

Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Terry Waldron; Dr Kim Hames; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Castrilli

BARNETT GOVERNMENT — REGIONAL ELECTION PROMISES

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER: Members, a letter was received within the prescribed time from the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Matter of Public Interest

I wish to raise the following as a matter of public interest on Tuesday October 20th, 2009.

“This House calls on the Barnett Government to honour its regional election promises and to restore funding that has been withdrawn from key projects across regional Western Australia”.

The matter appears to me to be in order, and if at least five members stand in support of the matter being discussed, the matter can proceed.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [2.55 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Barnett government to honour its regional election promises and to restore funding that has been withdrawn from key projects across regional Western Australia.

Mr Speaker, before I begin my remarks on this motion, I too would like to say how pleased the Labor Party is to be at this regional sitting of the Legislative Assembly in Bunbury, the second city of the state. I thank the people of Bunbury for the warm welcome that has been accorded to all members.

The subject of election promises is a very important one. The keeping of election promises goes to the heart of our democratic responsibilities. When a government breaks an election promise, it breaks an undertaking to the people of Western Australia and breaks one of the key requirements of government in a democracy. In a democracy, we have an election campaign during which the parties go to the people and say what they are going to do. If they then do not follow through on those promises, they have broken a basic rule of our democracy, undermined the credibility of our system of government and compromised people’s confidence in the way in which parliamentarians behave. Broken promises go to the fundamental credibility and honesty of the government. Given that this government campaigned on a promise of better, open, honest and accountable government, every broken promise is a breach of the larger promise that the government would be accountable to and honest and open with the people of Western Australia.

The motion actually has two parts. We are going to discuss broken promises; we are also going to discuss projects from which funding has been withdrawn. A lot of projects were not the subject of Liberal Party promises. However, because they appeared in the budget and forward estimates of the former Labor government, people expected that funding for them would be maintained. The Liberal Party did not say that those projects were not to go ahead; it allowed people to think that they would go ahead and then withdrew funding from them. There were a large number of projects, and \$500 million has been withdrawn from regional projects that were not the subject of specific election promises, but were included in the previous government’s budget and forward estimates.

I go to the first element of the motion: the subject of broken promises. I particularly want to deal with the Coalfields highway. I will quote from a Liberal Party document that was released before the last state election, entitled “Liberal Plan for Collie-Preston”. On page 1 it states —

The Liberal Party has a comprehensive plan for Collie-Preston.

Further along page 1, there is a section headed “Transport”. What does it say? It states —

Decent transport infrastructure is essential to Collie-Preston’s long term economic and social viability. That is why a Liberal Government will spend \$20 million to upgrade the Coalfields Highway ...

That is precisely what the commitment is. It is repeated further down the page under the heading “Liberal Party commitments”. The first dot point states —

- An additional \$20 million towards upgrading the Coalfields Highway;

Sometimes we find that an election promise is made by a candidate without authority; perhaps the leader of the party has not approved the statement or perhaps the shadow Treasurer or the Treasurer has not signed off on the official election costings. This was a fully approved statement. It was the subject of an article in the *Collie Mail*

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on 28 August 2008. In fact it was the front-page article in the *Collie Mail*. The headline was “Big promises from Barnett”. The first two paragraphs of the story read as follows —

Liberal Party Leader Colin Barnett was in town yesterday to announce more funding for the Collie Preston area, should the Liberals win next weekend’s State Election.

He promised a \$20 million upgrade to Coalfields Highway, ...

Unless anyone be in doubt about the Liberal promise, when the now Treasurer, Troy Buswell, released the election costings for the Liberal Party, there in the costings for financial year 2009-10 was the figure of \$10 million and for financial year 2010-11 the figure of \$15 million for the Coalfields highway. Therefore, in the costings the Liberal Party promised \$25 million for the highway.

Then we go to the reality of what actually happened. That reality is to be found in the 2009-10 budget papers. For those people interested in looking it up, page 133 of budget paper No 3 reveals the broken promise. It was not the subject of a press release, of course; it was there in the budget papers in very fine print. Under a heading commencing “Changes”, the funding for the Coalfields highway reconstruction in 2009-10 is minus \$1.9 million; in 2010-11 minus \$9 million; and 2011-12 minus \$14.1 million. There it is: that is the breaking of the election promise.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Does the Premier have some contrary point of view?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: There it is: the breaking of the promise. There is nothing allocated in 2012-13. That is it! All the money for the Coalfields highway has been pulled out. The Liberals came to Collie-Preston, made a song and dance about the promise, talked big about it, got on the front page of the *Collie Mail*, put that pitch to the people of Collie-Preston, and then cynically and arbitrarily in their first budget in government pulled out all the money that there was for the Coalfields highway reconstruction. It is not as though they do not know that it is important, because this is what they said in their election policy —

The Coalfields Road is the main highway running through Collie. It is now perhaps the most important industrial road in the South west.

That is what the Liberals themselves think—it is the most important industrial road in the south west. The government has gone ahead—a government supposedly focused on development, including regional development—and broken that election promise and pulled the money out of the budget. That will have some quite serious consequences.

I was taken by another article in the *Collie Mail* in June this year that reported comments made by local roads campaigner Bill Mitchell. This is what he said —

From 3pm to 6pm at the Wellington Dam turn-off, Mr Mitchell counted 1800 cars, 45 trucks, three semi-trailers, 16 double semi-trailer, eight triple semi-trailers and 38 buses.

That is what he counted on this most important industrial road in the south west. We know that because of all the developments occurring in the south west region, the traffic on that highway will increase and increase and increase. It was a good thing that an election promise was made, but it is a breach of democratic accountabilities, bad for the south west, very bad for Collie, and a safety hazard for people who live in this area that that election promise has been broken.

I will now turn to another broken promise that was discussed to a certain extent at question time—the promise made about Busselton hospital. There was a bit of fudging during question time on the whole question of Busselton hospital. Let us go back and look at what was actually promised. I have been to some considerable trouble to research what was actually said, and I was able to get a copy of an article off the ABC News website dated Wednesday, 13 August 2008. The article begins —

The Liberal Party has pledged to build a new hospital in Busselton if it wins the state election.

...

The Member for Vasse, Troy Buswell, says the Liberals would use the existing site to build a new \$77 million hospital if they win the September election.

There it is. That is a very clear promise for a new Busselton hospital, but what is happening with this promise? If Labor had won that election, the \$77 million new hospital would have been delivered in 2011. Now, the Liberals are saying that it will start the hospital in 2011-12, and they included only half the \$77 million required in the

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forward estimates. We are probably looking at the hospital not being finished until 2015. Only \$40 million of the \$77 million has been put forward in the government's own four-year plan. Members can see that it will not be built in this parliamentary term, and it will not be built as promised by the member for Vasse in that statement to the ABC.

Members can see it again in the 2009-10 budget paper. I refer members to page 138 of budget paper No 3, and there it is, under the heading of "Policy Decisions Since 2008-09 Budget Affecting Total Public Sector Asset Investment"; in other words, this is the list of the changes being made in the Department of Health's budget since Labor's budget in 2008-09, and the first budget of the Barnett government. If we go to the "Busselton Integrated District Health Service—Replacement" line item, we see that in 2008-09, it is minus \$8.4 million; in 2009-10, it is minus \$15.5 million; in 2010-11, it is minus \$27.8 million; in 2011-12, it is minus \$17.3 million; and then in 2012-13, it puts \$34 million in. Members can see what is happening. This hospital will be delayed for years, quite contrary to the impression given by the member for Vasse—the now Treasurer—when he campaigned in the run-up to the state election.

We know there are serious issues with the proposed project and the proposed site. The Minister for Health admitted in question time that some of the old buildings will be retained. He has admitted that what we are looking at is a partial refurbishment of the existing hospital. That is what he admitted. I listened to him during question time and I heard him say that some of the old buildings will be retained; in fact, he defended retaining some of the old buildings. This site also has environmental sensitivities. There will be difficulties in getting the right design to satisfy those environmental requirements, and there will be difficulties with the approvals process.

I know what will happen. The combination of the lack of money in the four-year plan and the environmental difficulties and the constrictions on that site will mean that the people of Busselton will hear bad news about their hospital year after year. The people of Busselton should be prepared for government announcement after government announcement that state there is a difficulty here, it has been put off another six months, it has been put off a year, and it has been put off another year—probably, before the election, they will re-announce a commitment to a new Busselton hospital.

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: This is a broken election promise. I chose two important broken election promises to illustrate what is going on in this region. They are two examples of the government breaking its commitment to be accountable to and open and honest with the people of Western Australia. If the government cannot be trusted with the promises it made before the last election, how can it be trusted when it makes another set of promises in the run-up to the next election? The government is compromising people's respect for this Parliament by saying before the election that it will do things and then, not in its second, third or fourth budgets, but in its very first budget, cancelling the promises it made on the Coalfields highway.

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The previous government left the present government with the strongest financial and economic position that any government has ever inherited in the history of this state, so there is no excuse in the legacy of the Labor government. The government has had a very strong inheritance from Labor. It had no excuse whatsoever to break that promise. Expenditure has grown 13.5 per cent in the past financial year. That is the highest rate of expenditure growth on record, so the government is spending the money; it is not just spending it on the Coalfields highway or the Busselton hospital. Shame on the Premier for breaking his promises.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [3.11 pm]: I too would like to welcome people here today from all over the south west. Many have travelled long distances to witness the performance of a very good Leader of the Opposition against the limp lot on the other side. I too would like to add a bit on the Coalfields highway, which is something that is dear to my heart. When the election was called, and the promises were made, we saw the headline "Big promises from Barnett" on the front page of the *Collie Mail*. If that does not influence people, what does? The next headline will be "Big promises broken by Barnett". This is the same thing he did for the power station in Collie some years back, when he promised a 600-megawatt power station for Collie, but when he was elected, he reduced it to a 300-megawatt power station. What a disaster! It was like a dunny with the door hanging off. There are still bits and pieces hanging all around the place, and it is about time he came and fixed it. The only time we got moving in Collie was when the Labor government came in. Anyone who read the *Sunday Times* about real estate in Collie would know that since 2001 we have seen the greatest growth ever. It was touted as the best place to invest. In 2001, we got a good Labor member—not someone who has been sitting around doing nothing, but someone who has got out there and worked. We got support from the then Premier and the then Treasurer to make it happen. If anyone wants some more investment, they should just have a look at

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Collie at the moment. Permanent industries are being developed, worth \$2 billion, and what is the current government doing to help? Nothing. Again, it is just breaking promises.

Let us go back a little. It is bushfire season, and at Balingup and Bridgetown we had problems with communications. What did the government do? It got Telstra to go out and establish a part-time radio signal for the local mobile phones. That signal would be turned on only when there was an emergency. If we cannot get radio communication, mobile phone or landline coverage, how can we ring up about a bloody emergency?

A member: Ring Kevin Rudd!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: This is a state issue, and it is about time something was done about it. Last time we questioned the minister in Parliament about this issue, he said that if the landline was ripped out, use a mobile. For God's sake, we do not have coverage down there, and the fire season is coming. We do not want the same things to happen as happened over east. We need that communication, not a tower that someone runs up the hill and turns on and off.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Why didn't you fix it then?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Leader of the National Party should not talk. Where is his royalties for regions money? He should get down there and fix it. He has the money. Let us see some action. He has been absolutely useless, sitting on \$240 million worth of slush money that he will not use to help save lives. That goes back to the Coalfields highway. What an absolute disaster that is. All the industry is increasing. Worsley is employing around 50 people a day. That means that an extra 50 people will be travelling up that hill every day. It is chock-a-block full now. We need action right now, not in 10 years' time.

Many other issues in my electorate need addressing, and these are broken promises. I remember standing in the house and saying that in the first 100 days of the Liberal government \$60 million worth of projects were canned, and we were talking at that time about unemployment. It has now drifted out to \$100 million if we include the extras such as the desalination plant, which the Minister for Water has sat on his hands with. That is another \$30 million that has not been spent. How many more can I outline? There is \$20 million for the Coalfields highway, and I could go on and on. But let me turn to the next one—the Greenbushes to Bunbury rail line. When I visited the area with the great former minister, she insisted that we have more money to get the rail line up and running. What happened? At the time the Liberal Party promised to match it, but what has happened since then? Nothing has happened; there has not been one word. The people in that area deserve to have that promise recognised. It is about time the Premier visited the area and talked to the people and looked at the number of trucks on the roads around Donnybrook, because that is a result of his broken promise. Here is proof. This is a photo of the Premier on the front page of the newspaper. He is grinning like a bloke who could eat a watermelon through the back of a cane chair! There is no doubt about it; that is him! He has made promises and has done nothing—except eat that watermelon through the back of the chair! That is all he has done. He certainly has not done any work. The Premier should not be frightened. I know that the Collie people do not like him, but he could get around them a bit. He could come down to Capel and then go across. But we will not let him through that way because he is an absolute disgrace. We want some action from the Premier. The Treasurer has left the chamber. The Premier is frightened of him. He is frightened to sit next to the Treasurer in the house, and he is frightened to ask him for money. The Premier is a Cottesloe figurehead. What was his big issue last night? His big issue was the pylon at Cottesloe. Well, well, well! What a great big issue that is! I just cannot believe that that is the Premier's top issue while he is in Bunbury—the pylon at Cottesloe. I thought I was hearing things.

There is so much that the Premier needs to do. He had a plan. He has worked very hard to not do anything in this region. He has had a hatred of the people of Collie for many years because he is a gas man. I remember those lines. The Barnett plan was that the pipeline would come down this way and that way and that there would be gas turbines all the way along it. Certainly, there was no coal in that plan. But we have survived without him and we will continue to do so into the future.

I will go back over the two things that are important—the Greenbushes to Bunbury rail line and the bushfire early warning system, which needs to be 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and not just for emergencies. If there is a car crash in that area, there is no mobile phone coverage. It is no good the Premier nodding his head; he is the man who can do it. All he does is sit there, nod his head and waffle; he is doing absolutely nothing. He has the chequebook. He should get off his rear end and help those people.

There are a few other issues, including the sporting clubs around the south west. I thought I was going to hear good news, but when I analysed it, I found that it was only spoken about; the money was not delivered.

Mr T.K. Waldron: They're not ready for it yet.

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: Okay, but I am watching. What about the Balingup Bowling Club? When it applied for its money, it was told, "We're sorry, but we've lost your application." A very embarrassed Steve Thomas fronted the people down there, not the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and he had no right to talk about what was going on. He used the Minister for Agriculture and Food's email system to do some absolute—I will change that word; it nearly slipped out—stupid stuff from his email system.

Mr D.T. Redman: Ask me a question.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: No, I will not ask the minister a question. I am telling him. I got the emails through a freedom of information application, and he signed off on them. The minister knows very well that that is why Steve Thomas is no longer in the minister's office. The minister pissed him off; he got rid of him. I withdraw.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Sometimes people have slips. With that little mistake, I think people have got the gist of what I am saying. We have a government that will not deliver for the people in the outer south west regions, some of which I have covered over many years, from Waroona, where my constituency boundary has changed, right down to Capel and out to Boyup Brook. I do not know all the people by name, but I am not far off it. It is about time they got their due reward from this government.

Mr C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [3.20 pm]: What an embarrassment for the people of Collie that was.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Collie-Preston should be proud of his community. He should not come up here and perform like that. He should not accuse me and others of hating the people of Collie. That is a despicable thing to do. If he were a man, he would apologise. He probably will not, so I will carry on. That was a totally untoward comment.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Patronising and pompous.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Patronising? How patronising was that to the people of Collie? To portray the people of Collie in that way was totally inappropriate.

Mr M.P. Murray: Eighty per cent voted for me.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie-Preston! You have had adequate opportunity to be on your feet, and I gave you plenty of opportunity to have your say. Other people on their feet deserve the opportunity that I gave you.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Although the members of the Liberal-National government were not a coalition when in opposition, they are today. Both parties campaigned on what we would deliver if in government. We had a comprehensive policy agenda across all portfolio areas. We have four-year terms of government. Because of the decision of the Labor Party to put up the white flag and cut and run, this government actually has a four and a half-year term. We will use every day of that term. We will deliver all our election commitments to the people of Western Australia, including the south west, Bunbury and Collie.

Mr M.P. Murray: We will be watching.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I hope that the member for Collie-Preston will be big enough to acknowledge that when it occurs.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You had better start now if you are going to build the Coalfields highway.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will get to the Coalfields highway.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We will deliver on all our election commitments. Indeed, in our first hundred days a high proportion of those were committed. Most of our election commitments are either underway or going through the necessary design process, whatever it might be. We are just at the end of the first year of a four and a half-year term. We have another three and a half years to complete all our commitments. We will do that, and we will do much, much more. We do not support the motion for that reason, because this government is going to do that. We campaigned about being a government of honesty and integrity. That is what we are doing and that is what we strive to do, in sharp contrast with the Labor Party, which discredited itself, discredited the Parliament and discredited the state. People will not get that from this Liberal-National government.

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As for broken promises, I concede that in our first year we have not completed every project that we said we would.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You have cancelled some.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We have not cancelled a single election commitment. Yes, we cancelled some of the previous government's policies. We radically kept the bar open at Parliament House! Yes, we did that. It was the Labor Party's major commitment, but we left it open. We have cut tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money that the Labor Party routinely wasted on politically motivated, taxpayer-funded advertising. Tens of millions of dollars of the people's money has now been saved, and it will be spent across all of Western Australia. People will not find a government that rorts the taxpayer for self-interest, as the Labor Party did. It skipped off with money whenever it could do it for its own political interest. People will not get that.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier indicated that the opposition was rorting the taxpayer. I suggest to you, Mr Speaker, that it is unparliamentary to suggest such a thing about members of the opposition. I ask that he withdraw that allegation.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It is quite clear what the Premier said. He was referring to the previous government, and that is perfectly within the bounds of the standing orders. He can refer to them in the terms he did. He was not reflecting on any individual member of Parliament here.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I am not going to take the point of order. Premier, I urge you to continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Labor governments routinely misused taxpayers' money for political advertising. Indeed, the former Treasurer, now Leader of the Opposition, was caught out in correspondence putting forward proposals, basically, for political advertising in the lead-up to the 2008 election. The Leader of the Opposition was caught out! It was a scandal. The government will not support this motion.

I have talked on only a couple of the issues because other members wish to speak. The first issue relates to the Coalfields highway. I agree with the member for Collie-Preston that it is a dangerous section of road and there will be a great increase in the number of heavy vehicles travelling on that road. I ask the member for Collie-Preston to again reflect on history. The section going up the hill was refurbished and rebuilt to an acceptable standard. When? It was in 1999! Who was in government then? What happened with the other section from the midway point into Collie, which is narrow, winding and dangerous? Was it done up in the past eight years?

Several government members: No!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Will it be done up under this government?

Several government members: Yes!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, it will! We will honour our commitments and we will complete what we started in the late 1990s when we rebuilt half the highway. We will rebuild the second half, and that will provide safety for travellers, householders, families and workers, and will provide a reliable safe passage for heavy vehicles. We will do that. It is an election commitment that we will keep. We estimated that it would cost an additional \$20 million. It will not cost that; it will probably be closer to \$50 million, but this government will do that. This government will make sure that the road is safe. It will be a Liberal-National government that does that!

I will ask other ministers to comment on the Busselton District Hospital, sport and other areas. It is fair enough for an opposition to challenge a government and ask when it will do this or that. That is fine. I accept that, and the opposition should do that. However, members opposite should not come into this place and accuse this government of breaking a promise. It would be fair for members opposite to say that we had not yet achieved what we promised or had not yet met that election commitment. Do members opposite not realise that when they went out of government their forward estimates went with them? All the boxes of rubbish went with them! They cleaned out their offices and ended their role in Western Australia. They are now has-beens! They have to re-work their roles. The member for Armadale is going off to Canberra; that is, if she can get elected! They have had two former ministers quit! They not only have people leaving the Parliament, but they are leaving the Labor Party and moving from their side of the Parliament to this side! That is what is going on, and until members opposite realise it and start doing some real work —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Arrogant and petulant.

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The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I have heard you in this place before and your contribution sometimes might not be appreciated by people on the government side. Your comments would be far more insightful and incisive if you did not repeat the same thing time and again. I formally call the member for the third time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It will be a short trip back to Victoria Park!

I think that the member for Collie-Preston has behaved poorly in this chamber. He sets a poor example for his electorate. However, I promise the member for Collie-Preston that the Liberal-National government will build the Coalfields highway and will complete the job we started in the 90s, and we will make up for the lack of progress under eight years of Labor governments.

Mr M.P. Murray: You are a tosser!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member for Collie-Preston just used a very unparliamentary term about the Premier and I ask that he withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the remark. Member for Collie-Preston, if you believe you have said something unparliamentary, I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: With due respect, I withdraw it.

Debate Resumed

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [3.28 pm]: I want to make a couple of comments about the sports funding issues raised by the member for Collie-Preston, so that people understand exactly where these projects sit. I will not take up a lot of time, but as I said recently in answer to a question a lot of other projects are underway in the area. Funding for sport and recreation projects is provided through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund and other funding bodies; however, the sporting body and local government authority have got to be in position with plans et cetera, so that the government can deliver that funding. I will run through the projects mentioned by the member for Collie-Preston. The Balingup Bowling Club project will be funded through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund at a cost of \$110 500. The Eaton Bowling Club project has been completed at a cost of \$150 000. The athletics track is proceeding with funding of \$1.67 million; and \$1.34 million has been allocated to upgrade Hands Oval.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: No, we cannot do it until the local city makes its plan for what it wants to do.

Mr M.P. Murray: You lost the application for Balingup!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: No, the member does not quite understand.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I am happy to talk to the member later about it. I do not want to waste time now. I just want to let members know where it is actually happening.

There is also \$1 million for playing fields that will be applied for through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. The \$58 000 for the Bunbury and Districts Hockey Stadium is done; \$500 000 for Bunbury soccer is happening. With regard to the \$1.67 million for the Collie drag strip, those involved are still getting the information that is required. I met with them today, as I told members —

Mr M.P. Murray: You put conditions on it.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: No, the promises were there and they have been delivered on. Also, so we can actually deliver further to not only the south west region, but also the state, we have increased the funding. The \$9 million was not delivering what it was hoped it would deliver. The government has increased that funding, which will enable it to complete the very projects the member asks about. Royalties for regions has allowed for the leverage. I just want to clarify that with the member for Collie-Preston so he is not unintentionally misleading people. It is all there in black and white, and that is all I can say.

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health) [3.31 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to be able to talk about the government's election commitments in health. There are too many for me to detail, but the government has fulfilled all its election commitments in health. These include things like the grants to after-hours general practice—one of which will be supported here in Bunbury; the Friend in Need—Emergency Scheme; an

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additional \$30 million for hospital waiting lists reduction; and the retention of Royal Perth Hospital, which I bet is strongly supported by people in the Bunbury region. There has been a huge 50 per cent increase to the patient assisted travel scheme by this government—something that has been a long time coming—the Royal Flying Doctor Service and so on. There are a large number of projects, all of which have been fulfilled by this government.

I want to talk briefly about the Busselton hospital. When the government went to the last election it made the commitment that that hospital would be built on the site of the current hospital. That was something that had very strong support from the members of that community. That required a redesign and it is true that when we came to government we had a significant financial event, one that affected not just Western Australia or Australia, but the world. A severe international crisis occurred that caused a reduction in funding to this state in the order of \$3 billion to \$4 billion. The government was forced to change some of the timing for the projects —

Ms R. Saffioti: Breaking promises.

Mr R.H. Cook: To break promises.

Dr K.D. HAMES: There was no promise made by us that that would be the time in which we would do it. We promised we would build that on the new site. When we came to government and had to reduce the funding, the Treasurer, of course, doing the right thing and being responsible for the total budget and the need to cut funds, agreed to a delay of two years for funding and starting the Busselton hospital. That hospital has been put back by two years, and we have made that very clear; however, we are proceeding to do all the things that needed to be done to have the hospital ready. I must say it has been going exceptionally well. The government has been talking to St John of God Health Care and St Ives Group, and has formed a partnership with them to gear up the \$70 million committed by this state government for that project. If the financial circumstances of this state improve, we will be able to deliver it in the time frame originally promised, so there will be no delay.

Mr R.H. Cook: What time was that?

Dr K.D. HAMES: Let us talk about what the member's government did.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Let us talk briefly about what the member's government did in terms of commitments for hospitals. Let us look at who we have on that side of Parliament, member for Kalgoorlie, and what they did to patients in the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. There was delay after delay. The previous government promised hospitals, but never delivered.

The member for Albany promised a new hospital in Albany election after election.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Unlike members opposite, we will deliver that hospital —

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: —in the time —

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, minister. There are some people in this place who might like to hear some of the answers. There are obviously some who do not want to hear some of the answers. There are people who have plenty of contributions to make. I suggest to them that if they want to make a contribution, they get on their feet when the opportunity arises; otherwise they should desist from interjecting.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The Albany hospital was delayed and delayed. We will deliver and we will build that hospital in our first term of government, as we have committed. We have seen two hospitals promised by the former government but not delivered, despite seven years in government.

Members should look at the clinical services framework and see when Fiona Stanley hospital was scheduled for delivery. It was in 2010-11. As each year passed and each year the budget came out, we heard about when the Labor government would complete the hospital. As each year passed, the time for completion was put back a year. When the previous government left office, the completion date had been pushed back to 2014-15.

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: There was a four-year delay in that vital piece of infrastructure during Labor's seven years in government. We will deliver that hospital in the time committed to and within the budget provided.

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MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [3.36 pm]: A great promise was made to the people of regional Western Australia that there would be an enormous amount of additional money spent within the regions. However, we see that to a very large extent this has been funded by stripping out of budgets projects that the regional communities were already expecting; projects that regional communities had every reason to expect would be completed. Indeed, in 2008-09 and 2009-10 we have seen in capital works alone \$520 million worth of projects that were committed in the regions that people in the regions were expecting being stripped from or delayed in that budget. This has occurred all over the state. Today we heard the Minister for Agriculture and Food amazingly talking about Caring for our Country. The government took, I think, \$84 million out of the budget for Caring for our Country. Members opposite have been talking about Kalgoorlie. The Kalgoorlie courthouse and the Carnarvon police station and justice centre are things that the government implied to the people would be funded. It was a clear part of the Liberal Party's agreement with the National Party that this expenditure was to be additional expenditure—not that it would just take all of this money out of the regions and substitute new programs. The promise was that it would be additional money. However, when we get down to the detail and when we look at the budget, we see enormous amounts of money stripped out of that budget in areas like regional land development. Regional land development is essential for regional development. In this current year, 2009-10, we see \$32 million taken out of the budget for regional land development.

I want to talk a little here with the audience today about the Bunbury waterfront.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Audience!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: It is an audience—the audience we have here, the gallery, the people from Bunbury who are here and who are interested to learn the truth. The Minister for Planning talked about his commitment to the Bunbury waterfront. Let us look at what has happened to the Bunbury waterfront! I remember an earlier Labor government had a plan—Bunbury 2000. Well, we have a plan now—obviously Bunbury 3000, because that is how long it will take to deliver this. How much does the government have in the budget for this year? It doesn't have even \$100 000. There is less than \$100 000 in the budget this year for the Bunbury waterfront redevelopment. This great project that needs to be driven and that will be the catalyst for the development of Bunbury has been put on the drip feed—\$93 000. Under the Labor budget, there was \$10 million for this year. In all, in the budgets over 2008, 2009 and 2010 we had something in the order of \$26 million for this project. What do we see with this government over that same period? The government has \$5 million. The minister says that he has revised the plan and it will now be a very different plan. That is fair enough; he is entitled to do that. But where is the money? How will the government, with \$93 000 in the budget, be able to take this project further next year? Presuming that the government will be able to do something with its \$93 000, which is very unlikely, what do we have next year? There is a mere \$5 million in the budget next year. The Bunbury waterfront project is incredibly significant to this community. It is an important way of taking this project forward. The government will not be able to take this project forward without putting funding in the budget.

Another area that I think is very important that we address is the minor works budget of Main Roads. It is very significant; over half of the minor works budget is spent in regional Western Australia. When we were in government, in our last two years we averaged about \$127 million a year. Over half this money went into regional Western Australia for vital projects like improvements to South West Highway. Now we have seen this funding slashed. This year it is a mere \$81 million and next year it will reduce to \$53 million—less than half the amount of money we were dedicating to this road funding. Therefore, I say to the house that we have seen a real betrayal, because there was a promise of this new money; this new plan of the Liberal-National government was based on additional spending. But this government has systematically stripped funding out of regional Western Australia and given the illusion that it is a great new program. It is coming at a cost.

MR B.J. GRYLLES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Regional Development) [3.42 pm]: I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to speak on this motion. Given that the Labor Party has alleged that it did so much for regional Western Australia, and given that the Labor Party alleged that all these programs were going to happen —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr B.J. GRYLLES: Given that the Labor Party says it did so much, why was the community so angry? Why was regional Western Australia so angry that at the ballot box in 2008 it said that it was time for a change? That is what people in regional Western Australia said in 2008: it is time for a change. I am very happy to compare the record of the Liberal-National government after one year with the previous government's entire legacy of eight years during the strongest economic development in Western Australia's history. The previous government had

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charge of the economy over eight years; it had \$2 000 million surpluses, and what did it do? What did the previous government do?

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: If the Collie highway was so dangerous and so important to the member for Collie-Preston, why did that road not get fixed in eight years? Why was that road not fixed in eight years? If regional telecommunications were so important to the member for Collie-Preston, if people's lives were at risk because their telephones would not work and they could not get mobile phone reception, if that was so important, why did members opposite not fix it? The previous government had \$2 000 million budget surpluses year after year after year and regional Western Australia was forgotten. I welcome today's debate because I have now been in Parliament for eight years. I was in Parliament for the eight years that the Labor Party was in government, and not once in eight years was there a matter of public interest motion —

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I did not know? I did not and that is why members opposite are over there!

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Not once in eight years!

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, minister. I think everybody is interested in the debate. I think maybe even the audience, as they were described, might be interested. I am particularly interested in the debate and I would like to be able to hear some of it. I am sure everybody would.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Not once in eight years was there an MPI or a major debate brought on by the Labor Party —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Not once.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, you might like to look around this place occasionally. I formally call you for the second time. To everybody to my left and to my right, I want to hear the minister. If you interject, I will formally call you.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Not once in eight years was there a major debate in the Parliament on regional development—not once. I welcome —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, member for Swan Hills —

Ms R. Saffioti: West Swan.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for correcting me. Member for West Swan and member for Armadale also, I formally call you all for the first time.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The reason that the previous government never brought forward that debate is that it did not care. The fact that today is the first time I have heard the member for Collie-Preston mention the Coalfields highway is symptomatic of why it did not get fixed. I am very happy with the role that the Liberal-National government is taking in driving a regional development agenda in Western Australia. I welcome Hon Vince Catania back to the lower house and onto the government benches to work with us to deliver our regional development agenda. I thank the member for North West for making the effort to come over and help deliver on the agenda. I also acknowledge the role of the Independent member for Kalgoorlie, who is also working closely with the government to deliver our regional development agenda—and what a big agenda it is! I know that members opposite are not happy; they are angry. They spend all their time in the Parliament in Perth talking about how we are spending too much money in regional WA. That is what members opposite do in the Parliament in Perth; day after day after day they say that there is too much money in regional WA. Here we are in Bunbury and members opposite have taken a new tack: now the government is not spending enough. It is a complete reversal by the opposition members, who now say that the government is not spending enough money.

For the benefit of the people from Bunbury and the south west who have joined us today, let me run through some of the initiatives that we are rolling out. There is a \$100 million injection to the country local government fund that empowers local governments across regional Western Australia with funding to put towards the

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priorities that they identify, not a faceless bureaucrat in Perth who tells country people what their priorities are. Local governments themselves are meeting in country communities right across the state and prioritising the local government fund to deliver outcomes to their communities.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There are new projects, new jobs and new economic activity to help ensure that regional Western Australia does not become a victim of the economic downturn, as the previous government would have been happy to see. Local governments are using that money to leverage other commitments from the federal government and from other state government funding agencies. That local government fund has been a vital component of the Liberal-National regional development agenda. Round 2 of the regional grants scheme was announced today. Last year there was \$40 million in contestable grants to all nine of the regional development commissions and this year \$5 million has been announced for each of the commissions. That is a \$45 million commitment, again for priorities identified at the local level. Regional leaders who are elected to the board of their local development commission put forward their priorities and fund those projects put forward by the community. Today in Bunbury we see the benefits of that. The Bunbury Dolphin Discovery Centre is a fantastic recipient of regional grants scheme funding. A complete refurbishment is planned, and many more attractions will be added to that Dolphin Discovery Centre off the back of Bunbury becoming Western Australia's top tourism town. It is a vitally important project that is delivering a very strong outcome for regional Western Australia. More than 800 applications were received. That was the built-up demand. Eight years of record budget surpluses under the previous government led to 800 community groups and organisations applying for regional grants scheme funding. Three hundred and twenty of those projects were funded in the first round, leveraging hundreds of thousands of dollars above the government commitment. The Liberal-National government is all about putting money on the table—seed funding—to allow projects to get up and running and delivered in local communities. They are put forward by local champions and delivered at the local level. Local decision making is prioritised. Those opposite never did it. We commit to keep that process in place moving forward. Will members opposite commit to keep that in place going forward? I doubt it very much.

Another program which those opposite continue to criticise but which is very important to the new Liberal-National government is the community resource centre network. That is a network of 103 telecentres across the state —

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The SPEAKER: Members, we are going to adjourn for five minutes.

Sitting suspended from 3.51 to 3.57 pm

The SPEAKER: Just before I allow the minister to continue his remarks, I say that it is nice to be back! However, I say to those who are in the public gallery that they are absolutely welcome in this place, but we have some rules that govern the way we operate. One is that people in the public gallery are not allowed to participate or interject with great volume. In fact, they are not allowed to interject at all. We have seen an example of what does happen.

Mr D.A. Templeman: If I'd known you were so unpopular, I wouldn't have come here!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: No. I have just found out that the person on whom they were commenting was a member of the anti royalties for regions committee, so it is very important that we continue. However, Mr Speaker, I apologise if anything I said set off the crowd. It is important that we interact with the community, but, obviously, that sort of activity is not going to deliver a good outcome for the regional Parliament.

I will return to my remarks. The point that I want to make in response to the opposition motion today is that the opportunity to make regional development happen is when members are in government. Members opposite had eight years in government, with very strong budgets to work with. The opportunity to address issues such as the Coalfields highway, the opportunity to get the Busselton hospital built and the opportunity to improve mobile telecommunications in the fire-prone area were there for the previous government to take. They just did not take them. The fact that they did not take them was why, in the last election campaign, they found themselves on the wrong end of community sentiment.

I spoke earlier about the country local government fund. I also spoke about the regional grants scheme, for which we have announced round 2 for this year. The Minister for Health touched on two very important programs for regional Western Australia, one of which is the patient assisted travel scheme. Many people in regional Western Australia have to travel to major hospitals in the metropolitan area to get access to top-level health care. The

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increase in funding of \$30 million to the patient assisted travel scheme is a major improvement for those people in being able to undertake that travel without putting financial pressure on their families. Invariably, some of the illnesses from which these people suffer are terminal. When a person is going through that very difficult stage, there can be nothing worse for both the patient and the family than to also have the financial duress of not being able to get to the metropolitan area to access treatment. I welcome the commitment by the Minister for Health under the patient assisted travel scheme, with funding under the royalties for regions program, to deliver what the minister has told me is the envy of patient assisted travel schemes across the country. In Western Australia, we have the best patient assisted travel scheme anywhere in the country. That is a great relief and a great outcome for regional Western Australia.

Just last week the Liberal-National government delivered a new jet to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to bring the RFDS into the jet age. What can be more appropriate for regional Western Australia than having high-speed jet travel to enable people from remote parts of the state to get to medical care in a timely manner? There is nothing more important than that. The Premier, the Minister for Health and all members on the government side are very proud of the extra support we have given to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It would have been good to see that sort of passion from regional members of the opposition when the former Minister for Health, Jim McGinty, labelled the RFDS an interest group. Maybe that sort of passion should have been exhibited then. It was not. That sort of passion was not exhibited by members opposite when the RFDS was labelled an interest group. That is why the new Liberal-National government has moved to fix the situation. We have put in place three new planes, which has reduced response times to emergencies across the length and breadth of the state. That is of vital importance to many people in the south west region in their hour of need. We hope that no-one has an accident that requires the services of the RFDS. However, if people do, it is nice to know that the RFDS is going to arrive. That is exactly what will happen with the new \$30 million of funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

I turn now to the Country Age Pension Fuel Card, which is a very important part of the Liberal-National government policy. The previous government promised free public transport on the Perth public transport system. That is not very good if people live in the south west. It is not very good if people live in any of the towns in the south west, because people cannot access that card. The new Liberal-National government, with a focus on metropolitan Perth and regional Western Australia, has matched the promise of free public transport in the metropolitan transport system and has also provided age pensioners in regional Western Australia with a \$500 fuel card to deliver to them a level of equity that has never before been seen anywhere in Australia so that they can go about their business with less financial stress. The government wants to know whether the opposition is committed to continuing the Country Age Pension Fuel Card in the future. There are 25 000 fuel cards in operation right now, and that is a huge boost that has been delivered to pensioners in regional Western Australia by the Liberal-National government. We welcome the opportunity to talk today about our election promises to regional Western Australia because in one year of government we have committed more and delivered more, and raised the expectations of the people of regional Western Australia to a level at which they know the government now cares about them. We will work with them and empower them to make local decisions, and the Liberal-National government will reap great benefits from regional development and economic expansion through that partnership with regional Western Australia.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [4.04 pm]: I will briefly tell the house and people in the public gallery about something the Liberal-National government is not telling them: how regional development will be stopped by the hapless Minister for Water as a result of cancelling the infill sewerage program by cutting \$100 million from its funding. It will affect people in Bunbury and the south west in general. Nine areas have been cancelled in Australind; three areas in Boyup Brook; 21 in Bunbury; two in Collie; three in Harvey; two in Waroona; and one large area in Yarloop. That is just in this region—in and around Bunbury. That is what the Minister for Water has done. As a result of cancelling the infill sewerage program and cutting \$100 million from the program, the Minister for Water is directly responsible for the loss of 400 jobs.

Here in Bunbury, Correct Line Contracting has had to slash its workforce by 50 per cent. It formerly employed 80 people; it now employs only 40 people as a result of the Minister for Water's hapless, stupid decisions. Several other companies operating out of Bunbury have lost jobs. At least 400 jobs have been lost from this region because of the Minister for Water's inability to defend his own portfolio from the Treasurer's \$580 million cuts. That is the real truth about development in regional Western Australia; that is the real truth about the lack of development in south west Western Australia. If those lots cannot be serviced by sewerage, they cannot be subdivided, and there can be no development. That is what has happened.

MR G.M. CASTRILLI (Bunbury — Minister for Local Government) [4.06 pm]: I will address member's comments, specifically the comment made by the member for Armadale about the Bunbury waterfront having to

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be re-imaged. Why did it have to be re-imaged? In November 2007, the greater Bunbury region scheme was passed, and it was an absolute mess; it was 11 years out of date.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You stopped doing it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I said at the time to the member for Armadale —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You opposed it. You got people with guns to threaten us; that's what you did!

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I ask you to withdraw that comment, and I formally call you for the first time.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I withdraw.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is one of the worst comments I have heard in this Parliament. If the member thinks she is fit for Canberra —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale and Premier, I ask you both to desist.

Debate Resumed

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I did not actually hear the comment!

When the greater Bunbury region scheme came to fruition, it effectively changed the zoning of town plan 7 of the City of Bunbury from parks and recreation to regional open space. LandCorp was carrying out a huge development on a piece of land, and we did not even know what land was available for development and what land was available for open space. There were 881 submissions against the plan, so the City of Bunbury quite rightly had concerns. In the end, it had to be pulled back together and the City of Bunbury had to start again from the beginning. That is why the Minister for Planning agreed to form this task force at my request. Appropriate people were appointed to the task force, and the task force has gone through a process and come up with something that will go to the Minister for Planning for his consideration and approval. That will become part of the greater Bunbury region scheme amendment, which will go out for public consultation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There is still \$45-odd million in the budget under LandCorp, so the money is there. As the Premier said, we will deliver that project for Bunbury. We have had to start again from the right spot, and the right spot is the beginning. That is the spot.

I have to tell members something else. Yesterday a great decision was made to give the City of Bunbury \$3.5 million. The City of Bunbury has been pushing us to help it with the jetty because it has become dangerous and very insecure. There have been pylons that the port authority has had to drag out of the water because the jetty is unsafe and insecure. We have supported the City of Bunbury and given it \$3.5 million to put together with its \$3.5 million so that we can get on with the job and construct the first stage of the Bunbury waterfront.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Get on with the job!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I thank the Premier. We can get on with the first stage of the Bunbury waterfront. I thank the Minister for Planning, because he has agreed to the amendment and for it to be advertised for public consultation.

In the short time I have I want to mention one other thing—I probably will not even have time for it. We have finally delivered on a very personal issue for young people in nursing homes. We are building a facility for young people with neurological degenerative diseases and acquired brain injuries. We have delivered that in Bunbury.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 20 October 2009]
p8270b-8282a

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Ayes (25)

Ms L.L. Baker
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J.M. Freeman
Mr J.N. Hyde
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr J.C. Kobelke
Mr F.M. Logan

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan
Mr M. McGowan
Mrs C.A. Martin
Mr M.P. Murray
Mr A.P. O’Gorman
Mr P. Papalia
Mr J.R. Quigley

Ms M.M. Quirk
Mr E.S. Ripper
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms R. Saffioti
Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr A.J. Waddell

Mr P.B. Watson
Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.A. Templeman (*Teller*)

Noes (32)

Mr P. Abetz
Mr F.A. Alban
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr J.J.M. Bowler
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr T.R. Buswell
Ms A.S. Carles

Mr G.M. Castrilli
Mr V.A. Catania
Dr E. Constable
Mr M.J. Cowper
Mr J.H.D. Day
Mr J.M. Francis
Mr B.J. Grylls
Dr K.D. Hames

Mrs L.M. Harvey
Mr A.P. Jacob
Dr G.G. Jacobs
Mr R.F. Johnson
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr P.T. Miles
Ms A.R. Mitchell

Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr C.C. Porter
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr T.K. Waldron
Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr J.E. McGrath (*Teller*)

Question thus negatived.