticism. It is time the Opposition recognised what has been done by the Government to provide health services through the opening of the South West Health Campus. It is time to stop carping and whining about the services provided by the Government around the State. If members opposite believe they can do something better, it is time for them explain how; they will find it difficult to do so. For all those reasons, I completely oppose this amendment.

MR MCGINTY (Fremantle) [4.22 pm]: Having listened to the member for Bunbury and the Minister for Health, one could be excused for thinking that no issue exists at the South West Health Campus and that everything is running perfectly smoothly. The second point to be gleaned from both contributions was that if one had the temerity to disagree, one would cop a mouthful of abuse. Let us consider what the member for Bunbury said about nurses who had the temerity to point out shortcomings. He described them as "traditional whingers" - "like nurses"! Pity the poor nurses who had the temerity to point out that all is not rosy in the garden.

What about the doctors? The member for Bunbury said that the hospital is not there to provide a harmonious cash cow for general practitioners. I presume that the member for Bunbury would not have said that unless a GP or several GPs in Bunbury had assiduously milked the Bunbury Regional Hospital or the South West Health Campus, and that that was somehow underlying the problems created with an unprecedented withdrawal of services by GPs at the hospital. The member is happy to dish out abuse to doctors and imply that they had fraudulently, or in some other way, used the hospital in Bunbury as their private milking cow. The member had no point in raising it if that were not the case. I notice he did not

have the courage to name the doctor he alleged was using the Bunbury Regional Hospital as a private cash cow. I am sure we all saw on the ABC television news last Sunday night the doctor who was described by the member for Bunbury as "suffering relevance deprivation".

Mr Osborne: No, I didn't. I was referring to another doctor.

Mr McGINTY: Who?

Mr Osborne: I was not referring to Dr Mike Hall, who appeared on TV. He is an acquaintance of mine.

Mr McGINTY: To whom was the member referring? Silence from the member for Bunbury, who is happy to stand up under parliamentary privilege and slander and defame an unnamed doctor in Bunbury, but he does not have the guts, with the full protection of parliamentary privilege, to say who it is. What a gutless coward we have in the member for Bunbury!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member that all remarks should be directed to the Chair, not to other members.

Mr McGINTY: What a gutless coward we have as the member for Bunbury. He says that a GP in his home town of Bunbury suffers from "relevance deprivation", but he is not prepared to name that doctor.

Mr Osborne: Did that sting a bit?

Mr McGINTY: It did not sting me in the least. I am surprised that the members dishes out abuse to his constituents. What sort of a member does that? The member for Bunbury abuses the nurses by calling them whingers, and abuses doctors by claiming they are milking the hospital as their personal cash cow. He claims that this underpins some of the criticisms made. He also said that another unnamed GP - I presume it was the GP who was leading the criticism of the hospital -

Mr Osborne: No.

Mr McGINTY: The member is too gutless to say who it is.

Mr Osborne: That is not what I said. Check what I said.

Mr McGINTY: The member is not prepared to say who it is - is that not the height of cowardice? He is happy to sling the mud, but does not want to be specific in case it comes back to him.

Mr Osborne: I know the doctor who was on television: It was Dr Mike Hall, who is a fine man and a fine doctor. I was not referring to him. Have you got it?

Mr McGINTY: To whom was the member for Bunbury referring? Go on - scurry away! It is a gutless effort on the member's part to accuse a constituent, who is a doctor -

Mr Pandal: Say gutless through the Chair.

Mr McGINTY: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Bunbury is gutless in making such accusations, and not being prepared to back them up. That is the background: Government members say everything is okay, and hurl abuse at people working at the hospital who say that all is not well and that the picture painted by the member for Bunbury and the Minister for Health is not accurate.

I went to the opening of the South West Health Campus in April of this year. I had visited it immediately prior to its official opening. It is a most impressive facility, which is a view I have expressed consistently since the project was nearing completion.

Mr Osborne: You were not a popular guest.

Mr McGINTY: When the member enjoys among the nuns of the St John of God order the sort of approval and popularity I enjoy, let me hear about it. I noticed the member standing like a shag on a rock the day of the opening as people did not want to know him. When he enjoys such standing among my good friends the sisters of the St John of God order, I will hear about it. That fact hurts the member for Bunbury, as they do not approve of him in a number of respects.

I said at the opening of the hospital in April of this year that it was a most impressive facility. The facility provided, particularly the palliative care facility by the good sisters of St John of God is long overdue, as is the mental health facility. I welcome the establishment of such facilities in the city of Bunbury. However, let us not say, as the member for Bunbury and the Minister for Health sought to say, that all is well. Let us not bury our heads in the sand to any issue which might arise, particularly when one has an unprecedented withdrawal of service from 14 GPs in the foremost regional city in Western Australia. That signals that we have big problems on our hands. It is not sufficient for people to pretend an issue is not at stake here, as it clearly is.

I asked the Minister for Health to indicate the last time he had a walkout or a withdrawal of services of this nature, and he could not tell me. Such action is unprecedented in recent memory. That is why the Minister for Health could not tell us some precedent. Interestingly, the General Manager of the Bunbury Health Service has reported that no breakdown has occurred in the relationship with doctors. That is simply not credible. We all saw a spokesperson for the doctors on television on Sunday night talking about why they had withdrawn their services from the hospital. It is a breakdown in relations and a major issue. It is not to be lightly dismissed, as the Minister for Health sought to do.

It was apparent in April, when the new facility was opened, that the doctors were unhappy. A number of them spoke to me

on that occasion about the issues, and I have spoken to a number from Bunbury since then about the problems which were emerging and which have now come to a head in a very dramatic and unprecedented way. Also apparent in April was the pressure on the hospital's emergency department. The situation has deteriorated since then. People are now waiting much longer for treatment. Instead of hurling abuse at the nurses and doctors, the minister should turn his mind to addressing these problems. He should sit down with the people involved and sort out these issues. This situation calls for leadership, but that leadership is sadly lacking.

Mr Day: What is the problem?

Mr McGINTY: According to the minister there is no problem. There is no point in discussing it if there is no problem. Everything is fine!

Mr Day: You have not substantiated your claim that there is a major problem at the Bunbury Regional Hospital.

Mr McGINTY: Did the minister see the doctor on television on Sunday night?

Mr Day: Yes.

Mr McGINTY: And there is no problem! Generally speaking, when someone disagrees with this minister, he gets a mouthful of abuse. Last week, after 20 years of service, Dr Graham Carroll resigned from the Royal Perth Hospital. He was abused by the minister for being a disaffected, narrow-minded individual. He is a man of great stature.

Mr Day: I did not say that.

Mr McGINTY: That is what the minister said on the radio. I was listening and I thought it was ungracious.

Mr Day: I suggest you get a transcript of what I said. I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr McGINTY: The minister said Dr Carroll was disaffected and that he did not have a broad view of the major issues involved.

Mr Day: I did not say he was disaffected and I have not criticised a particular doctor in Bunbury.

Mr McGINTY: The minister has a short-term memory problem too.

Mr Day: You speak with some authority on that.

Mr McGINTY: He did what the member for Bunbury did today - he hurled abuse at people who pointed out problems.

Mr Day: I have not abused anyone. I said that he had a particular point of view.

Mr McGINTY: After 20 years' service, the head of a department at Royal Perth Hospital resigned in disgust at what the minister was doing to him, and the minister dismissed him as disaffected.

Mr Day: I have not dismissed him. I said I have no doubt he is a very competent and dedicated doctor, but he is not the only doctor in the system.

Mr McGINTY: Is it true, as the member for Bunbury alleges, that doctors in that city are using the Bunbury Regional Hospital as their own private milking cow?

Mr Osborne: I did not say that.

Mr McGINTY: Yes he did. I wrote down his words; he said that the hospital is not there to provide harmonious cash cows for GPs.

Mr Osborne: It is not either. That is not to say that I said that was happening.

Mr McGINTY: We have a very impressive new facility. Will the Government support it by providing the necessary resources? Elsewhere we have had new, generally privatised or private-related, facilities and the neighbouring hospitals have been bled dry to fund them. One need look only at the North Metropolitan Health Service and what happened to the Osborne Park Hospital in order to pay for the new privatised Joondalup Health Campus. There was a concern that resources would be taken from other areas of the health system, particularly the neighbouring hospitals, and that insufficient resources would be paid to that campus to ensure that it operated properly.

Earlier this year we saw the unsightly spectacle of non-urgent elective surgery being cancelled at the Joondalup Health Campus. It closed one-quarter of its medical beds because the Government, having caused to be built a very impressive facility, then did not fund it to provide those services. In April I saw the challenge that faced the new South West Health Campus: Would the Government provide the funding to ensure that it operated at its maximum capacity?

Mr Day: I have given you the figures showing how much the budget has increased. Are you prepared to acknowledge a substantial increase in the allocation to the Bunbury Regional Hospital?

Mr McGINTY: The figures included details about the hospital on the old site, and halfway through the financial year it was moved to the new site. The budget for the full financial year increased by 13 per cent. That is not comparing like with like. I would like a full and proper analysis of the full-year operating costs rather than two half years - one at the old hospital and one at the new hospital. That destroys any basis of comparison for those figures.

Mr Day: It indicates that we are putting a lot more money into providing services in Bunbury.

Mr McGINTY: I should hope so; it is a growing area of the State.

Mr Day: I am glad you accept that.

Mr McGINTY: That is doing nothing more than what should be done. The Government seems to want to pat itself on the back for doing what it should be doing.

Mr Day: I simply want the facts reflected.

Mr McGINTY: Unfortunately, Bunbury is starting to fit into a pattern. The Joondalup Health Campus, the flagship of the Government's privatisation program, has run onto the rocks. Within 12 months of its opening, we have seen the closure of beds and the cancellation of elective surgery. A new, collocated facility with the good Sisters of St John of God at Bunbury has also run into problems because of the unprecedented withdrawal of services by a large number of local GPs.

We were told that the privatised Joondalup development would lead to massive savings. The Auditor General very quickly debunked that idea; he said there were no demonstrated savings as a result of having a privatised facility at Joondalup. It is most interesting that neither the member for Bunbury nor the Minister for Health has sung the praises of the collocated facility. We have heard not one word about the predictions made before the facility was built and all the reasons it should be collocated - the sharing of facilities and the benefits it would bring to the town and State by providing a more economical health care system. Are they going cold on the rationale of a collocated facility?

My good friend the member for Bunbury and I both have reservations about private involvement in government health care provision. It is a questionable proposition as to whether the benefits the Government said would flow from a collocated facility have been realised. What the Government said about the Joondalup Health Campus has now been debunked as a lie by the Auditor General. The fact that we did not hear a word about the projected benefits and whether they have been realised since the new facility has been up and running during 1999 makes me think that some of the financial benefits that flow from the shared facilities have not been realised. Perhaps some of the pressure we are now seeing is the result of having only one hospital in the city rather than two major hospitals on two separate sites. I would like to hear from the minister some explanation of whether the hopes for the collocated facility have been realised.

The Opposition will keep a close eye on what is happening to the other hospitals covered by the South West Health Campus in the years ahead. We know that the Pinjarra Hospital has been effectively closed to pay for the Peel Health Campus. We know that extensive funds were taken from the Osborne Park Hospital and a range of other hospitals to provide the necessary funding for the Joondalup Health Campus. We know that further massive cuts will be imposed on major teaching hospitals in Perth. The Opposition will pursue the minister on that issue. It will also watch very closely what is happening in the south west and in the other hospitals in the South West Health Campus catchment area to see whether services and facilities are being run down. One thing this State does not need is medical facilities in the smaller country towns being run down to prop up a greater centralisation of the system, even if that is in regional centres such as Bunbury or Geraldton. That should not happen because in most small country towns the hospitals are the lifeblood of the community and a major contributing factor to the existence and prosperity of those towns. The Opposition will be watching that, because I see a clear pattern emerging of other hospitals in nearby areas being hit for six to pay for the new facilities. The Government boasts that these are new facilities, but they are replacement facilities for those that have been shut down in neighbouring areas.

I conclude with a general comment about health care in Western Australia. In the time I have had an interest in health care, which is now a significant period, I have never seen health care in Western Australia in such a disorganised and dilapidated state. The situation at Bunbury should not be brushed under the carpet or dismissed. The Minister for Health and the local member should not pretend it is not a problem. In the quest for excellence it is necessary to be critical. That measure of excellence must be demanded, and the minister and the member for Bunbury are not doing that. Bunbury is not isolated from what is happening in the rest of the State; crises are occurring in health care throughout the State and grave problems have emerged in Bunbury. They will not be addressed until the minister and the local member have the guts to admit that problems exist. Those problems must be addressed, and that has not happened today. The South West Health Campus is a great facility and it should be all good news. It is a great personal disappointment to me that it is not.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

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

Noes (27)

Mr Baker	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Masters	Mr Shave
Mr Board	Dr Hames	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman
Mr Bradshaw	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Minson	Mr Trenorden
Dr Constable	Mrs Holmes	Mr Nicholls	Dr Turnbull
Mr Court	Mr Johnson	Mr Omodei	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Cowan	Mr Kierath	Mrs Parker	Mr Osborne (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Day	Mr MacLean	Mr Pendal	

Pairs

Mrs Roberts
Mr Bridge

Mr Barnett
Mr Marshall

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

DR CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [4.46 pm]: I listened to the Governor's speech quite carefully when he presented it last week and have since gone back and read through it. As usual, I found it interesting not only for what it said, but also for what it could have said and did not say. I draw the attention of the House to three pieces of legislation which I expected the Governor to mention but he did not.

The first is the animal welfare legislation that has long been promised by this Government. I know for a fact that a great deal of work has gone into that legislation, under the guidance of the Minister for Local Government. He should be commended for the thoroughness of his approach to the drafting of this legislation and gathering the information that went into the draft. Without doubt, it was an exemplary process in the consultation that took place with animal welfare groups; researchers in both medicine, agriculture and other areas; universities and other institutions; and animal ethics committees in the universities. Some months ago a Green Bill was tabled, which is another excellent step in the process. It allows members of the general public, as well as members, to comment on the legislation before it finally comes before the Parliament. I expected that to be given some attention in the Governor's speech and can only ask the question: What has happened to the legislation? Where is it? After six years in government, it is time that this legislation was introduced. It is important that it be debated before the end of next year because many interest groups have been waiting a long time for this new legislation.

The same can be said of the legislation dealing with prostitution, which is also important legislation. I note that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, are nodding. Many of us feel the time has long passed when the rewritten legislation should have been before the House. In many quarters of the community there is a sense of urgency for this updated legislation to be introduced. The reasons are very straightforward and obvious, although I acknowledge that it is a complicated area. Quite clearly, the policy of containment is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it is outside the current law. I do not suggest there should necessarily be a policy of containment in the new law, but I wonder how long we shall tolerate that situation. Also, the legislation should be introduced for reasons of law and order, health and the protection of women who are often subjected to violence and exploitation in this so-called industry. Those are three reasons that a complete rewrite of the legislation is needed. It has clearly been recognised by the Government, yet it still has not produced the legislation. Where is the new legislation on prostitution? We hear that it has been rewritten for the umpteenth time. Shall we see it before the end of next year? This House and the community have waited a long time for this legislation. Animal welfare legislation and prostitution legislation have long been promised.

A further piece of legislation which was introduced a few months ago but which seems to have disappeared mysteriously into oblivion is the State Records Bill. All the pieces of legislation that were previously on the agenda but not completed in June were reinstated with the exception of this piece of legislation. One must ask: What has happened to it, why have we not seen it again, what has gone wrong and why has the minister, the Government or Cabinet decided that we will not see that legislation? It is very important to have good state records legislation and a rewrite once more of the existing legislation. One example of the need for this legislation is the recent controversy about the destruction of documents by officers of the Marks royal commission. This issue is of deep concern to many of us. The issue of state or government records was dealt with at length as a result of the WA Inc years. It was dealt with firstly by the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters, and as a result of the report of that royal commission, it was taken up seriously by the Commission on Government, which made a series of recommendations about a rewrite of that legislation. For how many years will we need to wait until we get good state records law? That legislation is an important part of the democratic fabric of our society. I am very concerned that that legislation has disappeared without a trace, and this House deserves an explanation of that matter.

I will address most of my remarks to a subject that was dealt with earlier by the member for Perth; that is, women's suffrage and the contribution of women to public life. I hope I will not be too repetitive of what the member for Perth said, but this is an issue of great significance, particularly this week when we celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage. This matter was also mentioned in the Governor's speech and deserves to be debated in this House. The Governor said in his speech that -

Also adding to the significance of this occasion is the celebration of Western Australia's centenary of suffrage and the contribution of women to public life.

This was clearly recognised in the Governor's speech and was, therefore, clearly recognised by the Government. Yesterday was the centenary of the passage in this House of the Women's Suffrage Bill, which was passed by a healthy majority of 11 votes, so it was clearly the will of the House that that Bill be passed. Much has been said and written recently about the centenary of women's suffrage, and a number of celebrations have been held at the initiative of both the Government and institutions like Edith Cowan University.

I refer to an excellent article on page 12 of this week's edition of *School Matters*, the newspaper of the Education Department, which I understand is the first of three articles on the centenary of women's suffrage that will be published in that magazine in the next few months. To award women the vote was very timely indeed, because it meant that Western Australian women were able to exercise their vote in the following year and to participate fully in the referendum on the Commonwealth Constitution. Given the celebration of the centenary of women's suffrage this week, it is worth lingering

for a few moments on the advancement of women over the past 100 years, and in doing so I foreshadow an amendment to the Address-in-Reply. The decade that led to the attainment of suffrage by women in Western Australia was characterised by the tenacity of a number of strong and determined women who pressed on often in the face of strong opposition from, in the early days, this Parliament. Western Australia was, as we know, the second State in Australia after South Australia to give women the vote. Women in South Australia achieved the vote in 1894. It is not surprising that women in Australia and elsewhere met strong opposition in their quest for the vote, and I will read a quote in that article in *School Matters* which is amusing 108 years later but was totally serious at the time. The quote is from the editorial in the Adelaide paper *The Advertiser* of August 1891 and states -

A woman is as much out of place at the polling booths as a man is in the kitchen.

The writer of that editorial would have a lot of trouble dealing with the changes that have taken place 100 years later. Even Queen Victoria, arguably the most powerful woman in the world at the time, did not support women's suffrage and is reported as saying that to give women the vote would be mad, wicked folly.

The struggle for the vote was led by a number of women's groups in Western Australia. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, which formed its first branch in 1892, took on the issue of a vote for women as an important aspect of its work. The Karrakatta Club, which was formed two years later in 1894, was the first women's club in Australia and, I think, the British Empire. As a women's organisation formed in the mid-1890s it is not surprising that the members of the Karrakatta Club soon took up the fight for a vote for women. With women like Edith Cowan as a founding member, women's issues were bound to be pursued by its members. The Premier of the day was Sir John Forrest, and his wife, Margaret, was also a member of the Karrakatta Club. The article in *School Matters* contains this interesting quote -

Another member was Lady Margaret Forrest, a firm supporter of votes for women and the wife of Premier Sir John Forrest, who was just as firmly opposed to women's suffrage.

It is hard to imagine the conversations they must have had at home, especially when MP J Cookworthy presented a motion for votes for women "in the best interests of the country" in 1896 and Premier Forrest spoke out against it in no uncertain terms.

There would have been an interesting conflict in that household for a number of years, because in the following year, 1897, a motion was introduced by Walter James which read -

That in the opinion of this House, the best interests of the colony require an extension of the parliamentary franchise to women.

Again, the motion was lost, but the women who were leading this fight pushed on undeterred and were determined that they would get the vote. Unlike *The Advertiser*, the women in Western Australia found an ally in the editor of *The West Australian*. In fact, the Women's Christian Temperance Union had a weekly column in that newspaper, so it had the support of the newspaper of the day. In April 1899, various groups of women suffragists from Western Australia combined in their efforts to form the Western Australian Women's Franchise League, with Lady Forrest as one of the elected councillors, so the conflict at home must have continued. In the final round in Parliament when the Women's Suffrage Bill was debated, Sir John Forrest supported the Bill, so his wife obviously won the battle.

Twenty-one years after women had won the vote in our State, another landmark piece of legislation was passed in this Parliament. The Attorney General of the time had responsibility for the passage of a Bill giving women the right to stand for Parliament, and that Bill was passed in 1920, so even though women had the vote, they had to wait quite a long time before they had the right to stand for Parliament. The first election that followed the passage of that important piece of legislation was on 12 March 1921, when at the age of 60, Edith Cowan was elected to the Western Australian Parliament to the seat of West Perth. There is a delicious irony in that election, because she won the seat from the Attorney General who had the responsibility for the passage of that Bill through the Parliament, and on election night he must have wondered why he did it!

Mr Pandal: That is gratitude for you!

Dr CONSTABLE: He obviously did not think he would be challenged. Five women stood for Parliament at that first opportunity, but only Edith Cowan was successful, and we know, and it bears repeating, that she was the first woman to be elected to a Parliament in Australia and only the second woman to be elected to a Parliament in the British Empire. A new book has come out by Anne Henderson - there is a copy in the library - in which she states that the first woman was elected to the Australian Parliament in 1931 in New South Wales. Anne Henderson needs to be told the facts of the matter, and I was quite distraught when I read that, because she obviously thought Western Australia did not matter.

One of Edith Cowan's most important contributions to this Parliament was the passage of her Women's Legal Status Act in 1923. To understand the significance of this short but potent piece of legislation, it is important to look at some of the other struggles that women had in breaking through some of the male bastions, particularly in the legal profession. Before the passage of the Women's Legal Status Act, women could not even sit for an intermediate legal examination, let alone practise law. There was a stunning case at the turn of the century which involved a woman called Edith Haynes who applied for articles of clerkship. At that time, in order to become a lawyer, a person had to get articles of clerkship and at the end of five years pass an examination. She was warned by the barristers board that it could not guarantee her admission to practise even if she completed the five years of clerkship and examination. The reason was there was some doubt about whether she was a person. At that time the law said that to practise law, she had to be a person. The barristers board argued that only a man could be a person. This matter went to the Supreme Court and there was a struggle there. In the end she

was allowed to sit her examination and practise law. It was not until after Edith Cowan's legal status Bill was passed that women were allowed to practise law, and it opened the door to other professions as well. This is a very important piece of legislation because in a number of ways it anticipated by 50 years the 1975 commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act. The short title of the legal status Act states -

An Act to amend the Law with respect to Disqualifications on account of Sex.

It was a very elegant and simple piece of legislation in the form in which it was introduced. I will quote it because it is important for us to understand what Edith Cowan was trying to do. It states -

A person shall not be disqualified by sex from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from being admitted and entitled to practise as a practitioner within the meaning of that term of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1893, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any other profession, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

In that simple paragraph Edith Cowan encapsulated the freedom for women to practise not only law but also other activities in the community and other professions. I think that is a landmark. She entered Parliament at 60 years of age. She had one term of three years in Parliament, but that piece of legislation, as a private member's Bill, is a very important part of our history and the history of women in this State.

Edith Cowan was very optimistic when she was elected in 1921 that once one or a few women broke through the barrier and entered Parliament, many would follow. She would be very disappointed to learn that between 1921 and 1983 only nine women sat in this Parliament. What extraordinary women they must have been in many ways. She would be pleased to know that 20 per cent of the elected members of this Parliament are women, but would probably think that is not quite enough and, in nearly 78 years, would have expected more women to be elected to Parliament than have been. It is remarkable to note that while women were able to stand for Federal Parliament from 1901, the first woman was not elected to the national Parliament until 1943. It took a long time for women to break through that barrier.

Mr Trenorden: Which State was she from?

Dr CONSTABLE: There were two; one was from Western Australia. I think they represented Lyons and Tangney.

Ms Warnock: That was in 1943.

Dr CONSTABLE: One of the first women elected to the Federal Parliament was from Western Australia.

Mr Pendal: The member for Avon helped them both!

Dr CONSTABLE: It is quite obvious that much has changed in women's lives in the past century. While political developments have been extremely important in the changes in women's lives, we cannot forget the impact of two other areas that I see as absolutely crucial to the changes that have occurred. The first is the advances in medicine. At the turn of the century a large percentage of women died young or at the time of childbirth. Let us look at a few advances in medicine, such as antibiotics, which have overcome infections at the time of childbirth and at other stages in people's lives. That has made a big difference to not only women, but also men. Many would see contraception as a development that has brought about major change not just in women's lives but for the community as a whole. I think it is worth mentioning that Edith Cowan was instrumental in setting up King Edward Memorial Hospital, and, for that, women should be grateful. As the member for Perth mentioned, there are concerns about the condition of that hospital and the need to upgrade many of its facilities 80 years on.

Another impact on women's lives in the past century has been education. It has been the second major liberating force in the lives of women and in their advancement. In the past 30 or 40 years dramatic change has occurred to the point where, in university enrolments, women represent easily 50 per cent in some of the major professional courses, such as medicine and law, and the numbers are creeping up in engineering all the time. The change brought about by education has been absolutely crucial in the advancement of women. There is much to celebrate a hundred years after women achieved the vote. Much is still to be achieved in equality in the workplace and women's rates of pay compared with those of men. Areas in the social sphere continue to be worrying and they are the sorts of issues that women like Edith Cowan worried about at the turn of the century. I refer to domestic violence, dealing with alcoholism in the home and the violence that goes with it. She was concerned about single women and child care, issues that are still with us today. Although some progress has been made, more must still be made. Based on my comments, I now seek to move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, which I understand will be seconded by the member for South Perth.

Amendment to Motion

Dr CONSTABLE: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

and, in response to Your Excellency's remarks this House notes with satisfaction the significant increase in the status of women beginning with the historic vote in this House on 17 August 1899, and expresses the further hope that the status of women will continue to be enhanced.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [5.08 pm]: I am very happy to second and support the amendment on two grounds: First, one that I will deal with very briefly; and, secondly, one based on the substance of this amendment. Very briefly I use this occasion to point out that what was said in this House yesterday by both the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the House

about the practice of seeking to amend the Address-in-Reply was arrant nonsense. I will support that contention by reminding those members and, equally importantly, other newer members that both of those gentlemen, who were so strident in their opposition to those amendments being moved and carried, have a long history of doing precisely that.

Before I get onto the substance of the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands, I point out for the record that on 12 April 1989, at page 580 of *Hansard*, the Deputy Premier - who was so vociferous in his opposition to what opposition members sought to do yesterday - voted to amend the Address-in-Reply.

Dr Turnbull: Do you think your rubbing his nose in it will help?

Mr PENDAL: I will tell the member for Collie why I am doing this; I was ashamed of the sheep-like mentality of people like her who should have known better.

Dr Turnbull interjected.

Mr PENDAL: The member can make a speech later. It is possible that it might remind her that there is a history attached to almost everything in this House and the conduct of those members who swallowed that line yesterday will be to their eternal discredit. On 8 May 1990, today's Deputy Premier voted to amend the Address-in-Reply. On 15 May at page 862 of *Hansard*, the Deputy Premier again voted to amend the Address-in-Reply. The amendment put on that day was moved by none other than the present Speaker, the then member for Scarborough. On 16 May 1990, at page 1016 of *Hansard*, the Deputy Premier yet again voted to amend the Address-in-Reply. On 27 May 1990 at page 1303, today's Deputy Premier moved an amendment to amend an amendment already before the Chair - a situation which he condemned outright yesterday. On 20 March the following year at page 227, today's Deputy Premier said outright - listen to this in view of his remarks yesterday in defence of the Governor's position - he disagreed with the Governor and the Governor's address and he then moved to amend the Address-in-Reply.

I also make reference to my friend, the Leader of the House and member for Cottesloe. He was equally sheep-like in his support for the notion that we must never do anything of that kind. On 31 March 1992 at page 445 of *Hansard* the member for Cottesloe stated -

I am pleased to speak in support on the motion to amend the Address-in-Reply.

I ran out of time before the House sat today. I only had seven or eight minutes and I came up with those many examples. I rest my case and I do it no more than for the purpose of reminding everyone in this House that this House is the master of its own destiny; this House can do anything it pleases so long as it does not breach the standing orders. Let me tell the people who are in government today one of the few things I can contribute; one is never always in government. The day comes when one is in opposition and the day comes when Oppositions want to use every facility available to them to express a view as members sought to do yesterday.

That brings me to support the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands which is no more nor less than an attempt on the part of the House to express a point of view about something as important as the vote for women which was passed by this House of Parliament 100 years ago yesterday. A number of other things happened on that day. Just to show that there is nothing new, also on that day there was an amendment to the Constitution Act in which the Parliament voted to end four-year terms and to substitute three-year terms. It had been found that four-year terms were too long in government. From my vantage point, I can sometimes understand that in its entirety. However, other things happened. For example, 100 years ago yesterday there was an increase in the number of members of Parliament in this and the other House.

Mr Trenorden: What were the numbers?

Mr PENDAL: I think the lower House went from 30 to 33 or something of that nature. However, against the background of the enormous constitutional change passing through the House 100 years yesterday, by far the most important change was that which this amendment seeks to celebrate. Why would it be so important in our community and in a global sense? It was important because Western Australia was only the third colony in the then British empire to do this. The effort on the part of the British Parliament to give women the vote was almost another generation away yet that drastic, historic step was taken here on that day. For many years it has been standard history that Sir John Forrest relied rather cynically on that change being passed to allow most of the women who lived on the coast with their husbands the vote to offset the huge influx of people who were coming to the goldfields.

Mr Trenorden: The t'othersiders.

Mr PENDAL: Most of those t'othersiders were not accompanied by womenfolk. History always gets to a point where people want to reassess it. In more recent years, a great deal of doubt and suspicion has been thrown on that motivation. I was pleased to see in a parliamentary publication of this House in 1990 Professor Brian de Gauris begin to draw out some of that revisionism, not based on the desire to rewrite history but on the need to reassess it because of new facts emerging. However, until that point the significance was that only New Zealand and South Australia had given women the vote. When it occurred here in a tiny, isolated - some would say insulated - community, it demonstrated that we were isolated but far from insular. What happened in the generations to come enhanced the role of women in public life. Western Australia as a small, isolated community in the global sense took a lead that is stunning in its breadth to this day. The member for Churchlands has articulated the role of Edith Cowan. Edith Cowan rightly wins the praise of people but there were other firsts. I have taken the opportunity of talking to young female students when they come to Parliament to see if there is a good book in the scenario that followed Edith Cowan's election. Western Australia, this Parliament and this House went on to produce the first female sitting in any Australian Cabinet, the member for Subiaco, who later became Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver. I said by way of interjection to the member for Perth this morning that Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver was

not given a portfolio which reflected so-called women's interests. She was made Minister for Supply and Shipping in the post-war years which was arguably the most macho and male-dominated of all the portfolios.

Mr Trenorden: Second World War .

Mr PENDAL: Sorry. Western Australia had a large and extensive shipping service running up and down the coast and many active ports. To be Minister for Supply and Shipping in those circumstances was something pretty remarkable. However, it even went beyond that. This Parliament produced the first female Labor member of Parliament anywhere in Australia. I refer to May Holman, who followed her father into the seat in the south west. One of the great tragedies was that the night she was re-elected in 1939 she was badly injured in a car accident and died without knowing that she had been re-elected. John Tonkin told me many years ago when he was the Premier that his break onto the front bench was because of her death. This is one of the great ironies and tragedies of politics. The vacancy that she left went to John Tonkin, who had been a member for six years. He later served a very distinguished term as a minister and led his own government in the 1970s. That was another first for this small, isolated Parliament. It was not Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane or anywhere else that produced the first female member of Parliament, the first female cabinet minister or the first female Labor member of Parliament. Later on this small, isolated State produced the first female senator in Australia, Dorothy Tangney. Her name has already been mentioned several times today. This State also produced the first female head of government in the form of Carmen Lawrence.

My argument, particularly to young women, is that I do not believe that in a small, isolated Parliament such as Western Australia's, all of these achievements were coincidence. Somewhere in that history is a fabulous book that sings the praises and enhances the status of women to an extent far beyond what the so-called larger and sophisticated Parliaments in the Westminster system around the world were able to achieve.

Although Edith Cowan has received her just recognition and reward, Florence Cardell-Oliver is someone who, in many respects, has had a greater impact on the parliamentary life of Western Australia and Australia. This is so not only because she became a minister, but also in the 1940s Florence Cardell-Oliver was a strident opponent of capital punishment. This would have been very difficult for a Liberal member at that time and she got into all sorts of strife with her own party because of this stance. Members of this House were exposed to a tough, uncompromising woman, as she was when necessary. Florence Cardell-Oliver ran her campaign against capital punishment as a conservative. She survived that, fortunately, and her esteem with the Liberal Party did not seem to be ill-affected because she went on to be selected by Premier McLarty to serve in high office in his cabinet. Florence Cardell-Oliver was a woman of immense achievement but, unlike Edith Cowan, that level of achievement has never been recognised. It is another reason why young people interested in the political development of this State could envision a major published work on the life of Cardell-Oliver and the impact she had on this State.

There is consistency throughout the past 100 years that, once the breakthrough occurred, women took the opportunity. It is true, as the member for Churchlands said, the numbers of women in Parliament have not been as great as many people expected. However, there was the consistency that every generation of women broke barriers in this Chamber in a manner that took the breath away from many other so-called more sophisticated and larger Parliaments around Australia. It is against that background that the member has moved an amendment to celebrate the capacity of a small and isolated Parliament to set new parameters and give itself the vision about which the member for Dawesville spoke the other night. Who knows where that vision will take the status of women in the future. One could almost believe that after all of the records that have been set and broken in this Parliament there is nothing left by way of trailblazing on either side of politics, and that is another interesting aspect. When all of those reforms are combined, they are almost equally divided between the Labor and non-Labor sides of politics, so that neither side dominated. Both sides of politics appear to have the capacity to offer women the chance to make an impact.

The late Margaret McAleer saw these achievements as being too few and far between but she was prepared to acknowledge that when combined and looked at against that historical perspective, some remarkable things have come out of the small Parliament of Western Australia. There is much of which to be proud and I, for one, am very pleased to be able to support the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands.

I conclude with this final plea that amendments to the Address-in-Reply have been going on since time immemorial. What it amounts to is a reasonable expression of the House's view, not the Government's view. This House does not belong to the Government; it belongs to the people of Western Australia and the 57 people who are sent here by those people. Members are able to express views in this House which are out of kilter with the Government's view, albeit that yesterday members saw the oddity of the Government being the only party to vote against its own policy. There is the capacity in the Address-in-Reply to pay tribute to that which women have achieved and what has been done to enhance their role in our society. I suspect the story is far from over. I support the amendment.

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [5.27 pm]: As members would suspect, I support the amendment, as I spoke about the issue of suffrage and its importance earlier today in this Chamber. I believe the centenary we are celebrating this week is one that should be celebrated vigorously because it has made so much difference to the lives of women and, of course, to the whole community. Earlier this year, in common with many other women, I was asked what the vote meant to me. I said very firmly that I regarded voting as so important that it was almost a sacred duty. I am angered by people who habitually do not vote because of the immense battle that so many people fought to obtain the vote. In at least one case, it cost an English woman her life. Those of us who have come along later owe it to those women, and the men who assisted them, to use that vote.

When I was very involved in the women's movement 20 years ago I saw a marvellous British documentary called *Shoulder to Shoulder* which was about the fight for suffrage in the United Kingdom. It was extremely moving to see film footage of

both working and middle class women - it was a very widely-based movement - dressed in voluminous long skirts, button boots and tight corsets and all that sort of thing, marching through the streets with petitions and banners held high and determinedly fending off the jeers of passers-by who did not agree with their point of view. They had so much courage, whether they were led by Emmeline Pankhurst, as they were in the United Kingdom, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Women's Voting League, or the Karrakatta Club in Western Australia. We should remember that courage and celebrate it. It was much easier for us, generations later, due to the advantages we gained from that first wave of better education, earning capacity and, of course, the vote to get on the barricades in the 1960s and 1970s, to try to complete that revolution begun by the suffragists in the last century.

We did not finish the task even then. As I said earlier and as others said, much remains to be done for women. However, our task was made very much easier because we could get out and vote for the changes we wanted to see made and make our views count in the corridors of power. That reminds me that the Women's Electoral Lobby, of which I am still a member after some 20 years, was founded by a group of women in Melbourne in 1972. One of the first things it did was to ask every candidate in the 1972 federal election what were his or her policies on women's issues. They let it be known they would vote for the people who had the best record on women's issues. I understand it was one of the first times that technique of polling the candidates was widely used. It has, of course, been used by many groups in Australia since then. It not only had a tremendous impact at the time and caused much publicity for the Women's Electoral Lobby and the cause of women in general but also it shook up the candidates. As we know from history, the Whitlam Labor Government was elected and, with its policies on women's issues, it succeeded in pleasing and politicising thousands of women throughout Australia.

As I said earlier today, all women in the past 100 years owe something to those who made the case for suffrage at the end of last century. We stand on their shoulders and I salute them today.

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [5.33 pm]: I will make a brief contribution to this debate as the member for Kalgoorlie, being in a position to make some brief comments about the contribution that women have made in the goldfields, given the extremely significant and historical position goldfields women had in the lobbying that led to this Parliament's originally adopting universal suffrage.

It is a matter of pride to me that I am the first woman elected to represent the goldfields in this Parliament. A keen sense of history exists in the goldfields. Not universally understood is the role women played in the goldfields in both the early pioneering years and on a continuing basis. I have certainly had pleasure in looking through the Parliamentary Library, which has a good collection of historical books dating back to the early years of Western Australia and the goldfields in the 1890s and the early 1900s.

Two goldfields historians, both women, Tess Thompson and Norma King, have written terrific books. Norma King's book *Daughters of Midas* refers in great detail to the contribution women made to the goldfields in those early days. In any event, the Christian Women's Temperance movement as it then was - I do not know whether it still exists -

Dr Turnbull: It does.

Ms ANWYL: I am showing my ignorance. I have not had the pleasure of meeting many women who have told me that they belong to that organisation.

Mr Cunningham: It is a wonderful organisation.

Ms ANWYL: The books reveal that the women in that organisation played a large role in lobbying the men who sat in this place. It is true that women make up only about 20 per cent of parliamentarians in this place now, which is to be lamented. There could be many more women in this place. I hope that eventually we will have to bring in a policy of affirmative action for men because I would like to see women outnumbering men in this Parliament.

Mr Carpenter interjected.

Ms ANWYL: As the member for Willagee pointed out, young women dominated the recently held youth Parliament. Also in my electorate, the youth Mayor of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is a woman. Certainly the large majority of youth parliamentarians tend to be women. It is most important that we recognise the contribution that women made to the State in the early days in not only achieving universal suffrage but also advancing our State as one of the leading States in the Commonwealth.

I refer briefly to the contribution made to the goldfields by a lady who passed away recently, Sheila Eugenie Laver, the daughter of Dr Laver, after whom Laverton is named. She led a full life, passing away at the age of 92 in the Kalgoorlie nursing home where she had excellent care and formed many associations. I was campaigning at the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home in late 1994 when I met her. I was immediately taken with her overwhelming interest in things historical and political. It is fair to say that her passion was the water supply. She was a great believer in the bringing down of water from the Kimberley. I think her ideas predated those of the member for Kimberley. I am not sure where the copyright fits in! However, she was a supporter of the member for Kimberley. Her surviving nephew told me recently that she had been talking about that scheme for many decades.

Although I had the honour of attending her funeral, I was puzzled because it was not terribly well attended. It occurred to me that had she been the son of Dr Laver, more people might have attended. I may be a little misguided in that view but it occurs to me from time to time that our society has a little difficulty paying women the credit due to them and are more readily able to pay homage to men's contributions to our society than to women's contributions.

Sheila Laver was born in Paris. Her parents were very mobile, but she spent some earlier years in Victoria and she chose with her sister, Elizabeth, who has also passed away, to return to Kalgoorlie-Boulder because they felt such an affinity with

the goldfields. They had very happy days in Gwalia and Laverton as young women. Sheila Laver made a contribution to the goldfields that has not been recognised as well as it might be; nonetheless, I was pleased to see recently that the *Kalgoorlie Miner* ran a story about her life. I recommend members who might have an interest read it because it is an interesting tale.

Having said that, I was always very pleased to have conversations with Sheila, who took an active interest in sponsoring scholarships for the Western Australian School of Mines. She also took an active interest in ensuring that women students flourished in the goldfields. At the last School of Mines' graduation, she commented on the number of young women passing through the institution.

I remind members that women in the goldfields continue to play a pivotal role in the development of that community. Certainly they played a pivotal role in the passing of legislation for universal suffrage. I also point out that we have not had 100 years of voting for all women. Aboriginal women did not vote at the time European women were first allowed to vote. Not all Aboriginal men voted either. However, in celebrating the centenary, we tend to overlook that Aboriginal women did not have access to voting until the 1960s. It is significant again for the goldfields, given the number of Aboriginal people who reside in the goldfields that we add, if we like, a postscript to the celebration of the centenary of suffrage and recognise the fact that Aboriginal women did not get the vote until the 1960s.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [5.39 pm]: It will not come as any surprise to either the member for Churchlands or the member for South Perth that the Government remains indifferent to their pleas. One would expect them to demonstrate a degree of genuineness by moving a substantive motion in a later stage of this session. If they do that, I am sure it will be given the consideration it deserves.

I want to elaborate on something that I said yesterday. We are now entering into a new era. At one stage amendments to the Address-in-Reply were moved that generally began with the words, "but regrets to inform your Excellency" and then went on to talk about deficiencies in government policy or an issue that the government may not have addressed. Now we have got to the stage - this is being led by the Independents, and that is probably appropriate - when motions invite members in a fairly generic approach to either support a government policy or to take up an issue that everybody in the normal sense of business can support. There is nothing untoward about that. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Sweetman), can you imagine 57 members of Parliament, excluding the member in the Chair, deciding to amend the Address-in-Reply, and because we think the amendment is wonderful, trooping down to His Excellency the Governor, introducing ourselves and saying that we have a list of things which effectively say, "but your Excellency, your opening speech to the Parliament omitted all of these things, and we would like to draw your attention to that"? It is a great try. However, I offer a few words of advice to the member for Churchlands. She needs to take note of the activities of the Leader of the Opposition whose credibility is often destroyed because of his constant carping. The member for Churchlands should not fall into that same trap.

I make it clear that I would accept the genuineness of the member for Churchlands and the member for South Perth if, when the Address-in-Reply is adjourned or is completed, they introduced a substantive motion on this subject. I doubt very much whether we will see a motion of that kind, although I hope we do, because that will demonstrate that they are not as shallow as everybody believes them to be.

Point of Order

Mr KOBELKE: For the Deputy Premier to refer to the two members as shallow reflects directly on them and that is not in keeping with the standing orders. I ask that you ask the Deputy Premier to withdraw those remarks.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Sweetman). There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr COWAN: Perhaps I can assist the member for Nollamara by saying that one can say that the motives of the members for Churchlands and South Perth would be regarded as less shallow should they seek to introduce a substantive motion on the subjects that they introduced.

Mr Kobelke: Why should they, when this is an appropriate mechanism to bring issues before the House?

Mr COWAN: There is no reason why they should not. However, I need again to make the point that was made by the Leader of the House. It is not the intention of the Government to accept amendments to the Address-in-Reply. That has been our position. We will remain consistent with the position espoused by the Leader of the House.

I have some feeling on this issue, because of my name and the name of the person who was the first woman elected to Parliament not just in Australia but in what was then known as the British Empire.

Dr Constable: She was the second.

Mr COWAN: That is a matter for debate.

Mr Pandal: No, it is a known fact, and the Deputy Premier has been consistently wrong all day.

Mr COWAN: I do not mind being consistently wrong in this place as long as we win the vote. I recommend to members on this side of the House to oppose the amendment.

MRS PARKER (Ballajura - Minister for Women's Interests) [5.46 pm]: It is absolutely important that we do not trivialise the occasion of the centenary of women's suffrage in this State. We must be careful not to try to score political points and play stunts when members such as the member for Perth have demonstrated a genuine commitment to and support of the

celebrations in the State this year. It is not often that we can say there has been a true spirit of bipartisan support. I commend the member for Perth for her participation this year in activities throughout the State to celebrate the centenary of suffrage, not for any benefit but to look back over the past 100 years and to regard, respect and honour the contributions that a great many significant women have made to this State.

We should also take some time to consider where we are at the moment on the issues that the suffragettes campaigned for 100 years ago. We have been able to take some of those issues off the agenda; unfortunately, we have not been able to take all of them off the agenda. Domestic violence is still an issue very much on the agenda that we continue to deal with, and an issue that the suffragettes mentioned 100 years ago.

The centenary of suffrage is about not only looking back and taking stock, but also looking forward to where women and the community might be in 20, 50 or 100 years.

The member for Perth and I share a second objective. I have had support from the member for Perth, as the shadow Minister for Women's Interests, to ensure that the celebrations of the centenary of suffrage in this State were experienced by women and communities throughout the State. To that end, the Government established four rounds of community grants of \$100 000 each, and made grants to organisations large and small, new and old, to ensure that there was an acknowledgment and appreciation of the significance of the centenary of suffrage.

It is important to note that Western Australia was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to give women the vote. In that sense, while we can look back at some of the comments of the male members of the Parliament at the time and have a chuckle about what we now see as regressive and backward attitudes, this Parliament was a progressive Parliament when it gave women the franchise 100 years ago yesterday.

On behalf of the Government, as the minister I have a determination to ensure this year that, first, there will be an acknowledgment and appreciation in communities right around the State of the significance of and benefits and rewards from women's suffrage and, second, we might be able to take stock and look forward. I also have a determination to leave some sense of memorial to this event. One hundred years is a significant time. Projects commemorating this year have been carried out in small and large communities right around the State. A project at King Edward Memorial Hospital will stand there for time to remind us of this centenary. Most significantly, I look forward to the opening at the end of the year of the enhancement project at Kings Park where quite significant work is being undertaken so that we can not only look back and honour women who made contributions but also have a lasting memorial to this centenary of suffrage.

The member for Kalgoorlie quite rightly pointed out that Aboriginal women were not included 100 years ago in the suffrage right. We have provided for an acknowledgment of that in the memorial project we are undertaking in Kings Park because it is a significant issue. We look back on that time that Aboriginal people in Western Australia were given voting rights in the late 1960s with a sense of shame that it took us so long to give them that right.

I do not want the significance and the celebration of the centenary of suffrage trivialised by a political stunt in this place. I hope and anticipate that for the remainder of the year, all of the projects and activities that we have planned will continue to have the bipartisan support that I believe the community deserves and that we have enjoyed until now.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

Ms Anwyl	Dr Gallop	Mr McGinty	Mr Riebeling
Mr Brown	Mr Graham	Mr McGowan	Mr Thomas
Mr Carpenter	Mr Grill	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Dr Constable	Mr Kobelke	Mr Pendal	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Edwards	Ms MacTiernan		

Noes (23)

Mr Baker	Mr Day	Mr MacLean	Mr Shave
Mr Bloffwitch	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Masters	Mr Trenorden
Mr Board	Dr Hames	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bradshaw	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Minson	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Court	Mrs Holmes	Mr Nicholls	Mr Osborne (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cowan	Mr Johnson	Mr Omodei	

Pairs

Mrs Roberts	Mr Barnett
Mr Marlborough	Mr House
Mr Ripper	Mrs Parker
Mr Bridge	Mr Marshall

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR CARPENTER (Willagee) [5.56 pm]: I would like to take a few minutes to talk about an issue that has become important across the State. It is from an area for which I have portfolio responsibility in Family and Children's Services.

It relates to the stresses that families are under and how those stresses manifest themselves. In particular, it relates to domestic violence and the problems that spin from domestic violence. I am making these remarks to honour a commitment I gave to a meeting to which I was invited last week with representatives of women's refuge groups in Perth. I listened to what the representatives of the women's refuges had to say at that meeting. I was considerably disturbed by the picture they painted of the activities that they find themselves dealing with. It reinforces in many ways some of the issues that I, as a member of Parliament have been dealing with for some time.

The spark for the invitation to the meeting that I attended was provided very tragically by the murder-suicide recently of a young Perth father and his four children. The man from Singleton took the lives of his children and himself in most tragic circumstances. That followed on from a similar incident not long ago in which a Perth mother took her life and the lives of her five children. People across Western Australia in and out of Government were asking themselves how this could possibly happen. When one hears the stories of people involved in women's refuge groups who are dealing with domestic violence and stresses on families, one begins to be able to assemble a picture of the circumstances which could conceivably lead to the outcomes that I mentioned a moment ago.

As a member of Parliament dealing with a variety of social issues, it has become increasingly obvious to me that societies, communities and organisations, just like individuals and any living creature, act in most unusual ways when they are under pressure. Individuals who are under pressure will do unexpected and sometimes tragic things. Organisations that are under pressure will find themselves in all sorts of difficulties, and unexpected problems may arise from that. A case study of an organisation that is under pressure and is experiencing all sorts of difficulties is the Government of Western Australia. All sorts of unexpected problems are emerging, and people are behaving in all sorts of strange ways. However, I will leave that aside for the moment because I am dealing with a more serious issue. When families are placed under social and economic pressures, some of the people within some of those families will behave in unfortunate ways. Those pressures may be economic pressures related to employment or unemployment, or pressures that emanate from the breakdown of a relationship, which may in turn be related to economic and employment pressures, and when a relationship begins to break down, all sorts of other problems may arise with individuals and families, such as violence, depression, suicide and abuse of children. When people face a long period of social and/or economic pressure, these problems manifest more frequently. Any community in the world which has experienced a long period of alienation and/or social or economic stress will exhibit common threads, such as a high level of domestic violence, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, and low self-esteem and educational achievements. The tragically perfect longitudinal study which illustrates those problems can be found in Aboriginal Australia, and it is not surprising that many social problems of the type that I have just enunciated exist in Aboriginal communities around this country.

Western Australia has a significant problem of domestic violence, homelessness, depression, suicide and related matters. That is of great distress to the families and people who are affected directly by it and is also of considerable distress to members of Parliament, who must try to deal with the repercussions of those problems. It should be a priority of the Government to try to deal with those issues. However, I do not believe this Government is giving significant priority to those issues. My meeting with the representatives of women's refuge groups reinforced my belief that this Government is not doing enough to address the many social problems that are plaguing Western Australia at this time, in particular in communities which are experiencing long periods of high unemployment, low educational opportunities, and so on.

I was told at the meeting that Western Australia has 37 women's refuges, 17 of which are in the metropolitan area, and that on any given night about 500 people are in those women's refuges and many more are unable to access those refuges because they are full. The majority of those 500 people - probably 300 - are likely to be children. That is a distressing figure, and it is an indication of a time bomb of social problems that is ticking away in the community when on any given night hundreds of children in Western Australia are in women's refuges. One of the problems that is confronting women's refuges is a lack of funding from the Government. Governments obviously cannot be expected to resolve every social problem, but women's refuges are crisis centres for women who have nowhere else to go, and it is incumbent upon the State Government, which is the service provider, to do everything it can to assist women who find themselves in the circumstance in which they need to seek refuge.

Mr Bloffwitch: We have a very good women's refuge in Geraldton but we do not have a refuge for men, and we should look at that.

Ms Anwyl: Albany has one.

Mr CARPENTER: I am speaking specifically about problems for women and children. I know there are also difficulties for men.

Mr Bloffwitch: If a bloke's wife shoots through and he has the kids, he should have somewhere that he can go.

Mr CARPENTER: Most of the women in women's refuges are there not because their husbands have left them but because their husbands have battered them and their safety is at risk. Women and children go into women's refuges because in the majority of circumstances they have been physically abused. The funding for women's refuges is insufficient. The Western Australian Government has made a significant injection of funding into domestic violence protection in Western Australia, but the growth in that funding is directed at trying to educate men about domestic violence and at encouraging men who are susceptible to committing domestic violence or are the perpetrators of domestic violence to seek help. The problem remains that there has not been a significant increase in funding to meet the requirements of the victims. A significant body of literature is available which details the impact of domestic violence on women and children and the problems that can flow later in life for children who are subject to or observe domestic violence.

One of the outcomes of domestic violence is homelessness. An American report by the National Coalition for the Homeless, which was written this year, states -

When a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she often has nowhere to go. This is particularly true of women with few resources. Lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean many women and their children are forced to choose between abuse at home or the streets. Moreover, shelters are frequently filled to capacity and must turn away battered women and their children.

That American report is also applicable to the very sad situation that exists in Western Australia. Those members who have a significant number of Homeswest dwellings in their electorate would know that there is a major shortage of public housing in Western Australia at this time.

A report on homelessness which was released by the national Council to Homeless Persons pointed to Western Australia and said that in Western Australia last year 15 000 people registered as being homeless. That does not mean that on any day in the year there are 15 000 homeless people in Western Australia because there probably are not, but over the course of the year 15 000 people registered as being homeless. At the same time, Homeswest does not take homelessness into consideration as a criterion for housing. There is a critical shortage of affordable, cheap public housing in Western Australia, and there is a significant level of homelessness.

As members know, homelessness and domestic violence are related. By depriving people of accommodation alternatives, more women and children are being forced to remain in relationships in which they are subject to physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. That is an unfortunate development. When targeting domestic violence, the Government has chosen to target the offender, the perpetrator. The campaign that was launched and run with a great deal of publicity was the Freedom from Fear campaign. That campaign focused on perpetrators; that is, men who are at risk of committing domestic violence. What about the women and children who are victims of domestic violence?

Because of the funding arrangement and the focus on men in the Government's policies on domestic violence, more women and children are being forced to remain in situations in which they are at risk. If they leave to go to a women's refuge centre, they will be lucky to find one which can accept them because the women's refuge centres in Western Australia are full almost every night. These women and children cannot get access to public housing because Homeswest has a waiting list of thousands. People wait for years to get into public housing, and even if they get onto the priority list they can wait for months. This discourages people from leaving abusive relationships, which is unfortunate. I know there is a focus on keeping families together, and that is laudable. However, it should not be at the risk of violence to the women and children in those relationships.

The Government has pointed to an outcome from its Freedom from Fear campaign. The second dot point on page 506 of this year's budget papers states -

There is a measurable increase in community awareness of domestic violence as a result of the Freedom from Fear media campaign conducted by the Office during this year. The increased community focus on domestic violence is causing an increased demand for and supply of services to support victims and perpetrators and to help to prevent domestic violence.

That raises a couple of points. First, it may well be that the Freedom from Fear campaign has heightened awareness; it may also be that the heightened awareness is a direct result of the increased frequency of domestic violence and that people know more about it because it is happening more often. What has not flowed from the increased awareness and the increased frequency of domestic violence is the claim that is made in the second part of the statement; that is, that there has been an increased supply of services to support victims. There has not been an increased supply of services to meet the demand.

People who run the women's refuge centres have told me that they are under increasing pressure to provide emergency accommodation, not only to people who are directly affected by domestic violence but also to people who are turned away by Homeswest. Because Homeswest cannot house those people, they end up going to the women's refuge centres. The women's refuge centres are also being increasingly asked to find accommodation for people who are dealt with by the Health Department, such as people with mental and psychiatric illnesses, because many of these people find themselves homeless on the streets of Perth, with nowhere to go. Women's refuge centres are being increasingly asked to pick up the responsibility for finding housing for these people. Demand has far exceeded capacity. The word that was used to describe the situation that the women's refuge centres now face is "critical".

A couple of other factors, with which I will deal briefly, have aggravated the situation for them. I will give an illustration of the sorts of problems that the refuges face and the attitudinal problem that is presented to them by the Government. There is a peak body of women's refuge centres called the Women's Refuge Group of WA. It is normally funded to the tune of \$40 000 by the State Government, which is a small amount when one considers the vital liaison and information role it plays. At the moment this group is not funded. I was told that its funding ended earlier this year, and it currently has no funding while negotiations for a service agreement are ongoing. It is unthinkable government policy to effectively "defund" the Women's Refuge Group, which is the peak body. I cannot for the life of me envisage any circumstances in which that should be done, especially when the figure is a paltry \$40 000.

I was also told that that figure of \$40 000 has been static for more years than anybody in the area can remember, so it is not as though there have been massive funding increases in the past few years. My understanding at the moment is that the Women's Refuge Group has been effectively "defunded", at a stage when the women's refuge centres are all full, when domestic violence, according to the budget papers, has a greater focus than ever before and when there is a greater demand than ever before on services.

Mr Bloffwitch: Defunded?

Mr CARPENTER: I am not talking about the refuges. The minister knows what I am saying. The Women's Refuge Group is the peak body. It received \$40 000 for the coordinating and information service it provides.

Another illustration of the attitude of government that people in refuges find difficult to understand is provided by the Federal Government - the State Government refused to step in - which decided that it would not fund the \$8 000 it allocated during the past few years for the Community Help and Welfare Services reference page in the telephone book. The community help reference page was at the front of the telephone book and provided easy access for people who were searching for help. They could go to that page, pick out the number and quickly make a call. That was funded by the Commonwealth Government and it cost \$8 000 to insert in the *White Pages*. It has decided not to continue that funding. Women in the women's refuges ask why, if the Commonwealth Government is so mean spirited, the State Government has not picked up that small amount of money to allow that community help reference page to stay in the *White Pages*.

I recall at the time of the tragic murders and suicide to which I referred at the beginning of my remarks, the Minister for Family and Children's Services was questioned about access to help. It is very difficult for any minister of any Government to respond to a circumstance where a man takes his life and the lives of his children. The minister made the point that plenty of help is available to people; all they need do is reach out and get it. People working in the women's refuge centres are asking how they get it and how they go about accessing it. That is the difficulty they face. Plenty of services may be available, but if people cannot access them, they may as well not exist.

Mr Bloffwitch interjected.

Mr CARPENTER: The member has a very simplistic view and a very shallow level of knowledge.

Mrs Parker: The member for Geraldton is closely involved. His wife makes a fine contribution in this area and he does know what is going on. His comments need to be given some credibility.

Mr Bloffwitch: I do, indeed.

Mr CARPENTER: People from the women's refuges told me that since the community help reference page disappeared from the *White Pages*, the number of contacts coming to the refuge centres has dried up considerably. People cannot find how to access the help they need. That is what I was told. I would not have known that unless I had met with them. People used to be able to turn to page 36 - I think, they said - of the *White Pages* and quickly access all sorts of help. Since the decision was made by the Commonwealth Government, not the State Government, to take that information out of the *White Pages*, the number of people now contacting the centres for help by telephone has diminished considerably, unless they are repeat contacts - people who already know how to get access to the system. In any event, for most cases on most nights -

Mr Bloffwitch: When you put out your calendar, put the refuges' numbers on it. Then people will know where to ring.

Mr CARPENTER: The member is taking a ridiculous, piecemeal attitude to this problem. If all people in my electorate were relying on accessing the emergency services because of the calendar I provided, many would not get it. For one reason or other, many people do not put the calendar on the fridge door.

Mr Bloffwitch: It is better than no number at all.

Mr CARPENTER: It is a facile and tragic response.

Mr Bloffwitch: You are just so negative.

Mr CARPENTER: No, I am not. I am trying to be positive. I am looking at the dire circumstances people are outlining to me and asking me to raise in the Parliament so that something can be done about them. I do that and the response from the member for Geraldton is that I should put the telephone number of the refuges on a fridge magnet. For God's sake! The issue is a little more complex than that.

At the moment in Western Australia many people are under all sorts of pressures and stress, some of which relate to economics, to their employment or unemployment or to their educational capacities and opportunities. A hundred different reasons can compound a person's circumstances. It is my belief that the Government is not doing enough to meet the circumstances that are impacting so negatively on the lives of many people. The women's refuge centres are a classic example. They are providing a desperately needed service to those who are in probably the worst circumstances in which people can find themselves during their lives - a woman and children fleeing violence from a domestic partner. For the woman, it is a horrible experience; for many children it is a shocking experience which will have lifelong ramifications. There is plenty of literature on that. It is becoming more obvious that many of the problems that show themselves in adult life are the result of circumstances that were encountered in childhood.

The Government is not doing enough to respond. In the budget this year, the total cost of the output for domestic violence is estimated to be \$2m. That figure is up from \$1.8m in 1997-98, but down from \$3.6m in the last financial year. I know there were exceptional circumstances attached to that \$3.6m figure. If we consider the costs that flow to the community in all sorts of areas - education, police, the courts, social services, health services and the whole gamut of social support put into a community - from domestic violence and the abuse of children in those situations, the figure of \$2m to address the very critical point of the breakdown of relationships and the ensuing violence is a paltry sum. It is wrongheaded to go down that path. It is poor economics, poor social policy and poor government. I urge not only the minister, but also the rest of the government members to look at their priorities, to reassess them and to fund these responsibilities more adequately. Having said that, I take the opportunity to move an amendment.

Amendment to Motion

Mr CARPENTER: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that remote Western Australia still has health outcomes that are significantly worse than those in the metropolitan area and that the patient assisted travel scheme is not adequately meeting the needs of the community.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [6.27 pm]: In seconding the amendment, I ask the members of the House - unfortunately there are not many in the Chamber at the moment - to consider during this debate the plight of regional and remote Western Australians. The health crisis in which metropolitan Perth finds itself is something that people in the bush dream of being involved in because the services in regional and remote Western Australia are far worse, and access to proper health services is getting worse under this Government, rather than better. Members in this place, especially those opposite, should remember this: The number one reason people leave the inland Pilbara, other than forced redundancies and loss of work, can be attributed to the Government's health system. I ask members to consider whether they would accept being put in a situation where they had no access to the fitting of hearing aids for their kids who need them so they can compete adequately in the world by accessing education. Kids cannot access hearing aids because the patient assisted travel scheme does not get them to where they can be fitted.

The second reason relates not to the patient assisted travel scheme, but to the lack of government doctors in the Pilbara. People go to the local hospital and find there is no government doctor there. The nursing staff must decide whether the person is sick enough to call a doctor. In the case of children, if the decision is made that they are not sick enough, the parents are very upset. It is difficult to explain to kids why no-one can help them. The system does not respond properly to the needs of the community. There is no access to dental specialists, especially orthodontists, for kids in the Pilbara region with dental problems. In this place the minister said the answer to that was when the kids reach 17 or 18 years they can move to Perth and get it done themselves. Absolutely no-one in the metropolitan area would accept that. All we are asking for is access to the service. There is no access to computerised axial tomography scans under the patient assisted travel scheme because the specialist administering a CAT scan is considered to be a technical specialist rather than a medical specialist.

Mr Bloffwitch: Just ask them to drive down to Geraldton. We have two CAT scans there. We will do it for them.

Mr RIEBELING: That is fantastic news for Geraldton. That just happens to be 1 000 kilometres from where I am talking about.

Mr Bloffwitch: It is a much shorter distance than going to Perth.

Mr RIEBELING: Does the member for Geraldton suggest that people should drive 2 000 kilometres to access a service that everyone in Geraldton can walk to down the road?

Mr Bloffwitch: Are you telling me that if a doctor refers you for a CAT scan you can't have one? You are telling porky pies!

Mr RIEBELING: If the member for Geraldton thinks that is fair, he is in strife about what is fair in Western Australia. If that is equity on behalf of his Government, we do not want it. No-one in Western Australia will accept that. I will print documents to spread all over my electorate which say that this Government reckons that is equitable; it is not. Members opposite do not understand what regional people want.

Mr Bloffwitch: The PATS will pay for people to come to Perth to have a CAT scan. If they are in a critical condition it will fly them down.

Mr RIEBELING: Not for a CAT scan it will not.

Mr Bloffwitch: If the specialist thinks they need one it will.

Mr RIEBELING: No, it will not.

Mr Graham: The specialist is in Perth.

Mr Bloffwitch: The doctor refers to a specialist. Don't you get visiting specialists up in the Pilbara?

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr Bloffwitch: You are telling porky pies.

Mr RIEBELING: I have not quite got to members opposite, so the member for Geraldton should wait and not get excited yet. There will be plenty of insults in a minute.

There is no access to dental surgery for kids. Adults can understand that but children do not when they have massive problems with their teeth, gum disease and the like and the PATS rule says that they cannot get access because they are not sick enough yet. Children must wait until they get sick enough or get blood poisoning before they are flown to Perth.

Mr Bloffwitch: Kids don't wait.

Mr RIEBELING: The Government closed it down.

Mr Bloffwitch: Kids go into the government dental health service and are seen by the two dentists who are employed in Geraldton to look after them. Why don't you get your community organised. Get them to do something positive.

Mr RIEBELING: The problem I have with the member for Geraldton's insane interjections is that we are at least 1 000 kilometres from Geraldton and the situation he is talking about. That is the problem I am trying to sink into the minds of members opposite. We are talking about coming to Perth when the service is not available in the Pilbara. At worst, it should be available in Port Hedland where the regional hospital is located. We are talking about people in the inland Pilbara region, Tom Price and Paraburdoo, who are a 13-hour round trip away from that service. If the member for Geraldton thinks that is reasonable, he is wrong. If this Government is saying, through the member for Geraldton - and I doubt it - that it will provide those services to the people in Tom Price and Paraburdoo if we get organised, let us have a go at that. However, that will not occur.

Mr Graham: The member for Burrup will recall that is what the member for Riverton said he would do when he was the Minister for Health; and he did not do it.

Mr RIEBELING: I will get on to the member for Riverton as I have a special mention for him. The member for Riverton will be remembered in the bush as the worst minister ever to have the portfolio of Health, mainly because of what he did to the PAT scheme; he gutted it. He promised that the reduction of \$1.5m would go into the creation of more specialists in the bush and that the drain on the PAT scheme would reduce. What he really did was write out people's complaints so that they could not access the PAT scheme. I will give four examples how the PAT scheme failed us miserably in the past month.

Mr Graham: It would be nice if you could give them to the Minister for Health.

Mr RIEBELING: It would be nice, if he were here. However, most of these cases have gone across his desk at some stage. In fact, he was very sympathetic about the case I mentioned of the child who contracted blood poisoning. He did not do anything about it. He thought it was a terrible thing to happen but he would not change the system. His attitude was that these things happen. It was amazing when he came out with the brilliant statement that people who need orthodontic services can wait until later in life when they will be able to travel themselves and their parents will not be put to the pain of having to pay for it. It is wrong to consider that orthodontic services are only cosmetic. Members opposite are wrong if they think they are only cosmetic. Members on the other side of the House who have taken their children along for orthodontic services would know that statement is incorrect and that this Government should look at the matter.

One of the first things that has highlighted the problem with the PAT scheme in remote areas, especially in our area, is the fact that the regional hospital is in Port Hedland. There is nothing wrong with that, other than the air link between Paraburdoo, Tom Price and Port Hedland has recently been closed. People cannot jump on a plane, fly to Port Hedland, have an operation and fly home again. It is a 13-hour trip.

Mr Pandal: Do you mean by car?

Mr RIEBELING: Yes, by vehicle. They could go a quicker way across the access road but they would be dead by the time they got to the Karratha end. There are a couple of extra problems when people have to travel that extreme distance to get to the service. Occasionally, the Royal Flying Doctor Service will fly people to Perth and in one of these examples that actually happened. The lady concerned was diagnosed with an emergency situation through a birth by caesarean section. After surgery, when the emergency was over, she had to travel home again by bus. Not being a woman, I would not know of the pain involved in major surgery like a caesarean section. However, sitting on a bus for nine hours would be uncomfortable to the point that it is bloody unacceptable to every member that sits in this place. However, she had to return to Tom Price and the health services, responding to the well-worded PATS, forced her to get on a bus to travel back because it was cheaper. That is the problem with members opposite - they are cheaper and they are nastier; and the situation is getting worse in the bush.

The next problem will amaze and stagger everyone in this place. A lady who had cervical cancer contacted me in tears. She had approached the PAT scheme as she had just been diagnosed with that life-threatening complaint. She was told that she could not get to Perth through PATS because in three or four weeks' time there would be a specialist visiting Port Hedland. If members opposite think it is half reasonable that a person who has been diagnosed with cancer should wait three or four weeks to access a specialist for major surgery, they are half mad because it is totally unacceptable to every person to whom I have ever spoken. I contacted the hospital services and got around that; however, she should never have been told that in the first place. The stresses that the woman had to endure until we fixed the problem were totally unacceptable to me and to every other person in the Pilbara region.

I now move on to another fine example of how this system is responding to our needs. A lady in Tom Price was diagnosed with suspected appendicitis. The doctor thought it might be appendicitis and this lady should go to the Port Hedland hospital for the operation, but it is a 13 or 14-hour round trip. The doctor told her it might not be appendicitis, but he thought it was. This lady went home and packed her bags and the pain was getting worse. She was of the distinct view that if she jumped in a car and started to drive to Port Hedland, she might get worse, her appendix might rupture and she could die en route to the hospital. She felt that was unacceptable, most members here would also consider that unacceptable. The lady flew to Perth at her own expense and I am in the process of trying to get a refund for her for that trip. As it turned out, it was not acute appendicitis, it was another problem; but that does not change the fact that the doctor and the patient thought it was and if it had been and her appendix had ruptured halfway to Port Hedland, she would have died. She would not have survived if her appendix ruptured while she was halfway between Port Hedland and Roebourne. That is the sort of danger people in Karratha are being put in at the moment.

Another woman needed treatment for the birth of her child. This is an example of the stupidity of the rules rather than their appropriateness. It was known that this lady would have a difficult birth and it had been arranged that she would go to Perth.

Due to the severity of her problem, it was also agreed that the husband could escort the child back. It all seemed quite sensible. This man intended to fly down with his wife, be there when she had the baby and return. However, the patient assisted travel scheme is better than that. It said the husband was only allowed to escort the child back and would not let him fly down prior to the birth to be present for the birth and support his wife. He had to fly down after the birth. It would not have cost any more but that is what the rules say. This bloke said he understood and appreciated the State helping him and he copped all that. His wife experienced major complications with the birth and could have done with some support but the PAT scheme did not respond.

These examples are not unusual. Every week we get an example like this in my office. Every week we are ringing hospitals to ask if these rules can be gotten around. Fortunately, in many cases they can be. The patient assisted travel scheme is a patient hindrance travel scheme at the moment. It needs to be reviewed. I call upon the Government to conduct a public review of the PAT scheme. It must be a public review so people in the bush can have a say in how the system should be changed. Simple rules need to be put in place to fix the system. The first rule should be that if a medical service is not available within an area, the PAT scheme should get patients to a service. The second simple rule should be if the service is not available within a reasonable time considering the problem - for example, cancer - then PATS should get the patient to a service in a timely manner. If those simple things could be achieved, members would never hear another speech from me about PATS and the people in country areas may actually respect a Government which gives them a system that works.

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [6.44 pm]: I endorse the comments of the member for Burrup about the need for a proper public inquiry into the operation of the patient assisted travel scheme because, like the member for Burrup, I find that a considerable number of my constituents contact my office with very serious concerns about this scheme. Many people are not eligible to access the scheme notwithstanding their having serious medical problems or family members needing access to the scheme for things such as maternal health.

Mr Bloffwitch: In Geraldton if you are actually in St John of God Hospital, you are not eligible at all for any PAT scheme. You have to come out of the regional hospital to be able to get it. Do you have a St John of God in Kalgoorlie?

Ms ANWYL: No.

Mr Bloffwitch: You are lucky. Many of the ambulances end up taking people to St John of God as public patients who then find out they are not eligible.

Ms ANWYL: We do not have a private hospital, we do not have a choice. We have one hospital, the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. I will tell members about Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. It is currently about 30 staff down. We have a chronic staffing shortage. One ward has been closed since November 1997. When I put questions on notice to the relevant minister, I am told that the ward is closed for routine maintenance but it has been closed for routine maintenance for 18 months.

Mr Graham: Very slow routine maintenance.

Ms ANWYL: Absolutely. That is the situation in Kalgoorlie. On the issue of staff shortages, it is likely that the situation at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital will worsen during the usual attrition period at Christmas time. Many staff leave or relocate from country centres at that time which is likely to exacerbate the staffing problem. A significant number of wards may not be open at all. Add to that the fact that we have an ever-increasing shortage of general practitioners and that the resident specialists take their holidays over that period, and we can see the Royal Flying Doctor Service will have a lot of business. We also have an acute staffing shortage problem at the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home. I have been trying to get to the bottom of this but for whatever reason registered nurses receive one award rate while working in a hospital but a lower rate if they work in a nursing home. Given that Western Australia has an ageing community, some assistance is needed. I see the Minister for Health is in the Chamber. There will be an ever-increasing shortage of nurses available to work in nursing homes. We need 10 registered nurses in Kalgoorlie Nursing Home; we have four. I met some of the staff at the nursing home the other day. One nursing sister told me that she has not been able to take Christmas Day off for the past 17 years, she has worked every Christmas Day for that period out of a sense of dedication to her patients because people are simply not available. The nursing home cannot even access agency nurses because of the much lower rate of pay in nursing homes. I intend to progress this issue because there is absolutely no reason to pay nurses in nursing homes less than nurses in hospitals. Nurses in nursing homes are required to provide intensive care for their patients; it does not make any sense.

The patient assisted travel scheme can be very inflexible. A frequent problem I encounter is constituents are told they are not allowed to access that scheme retrospectively. That is, they may have any kind of emergency, medical or family, but because their signed application form is not submitted, they are precluded from accessing this very limited assistance. I want to make it clear to members who do not represent country electorates that we are not talking about a full reimbursement of travel expenses in every case, often we are talking about a contribution to travel and accommodation. For those people who are travelling, this is not a full reimbursement; it is a significant contribution but, nevertheless, one which cannot always be accessed. A young mother in my electorate has been refused assistance. There is a discretion where a person can apply for the assistance after the event. However, if there is a finding that that person could have applied earlier, and it is not an exceptional circumstance, that person will be denied that assistance. That creates a lot of problems.

Access for those with disabilities is another chronic area. There is one rule for those who live in the city and another for those who live in the country. An example of this is parents who have an autistic child at preschool are eligible for a set amount of about \$4 000. That amount of money is the same whether they live in Perth or in Kununurra. They will get that set amount of money, but they must organise the travel and accommodation expenses of the relevant therapist to their home town. One young couple, Mr and Mrs Airey, came to see me recently. In their case, they spent 40 per cent of the grant just on the cost of getting the therapist to Kalgoorlie-Boulder to deal with their child. Obviously that means that the Airey child

is disadvantaged as opposed to a child in Perth whose parents do not have to pay the expense of getting the therapist to their home town.

Mr Bloffwitch: No-one will disagree that we are disadvantaged in the country.

Ms ANWYL: Absolutely.

Mr Bloffwitch: However, we choose to live in the country.

Ms ANWYL: I will not enter into that debate as I have very limited time. The fact is that we must provide for equitable health services. Whether people who have an autistic child live in the city or in the country, they should be able to access the same amount of assistance for that child. They should not be spending money from the amount allocated on flying someone to Kalgoorlie and paying for that person's hotel accommodation. That should not be the situation; it is very unjust. I have written to the Minister for Disability Services about it and I hope, in due course, some proper action will be taken in relation to that.

The issue of respite services is a chronic one. I referred to the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home before. The issue of providing respite for families caring for the frail aged is a major one. We are fortunate that Kalgoorlie-Boulder has an extremely good community centre, which is largely funded through federal government resources, but which is run by the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. We have some real problems with what is available for children with disabilities and for adults who are not frail aged but who may be intellectually disabled. What does the Government do about that? It takes an existing facility and attempts to auction it. It would have been sold by now, but no-one would buy it. The Government will sell that facility and spend the money in its general budget. Years of work have been put into that facility, a lot of which was done by the former member for Kalgoorlie who is absolutely horrified by what this Government is doing with the facility. A lot of that money was raised by community groups; for example, the Boulder Rotary Club raised \$30 000 which was spent on this government facility. The facility was never purchased out of disability dollars. It was purchased a long time ago and was vested in the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

Mr Omodei: Were you briefed by Ron Chalmers on the issue of respite and disability services.

Ms ANWYL: Absolutely.

Mr Omodei: I understood that you were quite satisfied with the briefing; is that right?

Ms ANWYL: We have a major problem because the minister's department keeps telling him that I am happy. He listens to me telling him that I am not happy, yet he keeps saying that someone from his office has spoken to me and that I am happy. I am not happy.

Mr Omodei: Apparently someone from my department has lied to me.

Ms ANWYL: I am not suggesting anyone has lied to the minister. Perhaps he has some form of selective hearing, but I am telling him now that it is not just me; the people of Kalgoorlie-Boulder are extremely unhappy that a facility which did not cost -

Mr Omodei: It is not you spreading misinformation around Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Ms ANWYL: It is not me. I take this opportunity to tell the Minister for Disability Services that it is all very well for him to suggest to *The West Australian* that I am playing politics or using disabled people as a political football. He should come to Kalgoorlie and confront those people, and we will see who they think -

Mr Omodei: The whole board of the Disability Services Commission was there.

Ms ANWYL: I took the time then to raise these issues with the board and they have not been dealt with satisfactorily. If the minister thinks that people like those in the Boulder Rotary Club will be happy to see their hard-earned funds go back into consolidated revenue, he has another think coming. Obviously the minister has not been fully briefed. When Mr Chalmers was in Kalgoorlie-Boulder -

Mr Omodei: Mr Chalmers.

Ms ANWYL: I said "Mr Chalmers".

Mr Omodei: You said "Mrs".

Ms ANWYL: I said "Mr Chalmers". When Mr Chalmers was in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, I explained to him that there are major needs not only for respite, but also for permanent accommodation for people who have intellectual disabilities. I explained that we have pressing needs for those people to the extent that there is a terminally-ill mother in Perth whose daughter is not being looked after in the best way, and the minister knows this because I have told him about it. Other parents in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, who are in their late 80s, are contemplating moving to the metropolitan area after a lifetime in the goldfields because they are very concerned about the future of their children when they pass away. I explained to Mr Chalmers that I thought he should go to the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home, which has an empty wing known as the Paddy Hannan Hostel, and that the money raised from the sale of this building should be spent in fixing up the Paddy Hannan Hostel to provide, firstly, permanent accommodation for those intellectually disabled adults and, secondly, some respite. The current situation in which a property in Lyall Street, which is run by a palliative care community group, is being used as a respite centre is not acceptable to many parents. Because the minister had the temerity to suggest in the media that everything was hunky-dory in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, people came to a public meeting and voiced their concerns. I am in the process of listing all of those concerns in some detail. All of the needs of these people are not being met.

I return to the issue of equity for people who live in rural and remote areas particularly, as opposed to those who live in the city. I recognise that any Government, whatever its political colour, will have difficulty in this area because it is a challenging and expensive one. However, the Government should not remove resources from a community, particularly a country or small city community which has come together, fundraised and organised to make improvements to crown property. The Government should not be pulling out a facility such as that unless it will spend the money on that community. That is a fundamental issue.

Mr Omodei: Which facility are you talking about?

Ms ANWYL: I am talking about respite house.

Mr Omodei: You were talking about country areas and then you came back to Kalgoorlie. Can you not remember that you moved away from Kalgoorlie to country areas and now you have come back?

Ms ANWYL: I find the minister's comments most unhelpful.

Mr Omodei: *Hansard* will show it. You should read what is written in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Ms ANWYL: This is unbelievable. The minister, who fails to make any contribution to debate in a meaningful way, now attempts to interfere with my speech. I have said that it is not acceptable. I am talking about equity. The Government cannot pull funds out of a community and spend them elsewhere. If funds have been raised in a community, that asset should stay in that community. This is a fundamental issue of which the minister, as someone who claims to represent a country area, should be aware. People in the country are sick and tired of having their services pulled out and placed in the metropolitan area. I started to say that I realise it is a challenge for the Government to provide equity in the delivery of health services because it is costly to do so.

The Court Government is not pulling its weight by ensuring that equity exists. The point of this amendment, which I urge country members to support, is that a fundamental inquiry is needed into the way in which the PAT scheme is operating. It is not working and, as the member for Burrup said, in many cases it is more of a hindrance than a help. A proper inquiry is needed into the operation of this scheme. Members also need to be clear about what the Court Government is doing in relation to this issue, because it is ensuring that fewer and fewer health services are available in country areas.

I do not expect anyone from the government side of the House to support this amendment, but I hope that next time a constituent with a problem with the PAT scheme walks into the office of a coalition country member, the member will be honest enough to explain that he or she does not support any change to that scheme.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Trenorden.

House adjourned at 7.01 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, CONTRACTS OVER \$ 50 000

207. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Housing; Aboriginal Affairs: Water Resources:

- (1) How many contracts of \$50,000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department and agency under the Deputy Premier's control entered into between 1 April 1999 and 31 May 1999?
- (2) What was the amount of each contract?
- (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
- (4) What is the nature of the work or service required by the contract?
- (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Dr HAMES replied:

Aboriginal Affairs Department:

- (1) One.
- (2) \$60,000.00.
- (3) Edge Training Solutions Inc.
- (4) Design and implementation of Local Area Coordination (LAC) in the Aboriginal Affairs Department.
- (5) June 2000.

Ministry of Housing:

- (1)-(5) The Ministry of Housing has let a number of contracts above \$50,000 during the time specified in the question. It is not practical for the Department to commit the resources required to answer the question in its current form. If the member has a specific question on a particular contract I will be pleased to provide an answer.

Office of Water Regulation:

- (1) Nil.
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Water and Rivers Commission:

- (1) Three.
- (2)
 - (a) \$57,450.00.
 - (b) \$63,750.00.
 - (c) \$89,540.00.
- (3)
 - (a) UTS Geophysics.
 - (b) Deakin Consulting.
 - (c) Dames and Moore.
- (4)
 - (a) Airborne Electromagnetic Survey.
 - (b) Information Services – Planning.
 - (c) Phase 1 of a Policy Plan for Swan/Canning River (Swan River Trust)
- (5) (a)-(c) 30 June 1999.

Water Corporation:

- (1) 72.
- (2) Commercial in confidence.
- (3)-(5) See table below -

Company's Name (Response to Question 3)	Nature of Work or Services (Response to Question 4)	Completion Date for Contract (Response to Question 5)
Educom	Supply of Goods	21 April 2004
Toshiba Corporation International Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	16 June 1999
Air Liquide WA Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	26 May 2001
Colortype Press	Supply of Goods	16 March 2001
The Western Australian Centre for Pathology and Medical Research	Services	1 July 2002

Company's Name (Response to Question 3)	Nature of Work or Services (Response to Question 4)	Completion Date for Contract (Response to Question 5)
Integrated Tree Cropping	Minor Works (Establishment and Maintenance)	31 July 2004
Quality Builders Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Construction)	16 August 1999
DPM Contractors	Minor Works (Construction)	15 June 1999
Watercon Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Electrical Instrumentation and Mechanical Works)	6 June 1999
Albany Drainage & Construction	Minor Works (Civil and Structural Works)	14 June 1999
Underground Services Australia Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Construction)	12 July 1999
Pinetec Tree Farms	Minor Works (Establishment and Maintenance)	31 July 2001
KJ Johnson & Co Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Electrical)	1 July 1999
Finn International Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Inspection)	6 May 1999
DB Cunningham Pty Ltd trading as Advantearing Civil Engineers	Minor Works (Construction)	11 June 1999
Department of Conservation & Land Management (CALM)	Minor Works (Construction)	30 May 1999
Finn International Pty Ltd	Minor Works (Repairs)	5 July 1999
Henry Walker Environmental Pty Ltd	Major Works (Design & Construct)	21 January 2001
DM Drainage & Construction Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	29 September 1999
Tallenford Pty Ltd trading as G&B Drainage	Major Works (Construction)	30 July 1999
Westvac Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	25 June 1999
Prestige Civil Contractors Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	22 October 1999
DM Civil	Major Works (Construction)	8 October 1999
DM Civil	Major Works (Construction)	5 October 1999
Exnil trading as Paul Cooper Plumbing	Major Works (Construction)	9 June 1999
Mary Donald Nominees Pty Ltd trading as DJ & MB MacCormick	Major Works (Construction)	23 November 1999
Foothills Drainage	Major Works (Construction)	23 November 1999
Ideal Contractors Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	16 June 1999
DM Civil	Major Works (Construction)	14 December 1999
Premium Corporation Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	15 May 2000
Water Corporation, Construction Branch	Major Works (Construction)	22 November 1999
DMW Construction Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	22 November 1999
Carrara Earthworks	Major Works (Construction)	11 January 2000
JJ McDonald & Sons	Major Works (Construction)	26 October 1999
KBE Building Services	Major Works (Construction)	25 June 1999
Insituform Technologies	Major Works (Rehabilitation)	5 July 1999
Carrara Earthworks	Major Works (Construction)	8 July 1999
Warback Contracting	Major Works (Construction)	15 June 1999
Ertech Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	23 July 1999
Goldfields Contractors Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	20 August 1999
Rob Carr Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	23 July 1999
Hunter Watertech Pty Ltd	Major Works (SCADA)	1 July 1999
Ertech Pty Ltd	Major Works (Construction)	29 June 1999
Douglas Partners Pty Ltd; Gutteridge Haskins & Davey Pty Ltd; Geo-Eng Australia Pty Ltd; Terra Rosa trading as Advanced Geomechanics; Dames & Moore; MPA Williams & Associates; Soil & Rock Engineering; Coffey Geosciences Pty Ltd; Golder Associates Pty Ltd	Consultancy	5 May 2001
Price Waterhouse Coopers	Consultancy	31 July 2000
Gutteridge Haskins & Davey Pty Ltd	Consultancy	31 January 2001
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Consultancy	16 August 1999

Company's Name (Response to Question 3)	Nature of Work or Services (Response to Question 4)	Completion Date for Contract (Response to Question 5)
Hampton WA Pty Ltd	Consultancy	31 December 1999
Burns & Roe Worley Pty Ltd	Consultancy	29 November 1999
CSIRO	Consultancy	28 May 2000
Pipeline Actuation & Control	Supply of Goods	25 August 1999
Bendata Asia Pacific	Supply of Goods	21 April 2001
Waterex Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	17 August 1999
Flo Solutions	Supply of Goods	20 November 1999
Flo Solutions	Supply of Goods	22 September 1999
Stockham Valves Australia Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	21 October 1999
ABB Transmission & Distribution Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	8 July 1999
Keystone Tyco Flow Control	Supply of Goods	27 August 1999
Keystone Tyco Flow Control	Supply of Goods	25 August 1999
Siemens Ltd	Supply of Goods	29 September 1999
Western Switchboards	Supply of Goods	18 August 1999
Keystone Tyco Flow Control	Supply of Goods	15 September 1999
Rocla Pipeline Products	Supply of Goods	23 October 1999
Holec Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	27 September 1999
Engineered Products Group	Supply of Goods	30 August 1999
Schneider Electric (Australia) Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	6 September 1999
Iplex Pipelines	Supply of Goods	7 May 1999
Alpha West Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	6 July 1999
Sara Lee Clothing Company	Supply of Goods	6 May 1999
Vinidex Tubemakers Pty Ltd	Supply of Goods	21 April 2002
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Services	13 April 2001
Analytical Reference Laboratory (WA) Pty Ltd	Services	28 May 2002

BINDI BINDI COMMUNITY, FUNDING CUT

270. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

The Bindi Bindi Aboriginal Community has recently received a cut in Federal Government funding of \$15,000 -

- (a) is the Minister aware of this funding cut and the difficulties this is causing the Bindi Bindi Community; and
- (b) if yes, what action has he taken to assist them?

Dr HAMES replied:

- (a) Bindi Bindi Aboriginal Community does not receive Federal Government funding and I am therefore not aware of any funding cut.
- (b) Not applicable.

ROTTNEST ISLAND AUTHORITY, ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

287. Mr RIEBELING to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Who is the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Rottneest Island Authority?
- (2) Has the Acting Chief Executive Officer ever been made redundant from Government?
- (3) What position did he hold when made redundant?
- (4) What were the circumstances giving rise to the redundancy?
- (5) Was the officer paid a redundancy payment?

Mr BRADSHAW replied:

- (1) John Mitchell.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Executive Director Corporate Services, Ministry of Justice.
- (4) A consideration of executive level positions undertaken by the Acting Chief Executive Officer.
- (5) Yes.

TOURISM, NORTHCLIFFE

308. Mr BROWN to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Does the Government, as a matter of policy, support the -
 - (a) continuation; and/or
 - (b) expansion
 of the tourism industry in Northcliffe?
- (2) Is the retention of old growth forests near Northcliffe critical to the success of the tourism industry in the town?
- (3) Does the Government accept the retention of old growth forest in -
 - (a) Northcliffe 2 coupe; and
 - (b) Northcliffe 7 coupe; and
 - (c) Northcliffe 9, 10 and 11; and
 - (d) Muirillup 4 coupe
 is critical to the success of tourism in Northcliffe in the -
 - (i) immediate; or
 - (ii) medium term
 future?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr BRADSHAW replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Northcliffe must be seen in the context of the entire South West region. Visitors like to experience a wide variety of activities, for example, walks in forests, wineries and restaurants, the coast, good accommodation and more. Steps have been taken to ensure that visitor enjoyment of forest areas is maintained and enhanced.
- (3)-(4) I would refer the member to the response from the Minister for the Environment. Maps of the area indicate a significant number of reserves and national parks for tourists to visit.

SEWERAGE, NORTHCLIFFE

315. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Water Resources

- (1) Does the Government have any plans to provide deep sewerage for Northcliffe?
- (2) If so, when will it be provided?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Is the Minister aware of the water table level in Northcliffe?
- (5) Is it true the water table is so high that during winter months waste does not drain away very quickly?
- (6) Is it also true that the high water table coupled with the absence of deep sewerage causes a foul odour in parts of the town?
- (7) Does the Minister/Government accept the present inadequate situation is conducive to promoting tourism in the town?
- (8) Will the Minister review the situation with a view to providing deep sewerage at the earliest possible date?

Dr HAMES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The focus and commitment of the current Infill Sewerage Program is to sewer conventionally sized existing developed residential lots along the metropolitan coastal plain and within large to medium sized country towns. The criteria for sewerage are based on health, environment and development and redevelopment potential. \$800 million (in December 94 dollars) has been committed during a ten-year period. Funds are not available for sewerage small towns. Also, it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory revenue return from small towns to offset the high cost of establishing a sewerage infrastructure.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) It is understood that Northcliffe is in a similar situation to many small towns throughout the State where clay soils, wet climatic conditions and flat topography causes difficulties for septic tank operations.
- (6) I am not aware of any specific foul odours. However, this is common for situations as described in Question 5.

- (7) This is the same situation for many towns with similar circumstances.
- (8) I am considering options for provision of sewerage for small country towns which are presently not sewered.

WEDGE ISLAND, COASTAL HERITAGE VILLAGE

424. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of a submission by the Wedge Island Protection Association Incorporated concerning the proposal for a Coastal Heritage Village at Wedge Island?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the Association proposal for Wedge Island would see individual cottages remaining along with other tourist and recreational uses managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management?
- (3) Does the Minister agree the implementation of the Association proposal would have a substantial heritage and recreational benefit?

Mr SHAVE replied:

LandCorp

- (1) LandCorp is not aware of a submission by the Wedge Island Protection Association Incorporated concerning the proposal for a Coastal Heritage Village at Wedge Island.

(2)-(3) Not applicable.

Department of Land Administration

- (1)-(2) Yes.

(3) No.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CONVENTION CENTRE, LAND TO BE PROVIDED

68. Dr GALLOP to the to the Premier:

- (1) How does the Premier justify giving more than \$100m, plus valuable land, to the developers of a new convention centre in Perth when Burswood Resort Casino is already embarking on a \$75m expansion of its own convention centre facilities?
- (2) What studies have been conducted to determine the commercial viability of two major convention centres in Perth?
- (3) What guarantee can the Premier give that the convention centre market can sustain two major projects of this type?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) It is a myth that the Burswood Resort Casino has given the Government an offer to build a major convention-exhibition facility at no cost to the taxpayer. Burswood did put a proposition to the Government that it would expand its facilities, but in return for that it wanted significant tax breaks and extensions to its gambling exclusivity. When the dollar value of that offer was added up it was a very significant amount of money. Burswood has also participated in the recent expressions of interest. It submitted in its proposal that it wanted the full \$100m as a part of its development. I want to dispel the myth that Burswood was offering to build facilities at no cost to the taxpayer because that was not the case.

Mr Ripper: Are you saying the Burswood facility will not go ahead?

Mr COURT: No, Burswood Resort Casino has already announced it will spend \$75m. The previous Labor Government gave exclusivity -

Dr Gallop: Answer the question.

Mr COURT: I have answered the question.

Mr COURT: To continue -

- (2)-(3) At the end of the day that will be a commercial decision made by people who have been prepared to go into a public process.

Dr Gallop: No, you are putting in \$150m of taxpayer's money.

Mr COURT: The Government's money is protected. If members opposite bother to look at the agreement, they will find that the Government is proposing to give not freehold land but leasehold land. If the developer does not meet certain guidelines, the Government will get the development back. It is clear, if members opposite bother to look at the detail, that we have made sure that we will secure those facilities.

A Labor Government gave the exclusivity for gambling and other developments to Burswood. It had the opportunity, for many years, to develop purpose-built convention-exhibition facilities for this State. Burswood made a commercial decision that it did not want to do that.

Mr Ripper: Are they going to build the facilities or not?

Mr COURT: As soon as we announced that we wanted to proceed with a convention centre, Burswood came to us with the proposition that it would build those facilities if the Government provided some tax breaks and extended the exclusivity on its gambling arrangements. It was not until we acted as a catalyst for the development that this occurred. I find it fascinating that members opposite are continuing to knock the development of a magnificent new convention-exhibition facility which is long overdue in this State. Members opposite are significantly holding back tourism in this State.

CONVENTION CENTRE, STATE SUPPORT

69. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

As a supplementary question, can the Premier guarantee that no ongoing state support will be provided to the private developers of the convention centre beyond the capital and land grants that will be given?

Mr COURT replied:

Under the arrangements being negotiated, the developers will operate the facilities. It will not be our responsibility.

TURKEY, EARTHQUAKE

70. Mr JOHNSON to the Premier:

Following the devastation of the overnight earthquake in Turkey, can the Premier inform the House if the State Government has made contact with the Turkish Embassy in Canberra?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the member for the question. I have written to the Turkish Embassy offering our sympathy and concern for the loss of life that has occurred in Turkey. I appreciate the fact that we are a long way from Turkey and are unable to provide immediate assistance but we have notified it that if there is any assistance that it believes we can provide, we will be only too willing to assist. The Commonwealth Government has established a hotline to assist Australians who are seeking information about family or friends who may be in that area. The number is 0011 90312 289 6801. I table the letter of sympathy that I sent to the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey.

[See paper No 88.]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPLICATION ON SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING, RESPONSE

71. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's claim about being open and accountable and ask -

- (1) Can the Premier please explain why it took his department 180 days to respond to my freedom of information application on supplementary funding in the budget even though the statutory deadline for considering and deciding on the application is 45 days?
- (2) Can the Premier also explain why it took up to six months to tell us that we cannot have access to 247 documents and only limited access to 60 documents?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) On the specific details I cannot give the Leader of the Opposition an answer. However, as a Government we have operated throughout our term of government with freedom of information legislation. We have provided budget information and a level of detail that members opposite would never have dreamed of considering when they were in government, so if they want to talk about open and accountable government, I point out we have been able to provide them with information that year after year they refused to give to us.

VANDIUM PROJECT AND MID WEST GAS PIPELINE

72. Mr SWEETMAN to the Minister for Resources Development:

Is the minister able to advise the House of the current status of the Precious Metals Australia Ltd vanadium project and the mid west gas pipeline?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Ningaloo for his question and for his assistance on a number of aspects to do with the development of this project. The Precious Metals Australia vanadium project has a capital value of \$110 million and will supply about 10 per cent of the world's vanadium. The construction of that project only started in November 1998. The commissioning of some of the plant is now taking place. The project is on time and within 1 per cent of budget and, all being well, will start to produce vanadium in November of this year.

The significant event this week is that the first stage of the mid west pipeline, which is 370 kilometres long, has been

completed and as of today gas is now available in Windimurra. That is a major step forward in the history of the development of the Gascoyne-mid west region. Next week the commissioning of the gas turbines will start. The fact that the pipeline has been built in very quick time at a cost of \$50 million is a great credit to the joint venture partners AGL and Western Power and also to the constructors, Lucas-Clough alliance. The Government played a role, not only in the sense that Western Power as a fully owned business of government was a joint venture partner, but also it effectively made available the interest cost on \$20m-worth of investment by Western Power. The real cost of that over two or three years is very small, but we have seen what I believe will be the most significant development in the mid west region. As the vanadium project comes into production the use of gas throughout that area will underpin a period of sustained development. It is a very significant achievement for the member for Ningaloo and for his area.

DERBY TIDAL POWER STATION

73. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

I refer to media reports of divisions between the Premier and the Minister for Energy over the proposed Derby tidal power station and ask-

- (1) Was the president of the Derby-West Kimberley Shire Council, Peter McCumstie, correct when he stated recently that the Premier had given him an undertaking that he would ask the Minister for Energy to reassess the proposal with a view to including it in the next stage of the evaluation process?
- (2) If so, has the Premier raised the matter with the minister?
- (3) If yes, what was the outcome of this discussion?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) First, there has never been any division between myself and the Minister for Energy on the Derby tidal power project. My father had a dream of being able to introduce two things: Tidal power in the north of the state and nuclear power in the south of the state. A lot of work was done on tidal power back in the 1960s including studying what was being done in places like France. It was the current Minister for Energy, the deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who made it clear to me last year that he was very keen for the Government to try to establish tidal power in Derby as the option for power supply to that region. The initial figures that the Government was given were in a ball park that would compete with alternative sources.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: Now that I am telling the House about the discussion that I had with the minister members do not like the answer.

Mr Ripper: Do you tell the truth when you talk to these people?

Dr Hames: Give it a rest.

Mr COURT: The point that I am making is that it was the Minister for Energy who was the driving force in trying to get that project up. When we went through the formal process - members know the difficulties - that project nearly tripled in price and there were difficulties getting the project to a commercial position to the extent that a \$120 million subsidy is being asked for. I talked to Mr McCumstie and I told him I would continue to discuss the issue with the Minister for Energy and if members bothered to listen to the last answer they would know that the Minister for Energy has a track record of getting energy projects up and running.

DERBY TIDAL POWER STATION

74. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Has the Premier approached, or does he intend to approach the Federal Government with a request that it make available funding for the Derby tidal power project?

Mr COURT replied:

The Federal Government has said that it is looking for renewable energy projects. If funds are available, not just for tidal power, but for any renewable energy projects, we will ensure that we tap into them. Certainly in relation to Mr Tuckey's involvement, I have talked to him to ascertain what sort of funds are available.

Mr Ripper: Will the project move onto the active list or will it stay on the reserve list? You gave the West Kimberley shire the impression that it would move to the active list.

Mr COURT: I have answered the member's questions and if he wants any more detail about it I suggest he ask the minister responsible.

SENIORS, RIGHTS IN THE MARKETPLACE

75. Mrs HODSON-THOMAS to the Minister for Fair Trading:

Given recent concerns raised in my electorate could the minister explain what the Ministry of Fair Trading has done to inform seniors, during the International Year of Older Persons, of their rights and responsibilities in the marketplace?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for Carine -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members want to ask their questions and to get answers. I am very tolerant, perhaps over-tolerant some would say, of interjections. I allow interjections from the member who asks the question. The last question was a supplementary question. That is where we start to go off the rails because other questions are asked which prevent some members from asking their questions. Before the minister even started his answer, the member for Armadale had to get in more interjections. The member for Armadale should keep herself a little quieter or I will formally call her to order.

Mr SHAVE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is disappointing that my good friend, the member for Armadale, and I have fallen out.

The SPEAKER: If the minister keeps on like that, the member for Armadale will get a free kick!

Mr SHAVE: I thank the member for Carine for some notice of the question. It is true that this Government has implemented a number of initiatives. For example, it is with pleasure I inform the House that recently the Minister for Seniors and I launched a new consumer information guide for seniors titled *Wise Choice - A Consumer Information Resource for Seniors*. The publication was produced as part of the State Government's five-year plan on aging, Time on our Side. The new guide covers fair trading-related topics of interest to seniors and has been designed to meet their specific consumer information needs, both in content and design. This new resource book will support seniors when they are dealing with day-to-day issues that revolve around buying or selling goods and services. Currently 14 per cent of Western Australia's population is aged 60 years and older; and by 2021, seniors will make up 22 per cent of the State's population and number more than half a million. That is important, because at that time both the member for Armadale and I will be in that category.

Wise Choice is free and will be a valuable resource to help seniors gain the necessary information and advice to deal with a range of issues. I commend the Minister for Seniors and her office for their participation in this worthy project. So far, 20 000 copies have gone out, and more will be printed if the need grows. Right now, *Wise Choice* can be found in many doctors' surgeries, community libraries, retirement villages, seniors' organisations, senior citizens' centres and local council offices. It is also available from the Ministry of Fair Trading's Perth and regional offices. I commend the State Government for its strong and practical commitment to meeting the needs of older people in our community.

ROADS, FUEL FRANCHISE LEVY

76. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Premier:

Now that the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Finance have both confirmed that at least \$79.8m has been ripped out of the fuel franchise levy collected by the Commonwealth for the State in the past two years simply because the State received more than had originally been estimated, how does the Premier justify his statement on ABC Radio on 19 July 1999 that every cent of those moneys collected by the Federal Government for the State is going into roads; and how will the Premier explain to local government the \$12m it has lost as a result of this rip off?

Mr COURT replied:

The member for Armadale used the terminology "rip off". We have had two programs to provide extra funding for the roads: The 4¢ per litre fuel levy, and the increase in motor vehicle registration fees. We gave a commitment that we would put those moneys back into the road system, and we have.

FUEL FRANCHISE LEVY, FUNDS TO CONSOLIDATED REVENUE

77. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Premier:

I ask a supplementary question. The Minister for Transport said that the \$79.8m has been directed into consolidated revenue. Is the Minister for Transport wrong?

Mr COURT replied:

When the High Court decision came down and the States could no longer raise those moneys, we had to enter into another arrangement with the Federal Government, whereby we have gone through a split up involving not just fuel taxes but also liquor and tobacco taxes. Those arrangements have given us ups in some areas and downs in some areas. I am sure you understand, Mr Speaker, what changes took place after that High Court decision.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

78. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Youth:

Recently the Youth Advisory Council in Northam and the Youth Advisory Council in York combined to promote and assist in the organisation of the Avon Youth and Careers Expo. Are there other ways in which young people can use the Youth Advisory Councils to address the issues in my electorate?

Mr BOARD replied:

I congratulate the member for Avon, and the young people in Northam and York, with support from the Minister for Employment and Training, for that careers expo, which was extremely successful. There are now 72 Youth Advisory

Councils throughout Western Australia, and probably in all members' areas there will be a Youth Advisory Council that is gaining resources and putting in place policies and programs to assist young people in their region. The careers expo was just an example of what is happening in those areas. The young people are getting behind youth cafes and skateboard facilities, and are tackling some of the tougher issues, whether they be graffiti or self-harm, that relate to young people in their area. The Youth Advisory Councils are making a real difference. Over 1 000 young people are on those councils, from all socioeconomic groups and cultures, and they are addressing issues. They are being resourced through the Office of Youth Affairs, and I implore all members to get behind their Youth Advisory Councils and support them in what they are endeavouring to do, because they are making a difference in those regions.

DRIVERS LICENCE CLASSIFICATIONS

79. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Premier:

Why did the Premier claim yesterday that legislation to improve driver training and introduce new drivers licence classifications was already in the Parliament when in fact it still has not been introduced years after it was first promised by the Government? Is it the case that the legislation has yet to be approved by the party room and the Cabinet? Can the Premier explain whether he was being dishonest or simply incompetent yesterday when he made his claim?

Mr COURT replied:

The member for Armadale is quite right in what she says, and I apologise for saying it was in the Parliament. The legislation is about to go through Cabinet, and it will be in the Parliament in the next couple of weeks. The member is right, and I correct that statement.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS, FUNDING

80. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Employment and Training:

What are the latest funding assistance figures for community-based employment and training programs in Western Australia?

Mr KIERATH replied:

I am proud to announce that employment and training services throughout the State have received a \$4.28m boost, and this money has been earmarked to assist job seekers, to support some local community projects and to help them maximise the various employment opportunities. There are some 39 Job Link programs Statewide, 27 in the metropolitan area and 12 in regional areas - for the benefit of the member for Pilbara, who is not here so he probably would not know about it - and jointly they have received more than \$3.7m. In addition, we have the Aboriginal economic and employment development officer program, which is specifically targeting Aboriginal communities throughout the State. An amount of nearly \$600 000 has been allocated to the 10 AEEDO programs from the Kimberley, to the goldfields, to the south west. Job Link puts particular emphasis on job seekers with special needs. It targets people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, people from culturally different backgrounds, ex-offenders, people of mature age, young people at risk, Aborigines, and a range of other groups, particularly people who are seeking to return to the work force after a period out of it. We believe that this will improve the efficiency of our labour market, help those people find sustainable employment, and assist small business to operate effectively by matching job seekers to those employment opportunities. This again illustrates that employment and training is about not just economics, but the broader efforts of the community to provide and match people with jobs to suit productive and sustainable work.

NOVAK, MRS VERA

81. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

Notice of this question was given at 10.30 this morning. On what date or dates did Vera Novak of the Premier's Native Title Office declare her interest in mining companies associated with native title claims?

Mr COURT replied:

I am a bit bemused about why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants to persevere with what I regard as a personal attack on a very professional public servant. I will give the answer. Mrs Novak declared her interest in mining companies verbally prior to her commencement of employment with the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet on 18 November 1994, and subsequently in a memorandum to the deputy director general dated 2 February 1999.

Mr Ripper: She did not declare it in writing until after *The West Australian* had begun its investigations, and you had the gall to attack *The West Australian*!

Mr COURT: This lady is a decent, competent, professional public servant who has served the Labor Government loyally and has served this Government loyally. She has made it clear whenever there is a conflict of interest and has withdrawn from those areas. Why would the Opposition want to continue to try to chase a decent, competent, professional public servant? I do not know what is the Opposition's game plan.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, NEW DRUG

82. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

I have recently read that a new drug has been developed to curtail the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Will the minister inform the House what steps the Health Department has taken to ascertain when this drug may be available in Western Australia?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

I am advised that the efficacy and safety of a drug known as Aricept-Donpezil, which is designed to treat Alzheimer's disease, has been extensively trialled, both overseas and in Australia. To date, studies have focused on patients with mild -

Ms MacTiernan: You had better get some for the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAY: I would not make interjections like that if I were the member.

As I said, so far the studies have focused on patients with mild to moderate symptoms. The studies have revealed a modest effect on some patients who have shown improvement when put on the drug, but the effects have not been long lasting. The drug is not currently approved for listing on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme in Australia. Trials in Australia among other patient groups are still being carried out.

The Health Department in Western Australia does not have a role in ensuring that any drug is listed on the pharmaceutical benefit scheme. The evaluation of any new drug is the role of the Commonwealth Government through the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee. This committee operates within the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which approves new drugs to be used within Australia. Therefore, further evaluation is yet to be carried out. If it appears to be a beneficial drug which works, we would have an interest in making such representations, but more work is to be done.

FORESTS AND FORESTRY, DEPUTY PREMIER'S COMMENT ON PROTESTERS

83. Dr EDWARDS to the Deputy Premier:

Was the Deputy Premier stating National Party policy when he said on the front steps of Parliament yesterday that if he had his way protesting greenies would be moved on? What form of moving on did he have in mind when he made that comment?

Mr COWAN replied:

They were my remarks, and I do not need to attribute them to anyone else. At a time when this issue is inflammatory, the presence of protesters in the forests further inflames the situation. At the moment many of the protesters are focusing on Parliament House. I have a concern that when they return to their homes they may want to focus their protest somewhere else. One does not have to be a genius to know to where they might direct their attention. For their own safety, these people should remove themselves from the forest immediately.

CORPORATE TAX REFORM, ACCELERATED CAPITAL DEPRECIATION

84. Mr MASTERS to the Minister for Resources Development:

In recent weeks the gold mining industry has expressed concern about some proposals contained in the Ralph report on corporate tax reform, in particular in relation to the withdrawal of accelerated capital depreciation. Will the minister please advise of the Western Australian Government's stance on this issue and outline the actions that it has taken to convey its position to the Federal Government?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for the question.

The Government, the Premier, other ministers and I have consistently supported the retention of accelerated depreciation allowance, particularly for the mining industry. However, it also applies to agriculture and a whole host of industries. The Ralph report has generated a great deal of discussion, and there has been debate on the question of the removal of accelerated depreciation in exchange for a lower tax rate. Although I guess all people would welcome a lower business tax rate, accelerated depreciation is critically important for investment in this State. At a minimum, I hope that we see accelerated depreciation retained and the tax rate lowered. If that cannot be achieved, I hope that any current project going through feasibility development is exempt from any change that might occur to accelerated depreciation.

Western Australia is hosting the meeting of Australian and New Zealand energy ministers this week. I am the current Chair of the Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council. The meeting will be held in Kalgoorlie tomorrow, and I assure the member that will be one of the prime topics of discussion. The gold industry, among others, will be well represented at that meeting.

FORESTS AND FORESTRY, NAMES OF 500 SCIENTISTS

85. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the minister's claim that more than 500 scientists and experts addressed the economic, social, environmental and cultural issues of the ecosystems in the south west forest region, and ask -

- (1) Has the minister been able to come up with the names of the 500 scientists yet?
- (2) If yes, when will she table the names?
- (3) If no, will the minister concede that she misled not only the Parliament but also the people of Western Australia?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

(1)-(3) Letters have been sent to those respective scientists and experts asking them for approval -

Ms MacTiernan: How many letters?

Mrs EDWARDES: I do not have the exact number. It was under 500. We had to track down many of the addresses, and not all of these people are living in Western Australia. We asked them for their approval to have their names tabled in Parliament. I am still awaiting those responses.

FORESTS AND FORESTRY, OLD-GROWTH KARRI LOGGING

86. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

I have a supplementary question. With reference to the work of the scientists, what is the science involved in the policy of banning old-growth karri logging after 2004 while continuing to log old-growth jarrah?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I am not sure that that is a supplementary question. The issue that the member raised is interesting, because Labor Party policy is to stop all old-growth logging of jarrah, karri and tingle. The Government has come out with the adjustment that it will stop all old-growth karri and tingle logging from 2004. Yes, there has been an impact on the south west communities, on the fabric of those communities and on jobs. If the people in those communities were to support the Opposition at the next election, they would be facing triple the problems they are currently facing. Members opposite should start to think about what would be the impact of their policy and table their plans.

Dr Gallop: You were not here last week, obviously.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. The Opposition has offered \$100m, but it has no plan whatsoever for the south west communities regarding the impact of its policy or what it will do between now and 2003.

KWINANA FREEWAY EXTENSION, BRIDGE TENDERS

87. Mrs HOLMES to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Will the minister please confirm for my constituents -

- (1) The current status of the tenders for the construction of the bridges over the Kwinana Freeway south?
- (2) The exact time frame for the construction of these bridges?
- (3) When the work will commence?

Mr Marlborough: That was asked yesterday.

Mr OMODEI replied:

I will answer it again.

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1)-(3) I am pleased to advise the member that Main Roads expects to award a two-year contract in November this year for the extension of the Kwinana Freeway to Safety Bay Road and the replacement of the existing signalised intersections with interchanges. The construction of all the interchanges and the extensions is programmed to be completed by November 2001. The interchanges at Berrigan Drive and Beeliar Drive-Armadale Road are planned to be completed approximately six months ahead of the remainder of the works.

GOLDFIELDS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, EXTRA STAFF

88. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the recent decision announced by the minister's director of staffing, John Ryan, that extra staff will not be provided to enable Eastern Goldfields Senior High School to provide three crucial programs, including youth support and fast track for students at risk educationally, and ask -

- (1) Why is the minister determined to ignore the educational needs of those students most at risk?
- (2) Will he reconsider this decision?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am conscious that there have been some difficulties at the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School. I visited the school with the member, at her request.

Ms Anwyl: The minister gave assurances, hence the request.

Mr BARNETT: I know exactly what I said. I will be in Kalgoorlie later this week, and there will be some assistance, but perhaps not all that the school wanted. We must bear in mind that this school is also receiving \$12m by way of a capital upgrade. It is one of many schools that have needs for both physical facilities and the care and educational program for young people. I am conscious of the needs of that school amongst others and, as I said to the member the other day, I will be in her electorate again this week and have the opportunity -

Ms Anwyl: Your staff member said no.

Mr BARNETT: I will be there this week.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, 75 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

89. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Will the Premier join with the Opposition and, I am sure, all members of the Parliament in congratulating the Country Women's Association on 75 years of service to the Western Australian community?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of this question. The Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Premier and I had the privilege of attending the opening of 75th Annual State Conference of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia Inc on Monday night. It was a fascinating evening. There were plenty of speeches, with the three politicians being last in the speaking order. I compliment the CWA organisation. Any organisation that has been in operation for 75 years, had 700 people attend its annual conference and has over 200 active branches around the State speaks volumes for that organisation because it has been able to move with the times and address the challenges of the times. In the past year we have had direct involvement with the CWA, unfortunately, through many natural disasters, beginning with the fires and floods in Esperance, the flooding of Moora twice, and the cyclone damage at Exmouth and Onslow and the surrounding pastoral properties. In all these natural disasters, once again the CWA was helping out in the way it does. This organisation is addressing a number of issues at its four-day conference this week. It is tackling difficult issues, including suicide in our regional and country areas, and problems associated with drug abuse, no matter what form it takes. As was demonstrated to the three politicians on Monday night, this organisation has been well ahead of its time in dealing with, raising and addressing many of these social issues. It is with much pleasure that this Parliament can say, in a bipartisan way, congratulations to a wonderful Western Australian women's organisation.

[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Firstly, I indicate that we had 22 questions, which is a good effort and, secondly, that there are some difficulties with the entry and exit to the members' car park which has been blocked. If members want advice on how to get out of this place, perhaps they should ask the security people at the southern entrance.
