

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Brendon Grylls; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker

SOUTH WEST INFRASTRUCTURE

Motion

MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [3.20 pm]: I move —

That this house acknowledges the importance of infrastructure projects such as the Perth-Bunbury highway for the development of the south west and calls on the Barnett government to continue work on Labor's initiatives for strategic infrastructure development in the south west.

The opposition has an important issue to raise today. We recognise that each government builds on the work of previous governments, and that it is important that the momentum is kept up. I find absolutely extraordinary the vast array of projects that the previous government delivered across this state. However, I hear a most extraordinary line coming from the National Party. In 2000, the National Party, part of the then coalition government—the drivers of the project—privatised our grain freight system. Now the Nationals are absolutely refusing to do anything to repair it. We told the government at the time that the system would eventually reach meltdown, and it did so. The privatisation took effect on 1 January 2001, about a month before the Labor Party came into government, and it started to unravel in about 2005 and 2006. The Labor government put in place the mechanism for a grain freight strategy that would enable the system to be rescued. However, it involves investment by the state government, and we do not see any preparedness on the part of the present state government to do that.

It is an absolute irony that, in an attempt to cover the mess that the Court coalition government made in selling off the freight rail system for about half of its value, the National Party says that we should have fixed it. The previous government actually developed a way in which the system could be fixed, but it had no luck with the National Party federally. John Anderson and Warren Truss were not interested, but as soon as a federal Labor government was elected, it was prepared to work with the state government. However, the message going out from the present state government is not to bother about the freight rail system; it is quite happy to see millions of tonnes of grain moved back on to the roads. That advantages a certain cluster of farmers who see themselves as benefiting from the demise of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. The broader triple bottom line issues are simply not being examined. I urge the current government to continue on with the work of the feasibility study.

Late in 2006, we started looking at the way in which we could develop a fast, cost-effective modern train system between Perth and Bunbury. Having looked at how certain intercity rail systems operate, particularly in Europe, we thought that the best solution would be a fast, modern, diesel-hybrid train running between Perth and Bunbury on a new line, using the southern suburbs rail line as far as the Anketell tunnel, and then continuing on down the Kwinana Freeway and the Perth-Bunbury highway. We were very careful to ensure that, when we built the Perth-Bunbury highway, we made provision for a fast rail line to be built between Perth and Bunbury. We had some engineering reports and a pre-feasibility study done, and it was estimated that this project could be done at a cost of around \$300 million. I suspect that it will be something more than that, but even at \$500 million, projects such as this are very worthwhile. Now that we see the Perth-Bunbury highway completed and we see the great time advantage—the fact that it is possible to travel between Perth and Bunbury in one and a half hours—it is obvious that having an antiquated rail service that takes two and a half hours, at best, is a twentieth century, or even a nineteenth century, solution to a modern public transport issue. We need a proper effective rail link between our capital and our largest regional city. It can be done in a cost-effective way, and it can deliver. One of the big problems we have with the *Australind* as it now is, is that it travels only twice a day.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Didn't you close it down at one stage?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No, we never shut it down. The member has his information wrong. We put a proposition to the community asking whether it was interested in looking at a different configuration so that we could get a more rapid service. However, at that particular time people did not want to utilise the Mandurah railway as part of the journey, although I am told that they are now doing so. Regardless of that, it is quite clear that we need a modern, twenty-first-century rail system between Perth and Bunbury, and we do not have one. The *Australind* takes two and a half hours to get from Bunbury to Perth, when it takes only an hour and a half to do the journey by road. A service that runs only two return trips a day does not come anywhere near satisfying the contemporary demand of the community. We have an opportunity to go to the federal government and seek funding for this project. The federal government has set up the Building Australia Fund, which is administered through an outfit called Infrastructure Australia.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Are you committing to that?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: This is something that the government has to do. I am here as a member of the state Parliament. I am quite happy to talk about all the great things that the federal Labor government has done. Can

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the Premier tell us what he did with Infrastructure Australia funding? The previous government had put in a list of fantastic projects, such as the north west interconnected grid—the Pilbara power solution. We will be needing a massive upgrade of power supplies in the Pilbara, but the present government took that out; it did not want it. The government has no plan to deal with the fact that the Pilbara will experience a 400 per cent increase in demand for energy over the next 10 years. The government also took off the list every plan for public transport; they had to come out. Why did all those projects have to be removed? It is because the government had to get Oakajee onto the list, even though the private sector has said that it was happy to fund that project. A tender had actually been awarded to a private sector entity after a competitive bidding process.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Why did the commonwealth support it then?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: It was because it had to give some money to Western Australia. Obviously, it had to give money to Western Australia. It was not going to give no money at all to Western Australia, and it had to take advice from the state government. The state government has to be accountable for what it did. It took out all these projects, which would have added immensely to our community, to get Oakajee in, which the private sector was going to fund. In any event, out of the total \$8 billion that has been allocated, the state government has about \$550 million and it has said that it is quite happy with that. A lot of other people are saying that it should be getting more, and it could get more.

Dr K.D. Hames: I got that.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The minister did not get it because it is not the Building Australia Fund! We are talking about the Building Australia Fund. The Building Australia Fund is legislated for, and that money cannot be spent on hospitals. Critically, approximately \$4 billion from the Building Australia Fund is still to be allocated. We are saying to the government that it should get some great public transport projects in the queue. Victoria has been allocated \$3.2 billion from this fund for a regional rail system.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: How many people live in the regions there compared with WA?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: It is probably a similar percentage of the total population. With that attitude, places like Bunbury will never develop. We need to provide that sort of infrastructure.

Dr K.D. Hames: It's the fastest growing area in Australia.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: But the member is saying that there are not enough people living in the regions and that the government cannot justify a rail system between the two cities.

This project has great capacity to add value not just to Bunbury but, indeed, to the whole south west. It is great for the community of Bunbury to be able to access Perth.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Was the Bunbury fast rail on your list?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: We had an expansion of the public transport system on our list. We are urging the government to complete the study.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Premier, can we hear the member for Armadale, please.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: He is the ex-retiree. The Premier was going to retire. We have not said to him that he is not a legitimate Premier because he was going to retire. It is pathetic. Let us talk about the issues.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Why are you leaving when there's so much more to be done?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I believe there is a great need for us to have more powerful advocates for Western Australia. This government has been so pathetic that it has been able to get only seven per cent of the Building Australia Fund moneys that have been allocated. Western Australia obviously needs every bit of help it can get to ensure that we have adequate representation at a federal level, because we are not getting that advocacy from the state government. Government members are not powerfully advocating for WA's case. If they are doing so, how do they explain why they have received only seven per cent of the total allocation?

Opposition members are trying to run this debate in a positive way. We are saying that we understand that the state government has continued the Labor Party's work on this Bunbury rail project by doing the feasibility studies. We are urging the government to complete these studies in a timely way—we understand that they were

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to be completed in August—and to put this project before the federal government so that we can have a very real chance of getting this piece of infrastructure put in place over the next seven years. These projects require a lot of forward planning. We need to get ourselves in the queue. We are asking the government to go out there and advocate for the south west. The Labor Party, when it was in government, was able to do this with the federal Labor government. We got a great outcome from our negotiations with the federal Labor government. We were not able to get any funding from the Howard government for the roads into the ports. We got those commitments from Martin Ferguson and those commitments were delivered on. An amount of \$160 million from the federal government is going towards the Bunbury port access road and the Bunbury outer ring-road. These are great projects that we were able to negotiate with the federal Labor government and get a fantastic outcome for the south west. Those projects are now underway.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Some unparliamentary language is being used by members of the government. Also, the Deputy Premier is interjecting while he is not in his seat. I request that if he is going to interject, he sit in his seat and do so.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): The member is quite right. If the Deputy Premier is going to interject, he needs to do so from his seat and have the member speaking accept his interjection.

Debate Resumed

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: With powerful advocacy from the state government, it is possible to get great projects delivered for the south west. We have demonstrated that with the Perth-Bunbury highway. The federal government paid half the cost of that project.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Well done, Don Randall.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No. It would be very interesting to know who in the federal government opposed the project and why the Howard government resisted it for three years. Who was the federal member who led the Howard government to resist providing any funding for the project for three years?

As I have said, the state Labor government had a very constructive relationship with the federal government. This project needs to be prioritised. The state government needs to say to the federal government that this is what it wants the money spent on. As I have said, the government has so far managed to get only seven per cent of the money that has been allocated under the Building Australia Fund. Now is a great opportunity to put forward what is a relatively cost-effective project. Victoria has been allocated \$3.2 billion for its regional rail system. We would be asking for something in the order of \$400 million to \$500 million to bring this project forward.

What we are keen to do today is not sledge the government, but encourage the government, if it can wrap its head around the idea of building rail—the Liberal Party has not built any rail line since probably the 1940s, if then; its history has been to close down track and sell it—to understand that there is a great opportunity to reverse that history and to say to the people of Bunbury, “We’re going to get your project put in the queue.” It will not be done overnight. It would not be delivered before 2015-16, but the government could get it in the queue and it could get the planning done and get the commitments for it. I urge the government to complete the work of the Labor Party that it has continued with; we compliment the government for continuing that work. We want the report to be released, we want the dialogue with the community to start and we want that application for funding to go to the federal government.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [3.38 pm]: It says a lot about the Labor opposition in Western Australia that, in a historic meeting of Parliament in Bunbury, the best it can do is produce the candidate for Canning. That is as good as the opposition can do. The best it can do is pick someone who just made a campaign speech for a federal seat.

Point of Order

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am a democratically elected member of this place and I have as much right to be here as that ex-retiree.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): There is no point of order, member for Armadale.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We have just heard in Bunbury a campaign —
Several members interjected.

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The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Madam Acting Speaker, what the people have seen by those accusations is something of the true nature of the Labor Party. What we just heard was nothing less than a campaign speech by a member of Parliament who, yes, is entitled to be here, but, of her own volition, is quitting and going to run for a federal seat and probably using some of her resources funded by the state taxpayer to campaign for Canning.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier is alleging that a member of this house is acting improperly when using her resources. I am aware of a member who is, but it is certainly not the one he is alleging. I ask him to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Thank you, member for Rockingham. Premier, just be careful with your use of language on this one.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Okay. May I just make the comment that I never used the word “improper”, but in his comment the member for Rockingham has placed on the public record that to use state-funded electoral provisions for a federal campaign—apparently, in his view—is improper. I did not use the word “improper”. I thank the member for Rockingham for raising the issue of propriety.

I am going to paint a brief picture of Western Australia. I will end up in the south west, I hope, and some of my colleagues will then talk more about the south west in particular. We are talking about funding under Infrastructure Australia programs and the like. This motion talks about building infrastructure. Let me take members around the state. Let us start right at the top, on the Northern Territory border, and the Ord River irrigation project. It was launched in 1973 and involves \$230 million of state government funding to build all the infrastructure—the channels, the bridges, the roads. Yes, the commonwealth is contributing on social infrastructure—housing, training, health and education. Under the great leadership of the Leader of the National Party, infrastructure funding is taking place in the far north of the state, which means opportunities for people, and probably opportunities for many young farmers, to go there and move into that highly productive Ord River area.

Let us come around the coast a little to the west Kimberley. The former Labor government could not make a decision about liquefied natural gas. It lost Inpex and a \$15 billion project —

Mr E.S. Ripper: Tell the truth.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The previous government lost it. That Japanese-based group is now going to extract gas out of waters off Western Australia, pipe it 850 kilometres sub-sea at \$4 million per kilometre to Darwin, because with the former government it could not find a piece of land of about 1 000 acres to build the plant.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What have you done?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What have we done! We have found the land at James Price Point. We have negotiated with the Aboriginal people in good faith. They will be major beneficiaries. It will be a major infrastructure development for the state and a major social advancement for Aboriginal people. Here we have a government that achieves not only economic results, but also social results, particularly in this case for Aboriginal people.

I will just go back a little bit to Derby. What did the former government ever do for Derby? It promised the people of Derby a tidal power plant back in 2001 but did not do it. It was promised in an election campaign but the previous government did not do it. We are not there yet, but what we are trying to do as a government is see Derby developed as a supply base for the Browse Basin gas fields. What a wonderful opportunity that would be for Derby.

Let us go to the Pilbara. A lot is happening in the Pilbara. Under this government the Gorgon project is proceeding. The opposition claims credit for all these things that never happened under the previous government. Why is it they happen under a Liberal-National government? Is it just luck? Does the Lord like us? He probably does. They seem to happen under this government. Why is it? It is because ministers and members of this government roll their sleeves up, make decisions and get on with the job. Gorgon, the biggest project in Australia’s history, is now underway. Look at those opposite; they could not even find a lead spokesman who will be in Parliament in a year’s time to lead their major debate in Bunbury. Look at them. They are all second-raters, the whole lot.

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Let us go to Onslow. The previous significant development at Onslow was the solar salt project. Again, it was put in place under a Liberal-National government. It was so frustrating. Members may not know this, but I had something to do with it as a responsible minister. The project was built and completed around 2001. Of course, then Labor was in power. So frustrated and angry were the proponents of the project that they asked me, as then Leader of the Opposition, to open it. The project was virtually built, but their bitter experience of the last couple of months of dealing with a Labor government meant that they did not want Labor to even be there for the opening ceremony. The Minister for Lands and I are proceeding with developing a precinct for what, hopefully, will be two or three LNG projects in Onslow and a whole expansion of economic and social infrastructure.

Let us come down the coast a bit further to Oakajee. What a mess the former government made of that. When our two major trading partners are Japan and China, why set up a bidding competition between those two major trading partners? That legacy is very difficult to resolve. Yes, we, along with the federal government, are going to build a deep-sea port and a major industrial estate on the mid-west coast. It will be government owned. It will be owned by the people of Australia, and particularly of Western Australia. It will be there for all comers and goers. It will be a great economic and industrial development for this state.

In the City of Perth we are going to sink the rail line. It is a project that was talked about for years by the previous government, and even before it; in fact, for 100 years people have been talking about it. It is going to happen under a Liberal-National government. We are going to sink not only the rail line, but also the bus station, and we are going to create a great town square as the heart of Perth, which will be there for the benefit of future generations. It is a very good thing. We are also going to do a waterfront development, but it will not look like Disneyland. We will have plans out for public comment before Christmas on a tasteful, appropriate waterfront development that will happen under this government.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: That will bring the international visitors along!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As long as the member stays away, they will probably feel safe coming here.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Anyone will come along after that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member is out of here. The member for Armadale is entitled to be here, but the question is: for how long is she entitled to be here? If she is out there campaigning for another job —

Mr T.G. Stephens: You were actively retiring. You were writing a book.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a very good book, and it is written. I think the people of Bunbury need to know this. The member for Armadale has signalled that she is going to be a candidate for the federal seat of Canning. My understanding is that she is out there actively campaigning while she is still a member. I have said publicly that I will accept that until the end of this calendar year. After that point I will not accept it.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What pomposity!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it is honesty and integrity.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You would know all about that, wouldn't you?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have a fair idea; I know a bit more about it than you, my friend! The member's last public appearance was as a penguin.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It wasn't a penguin, you fool! You get it wrong all the time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What was it then? What was he—a seagull?

We as a government have delivered on our election commitments. There is one we are yet to deliver on, but we will, and that is a south west gas pipeline. We will bring natural gas into the southern part of Western Australia through to Albany, which will give greater opportunities for cleaner energy for households and industry and will bring development. That project is something we would have done had we not lost the 2001 election. The Labor government examined it and said that it could not be done because it was too hard. Watch this space, because this government will do it.

I want to leave opportunities for other members, particularly those from the south west, to talk about the infrastructure needs of the south west, which are great. There is enormous growth in Bunbury and the surrounding hinterland. There are pressures on roads and rail issues with port access; there are pressures and constraints on the port. The Coalfields highway project was half-built by the previous Liberal-National government, but nothing was done under eight years of Labor. As I committed to yesterday, this government will roll its sleeves up and do that road.

Mr M.P. Murray: I want to know when.

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: It could have been at any time in the past eight years, had the member actually fired a shot for his electorate. He did not fire a shot for his electorate. Not once in eight years did he wake up from the backbench and say that we need a Collie-Coalfields road. We did not hear from him for eight years, but at least he has come back to life, if he ever was alive; he is doing as well as he ever did in the past eight years. There are projects to be done, and we will work with local government in this area and we will deliver what is required. I will allow other members to say more, but I hope that is the last we have heard from the member for Armadale. She spends most of her time out there doorknocking; she might as well go out and do it again.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [3.49 pm]: What a terrible response from the Premier! It was a personal attack on the member for Armadale and a litany of untruths about Labor's record on development.

A few facts need to be placed on record about the past year of the government that the Premier leads. Who would have thought, listening to the Premier, that unemployment has doubled in the past year? Listening to the Premier, who would have thought that 160 000 Western Australians are now either without work or without sufficient work? Who would have thought, listening to the Premier, that that is the case? Listening to the Premier, who would have thought that on Labor's watch the size of the Western Australian economy doubled? The Premier thinks that everyone has forgotten what it was like in 2001. In 2001, when the now Premier was the Minister for Resources Development, the state's economy actually got smaller. When we came to power, we found that \$450 million of projects had been committed to by the previous government—when the now Premier was a member of the budget committee—but no money had been put in the budget. Therefore, the first thing we had to do in 2001 was to find the money for all the projects that the Premier had committed to but were not in the budget. That is what the Treasurer is finding now. I must admit that despite the Treasurer's improper behaviour and false travel claim, I have a sneaking sympathy for him because I know that as Treasurer he is dealing with the same bad behaviour from the Premier that I had to deal with when I was Treasurer and I had to fund the commitments that he had entered into and not provided for in the budget.

The Premier is out there talking about all these projects, such as the Northbridge Link and Oakajee—that are not in the budget! To take a local example, the Premier is talking about the Coalfields highway—it is not in the budget! The Premier says that the government will build the Coalfields highway, but the only reference in the budget papers to the Coalfields highway is the withdrawal of all the money that was previously set aside to build it. There is no provision anywhere in the budget or in the four-year forward estimates for a cent to be spent on the Coalfields highway. Therefore, we have a number of different worlds. We have the Premier's world where projects are announced but no funding is set aside in the budget. We have the Treasurer's world where services are cut and family bills are skyrocketing. And we have the Leader of the National Party's world. At some stage, the Premier's world, the Treasurer's world and the Leader of the National Party's world will have to come together, and when they do there will be some real difficulties in government decision making and some real difficulties for the people of Western Australia.

I will talk briefly about some of the projects that the Premier has canvassed. One project was Oakajee. Let us be very clear about the implications of the Oakajee project for people in other regions. We in the Labor Party support the Oakajee project. We had a good process to set up the Oakajee project; we had an expressions of interest process, and we chose a private-sector developer who agreed to fully finance the cost of the port, to build the common-user infrastructure and to gift the common-user infrastructure to the state and for the port to be run by the Geraldton Port Authority. That was what the private financier agreed to do. Even after the global financial crisis, people in the private sector were saying that they would and could build and finance the port. However, the Premier came along with his own plan and his own obsession—back to the 1990s: "Let's do Oakajee with taxpayers' money!"

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: He failed last time.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: It failed last time because the Premier hitched his wagon to a dodgy project—the Kingstream Steel project—and in the end the government refused to develop the Geraldton port, which stymied the growth of Geraldton and strangled Geraldton in support of the Oakajee dream and it did not come off. Now, the Premier is at it again; he has another steel pipedream and he is strangling the Geraldton port again. The Premier has put a cap on the amount of iron ore that can be exported from the Geraldton port in order to further and protect the Oakajee dream. Therefore, Geraldton's future is once again hostage to the Oakajee dream. However, it is not only Geraldton's future, but that of everywhere across the state, because if the government takes \$700 million of taxpayers' money, when it does not need to spend that taxpayers' money because the private sector would spend its own money, and puts it into that project, that is \$700 million of taxpayers' money that is not available for south west infrastructure. Every time we want something in the south west, we should think about the waste of money going into Oakajee —

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Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Because that project would be funded by the private sector! The private sector was —
Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Wait a minute and I will answer that question. The private sector was prepared and is prepared, I believe, to fund Oakajee. However, the Premier does not want our major customers and major investors to make an investment; he wants to unnecessarily spend taxpayers' money on the Oakajee port, which means that the Coalfields highway and other important infrastructure in the south west will not be built because of his obsession with Oakajee. The Premier is spending \$700 million on Oakajee when the private sector would build the port.

The government's submissions to Infrastructure Australia have been very poor. I was at an event at which a member of Infrastructure Australia spoke about how poor the submissions from the Western Australian government were.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Who? Who was it?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I am not going to name the person, but I will tell the house that a member of Infrastructure Australia told a gathering at which I was present that the submissions from the government of Western Australia were very, very poor. The submissions were so poor that Infrastructure Australia could not within its guidelines fund a lot of the submissions of the Western Australian government. Therefore, in order for Western Australia to get its fair share of commonwealth funding, the commonwealth government had to go outside the provisions of Infrastructure Australia. Oakajee and other developments are funded outside of Infrastructure Australia requirements because this government could not get its act together, could not present a robust submission and could not comply with the requirements of Infrastructure Australia. I am critical of all taxpayer funds being invested in the Oakajee project—federal government investment and state government investment. The federal government has supported the state's submission because it believes in cooperative federalism; it has adopted the list of projects put forward by the state government. However, that is \$700 million of taxpayers' money—\$350 million of state money and \$350 million of commonwealth money—that could be spent on much-needed projects right across the state. Instead, those projects will not be funded because the money is going unnecessarily into Oakajee when the private sector would fund it. That is remarkable, because I thought members opposite supported private enterprise and free enterprise. I thought they did.

Mr C.J. Barnett: By the Chinese government.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Is it not amazing that when a Japanese firm, Mitsubishi, wants to build a private port, the Premier says, "No, no, no; we're nationalists; we want all our ports to be Australian and we don't like foreign investment. We'll have taxpayers' money put into this port." As a consequence, we will not have that money for other things.

The Premier has misrepresented our record and he has unjustifiably and personally attacked the member for Armadale. No-one would know from listening to the Premier that unemployment has doubled on his watch and, on the other hand, that the economy on our watch doubled in size. On our watch, \$150 billion of private sector investment came into the Western Australian economy. We had the lowest level of unemployment, the highest rate of growth and the strongest finances in this state's history. This government inherited a stronger economic and financial position than has ever been inherited at any time in our history by any incoming government. It ill behoves members opposite to come into this place and talk with such lack of grace about the record of the previous government and about the contribution of the member for Armadale.

MR B.J. GRYLLS (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the National Party) [4.00 pm]: One thing the good people of Bunbury might be interested to know is that there is a very large difference in the new relationship between the current state government and federal government and what existed previously. For so many years people have been concerned about the constant blame game: when something goes wrong, the federal government blames the state government, the state government blames the federal government, and nothing ever happens. The people of Western Australia are clearly seeing a new relationship between the federal government and the state government—a new relationship that is delivering an outcome. In just 12 months that outcome has been substantial. The Leader of the Opposition talked about anecdotes. The anecdote I have heard is what the federal government is telling me, which is that Kevin Rudd and Colin Barnett have the closest relationship of any that the Prime Minister has with the Premiers.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Who said that? When? What event?

Several members interjected.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Brendon Grylls; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: We do not have to name them, obviously—that is what the Leader of the Opposition said.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I know that it hurts, members opposite.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: No, the job of the Premier is to work closely with the Prime Minister to deliver an outcome. That is exactly what he is doing. The Premier has outlined the great benefit of that. What we had over the last eight years under the previous government was a constant blame game—it was somebody else's fault. We heard from the member for Armadale in her campaign speech that if it was not for her, nothing would have ever happened in regional Western Australia; if it was not for her, Western Australia would be a worse place. I think what that says is that if it was not for her, maybe the Labor Party would not be in the predicament it is in. If it was not for her, maybe that backlash from regional Western Australia in the last election would not have happened. The member for Armadale cannot take all the credit and not wear some of the blame. I think some of her colleagues may be quite happy to see her resignation in the near future and her candidacy for Canning, because they know that it is because of her dismissal of so many important issues in regional Western Australia that they find themselves on that side.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Let us talk about those young children in Esperance who went to the doctor only to find they had lead levels in their system that exceeded World Health Organization levels. What happened to those children? Nothing happened under the previous government. It is this government that has cleaned up the lead; it is this government that has cleaned up their houses; it is this government that is working closely with that community to ensure that sort of thing never happens again. That is the sort of thing that happened on the watch of the previous government. The member for Armadale talks about that railway. The railway is being used and it is an important infrastructure project for regional Western Australia. But that was all there was—there was nothing in the Kimberley, nothing in the Pilbara, nothing in the Gascoyne. That is why those communities were so angry. I know how angry they are —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: They do not have Labor members of Parliament, because the member for North West actually left that side to come and sit with us.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: He ratted!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: He ratted? The member for North West said that he was going to put his electorate first and he was going to make sure he delivered an outcome for North West. It was wonderful for us. The Pilbara revitalisation plan is the first effort by any government in the past 25 years, since Charlie Court's government, to go to the Pilbara and deliver amenities that match those in the south west. That is happening under this new government. The legacy of the member for Armadale is that rents are \$2 000 a week in Karratha and Port Hedland. What do members of the community of Bunbury think would happen to their community if rents were \$2 000 a week? That is what was presided over by this member who has spent today seeking their endorsement for her candidacy to Canberra. That is her legacy—\$2 000 a week rents. Such rents completely undermine any potential for regional development. The newsagent worker, the supermarket worker, the apprentice with the local auto electrician cannot afford to live in the Pilbara. That is the legacy of the previous government.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Yes, there is a railway, but that is it—that is all the member for Armadale has to campaign on, because her legacy across the length and breadth of regional Western Australia is terrible. She knows it, and that is probably why she is leaving. It must be very painful for her to stand at this despatch box and talk about her vision for regional Western Australia when —

Several members interjected.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Brendon Grylls; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I am not going to ask you again. I have asked you three or four times. I will not ask you again. Please stop drowning out the speaker.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The legacy of the new Liberal-National government in one year is superior that of the previous government after almost eight years of record economic times. What do members opposite have to show for the strongest period of prolonged economic growth, as the Leader of the Opposition rightly points out, in Western Australia's history? What is their legacy for regional Western Australia? It is a railway to Mandurah—that is it. It is a good project, but it is not enough. There is more work to be done. I am very happy that the Premier can work so closely with Kevin Rudd, as the Premier will work with whoever is the Prime Minister of Australia, to deliver the infrastructure projects that are so important to regional Western Australia. That is what is important. We are delivering them.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Premier has outlined them. I do not need to do it again because I know how much it hurts members opposite that we started at the furthest part of the state, in Kununurra, and we are delivering a project there. We are talking about moving the gas down through the south west to Albany. We have gone down to Esperance and we are upgrading the Esperance port and we have cleaned up the lead that poisoned the young children there. That is the mark of a government that knows about regional development; that is the mark of a government that knows what is required to grow regional Western Australia. That is a government that is working with the Bunbury community to not make it the second city—we do not want Bunbury to be the second city; we want it to be the first regional city. The foreshore development that was “gunna” happen under the previous government will happen under us. We will do it.

The land developments that are required to house the expanding population of Bunbury in the south west will happen under this government; it did not happen under the previous government. Bunbury in the south west has a great future with projects like Perdanian Industries and the Worsley expansion and the ability for Bunbury to become such an important part of the tourism product in Western Australia. All will be expanded under this government. This is a government that has put in place royalties for regions. This is a government that is delivering to regional Western Australia. As I said, I want to compare our record in one year with the record of members opposite in eight years, and I think we will win.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [4.08 pm]: I stand here a little distressed to see what has not happened under this government. I spoke yesterday about how well the south west was going until this government came into office. The state was absolutely cranking along. The Perth-Bunbury highway was opened with, of course, the ribbon being cut by the Premier, who contributed absolutely nothing towards the project, other than being a knocker the whole time. He still could not beat the member for Armadale with the scissors. He was too slow. What a beautiful photo. Well done, Premier!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Do not worry about that. What we see is that works that are really vital to the south west are not happening to allow us to grow and expand—not only in the central Bunbury region. For some reason there seems to be a fixation on the Bunbury region, right into the Bunbury council. I do not know—I think it might have something to do with that bloke over the back there who seems to be getting looked after quite well. However, the outer regions, which the member for Bunbury wants to take over, are not getting funding. They have also been threatened that if they do not amalgamate, they will not get funding, have they not? It has now changed from a forced amalgamation to a voluntary one, but if the local governments do not want to do it voluntarily, they will be taken over anyway.

Mr B.J. Grylls: What do you think we should do?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I am quite happy with the way Collie is, and I will leave it that way, and I will leave Donnybrook that way, and I will leave Dardanup that way, and I will leave Harvey that way as well, because that is what they want. That is what they want, and the minister is not listening. That is the point I am making. But now we need further infrastructure on the outskirts of Bunbury. What about the Bunbury ring-road? There is \$30 million in the budget. We need \$130 million to finish it off. All these cars will be charging down to the south west, and where will the problem be? It will be at the Eelup roundabout, the same as it was previously. I see the member for Bunbury over there nodding his head.

Mr G.M. Castrilli: I'm not nodding at all.

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: He was only sneezing. It does not matter; he was still nodding his head. At the roundabout, we will have traffic jams miles long because there will be a half-finished Bunbury ring-road. We need \$100 million more to finish that. The money is not there. The contractors do not know whether to take on other contracts or whether they are going to get the money. It is really stifling what they are going to do. We need the government to do some forward planning, as the former minister used to do. There was planning for 10 years ahead. This government has wiped that and taken the money out.

Dare I mention again the Coalfields highway. People will be killed on that road. Up on the hill, that wonderful place called Collie will grow and provide jobs for many people in the hinterland, down on the flats. As I said yesterday, 50 new workers start employment up on that hill every day. Therefore, there will be an absolute groundswell of cars, trucks and buses going up there. We need that work to be done now. Some areas could be done without using the whole \$20 million. I will take anything. However, we need some money—probably \$4 million or \$5 million—to construct a slip lane for people going up the Roelands hill. Anyone who has travelled up there will know exactly what I am talking about. When one truck goes up there, the traffic is queued up at the bottom of the hill. Of course, the next two-mile dash where the double lines are is where the problem is. This could be done without major disruption to the whole area. However, we need this work to be done, and we need it now. As I have said, if Perdaman Industries gets a go, we will want another 1 500 workers up there. It has been said many times that the day Collie catches a cold, Bunbury gets the flu, because the spin-off that comes down the hill is tremendous. We need to work together. It is not one against another; it is a regional issue, and we need to get that work done.

Let us go back to look at the infill sewerage situation around Donnybrook, Capel and Balingup—those sorts of places. That work is not being done there, so those areas cannot expand. I think there is a problem at Nannup too, if I remember correctly. We need that work to be done so that in this boom time we can attract people to those smaller communities so that they can grow. Otherwise we will have only two cities in Western Australia—one in Perth and one here, and I think there would be half a city in Geraldton. We need that work to be done so that people are encouraged to live in those areas. They do not want to be there every winter. I see it in my area also. We had an average winter, and the sewage started to seep out of the ground. Donnybrook had it from the top of the hill again this year. No-one wants to go home and have that smell running down their drains. We need infill sewerage; we really do.

The Premier has gone now. My speech must have been pretty good; he has gone. However, I beg the Premier to look at the south west as a whole. He should look at the infrastructure as a whole. He should look at many places along the South Western Highway, especially at the Roelands turn into Picton. Some work has been done there, but the contractors have had to pack up their gear because there is no ongoing funding. There was a huge crash on one of the corners there the other night. I am not sure whether both people lived, but they were on the critical list. The sand has been put there, and the ground has been cleared. Now the contractors have left the job because there is no further funding. However, in that time, two people have had to go to hospital. What will be the cost to the community if those people are paralysed or seriously injured? Over a period, it would probably cost the same amount to do that work. So there is that part of the South Western Highway.

Let us move to the patch south of Donnybrook. Again, that has been half done; it has not been finished. We need the money now, Premier, to get those jobs done. The Premier does not get out of Perth enough. Cottesloe is his patch. He walks down to the Blue Duck, has two coffees and a latte, and off home he goes. He forgets that the south west is where the growth is.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I was in Collie recently. You didn't show up!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Premier would not get a good cup of coffee at the Blue Duck like we get in Collie; do not worry about that. We also get a good, cold beer. What I am saying is that the expansion rate of the south west has been underestimated. We should look at the exports from the area. More than \$2 billion worth of mining products went out of that area in the past year—\$2 billion worth. That is equal to anywhere else in Western Australia. The Premier is forgetting that. We have the gold going out. Members can name it. We have a port that is working double time.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Premier should not worry. Those figures are right. We have a port that needs to be expanded, and we need capital funding to do that. How can the area grow if it does not get capital funding? We need that funding, and we need a government that is fully committed, not half committed. It is not a pylon off Cottesloe, and it is not \$3 million for the wooden jetty. We need real money for infrastructure.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: No. I would not put \$3 million into the pylon, but that is what he wants. I think it is just because it resembles him, with a bald head and a round head. That is what he wants down there. What I am saying is that we need that infrastructure money, and we need it now. Money has been taken out of the budget over and again to make it balance.

Let us look at the desalination plant east of Collie. It is a great project. It has diverted 30 000 tonnes of salt out of the Collie River. Off the top of my head, I think the graphs show—I will be corrected; I may be one or two points out—that, per litre, there were 935 parts per million of salt. However, after we had the diversion, it went down to 830 parts per million of salt. That was in only one year. It was a huge difference. Now we are stifled; we have stopped. The irrigators down there would love to have fresh water. The trouble is that we diverted the water into the mine voids. Once the mine voids are full, we have mine voids full of salt. Therefore, we need a desal plant so that we can pump water into the Harris Dam or put it into industrial water. I do not care what we do with it, as long as it is used wisely. We would then have a freshwater source there that is the biggest in the southern part of Western Australia. Everyone knows that. This year, the water that went over the top was all fresh. Due to the nature of water, the heavy stuff was at the bottom, so the salt stayed at the bottom. The good water is now in the Bunbury estuary. That is because the works are not being done there, with the capability to back-pump, side-pump and hook up with the integrated system. We could pump from there across to the Harris Dam, and from the Harris Dam to the Stirling Dam, and supply all of Perth from that, with no worries whatsoever.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is no good the minister being smart. It is no good the minister sitting on his rear end there with a slush fund of \$240 million unallocated. People are getting killed. Jobs are not being created. Even this week, 70 more people will lose their jobs with the Forest Products Commission. I cannot fathom how we can have such a weak local member down that way. He will not look after his own. He has the Greens offside, he has the timber industry offside, and now he has the plantation industry offside, along with the apple scab group.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: No, those numbers are right, because they come from the member's office. So let us look at that.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I do not quite understand that either. The minister can work it out for himself. I am saying that we urgently need money for the south west. I have a list in front of me. We have talked about the desal plant. Another project that was canned, which was a job creator, was the safety upgrade of the Wellington Dam. Probably sometimes I am not very concerned about that, because I wonder what would wash out of it down to Bunbury if it ever burst. However, I will leave that alone because I will only get into trouble. We had the Harvey —

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: If it came down this way, Bunbury could end up being out past Rottnest. That is what I am saying. I can say that moneys were available to get the job done. The machinery went on site and the old grey fox came along and took the money away. Perhaps it was a young grey fox; maybe half and half, although he was not too flash at playing football. The moneys have shrunk back and there are now job creation issues. Unemployment rates are going up because we are shrinking the amount of money we are spending on infrastructure. What better time to spend money than during an economic downturn? There is no better time than now. People in the south west are saying that they need more jobs, especially in the area of infrastructure. Projects to install water pipes and sewerage lines have been knocked back; we need extra help to get on with them. The government should not can them. That is another \$20 million.

There is also the matter of the Greenbushes-Bunbury railway line. I heard a spray about that, but I also heard an answer that is possibly the weakest answer I have heard since I have been in Parliament—there was no answer. The answer was, “Please tell me before you ask a question.” Fair go. Is it not the minister's job to know what is going on? There have been news stories about the highway backlash, the big promises made by Barnett, the Labor Party pushing for works on sewers and urgent road upgrades—that story carried a picture of a good-looking bloke! There have been headlines about state changes to grants and about training being put in jeopardy.

The Minister for Police is not here, but there is a very successful police training program in place in Collie that provides money for the region. The police get absolutely top training at the motor sports complex. The government has been out there and contributed to it—not enough, but a little. The government is placing police officers' lives at risk by preventing them from training in traffic. The government is going to take that training away. That training program contributes approximately \$1.5 million to the economy of Collie. It is going to be moved back to the city so that police will be training with schoolkids! The training area is a former mine area

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with wide roads, a racetrack and an off-road course. It is very well located, and it is now only one and three-quarter hours from Perth. It is not, as the commissioner said, out the back of beyond. I do not think that that is fair comment about travelling from Perth to Collie. We have all the infrastructure to go with it. To remove such training schemes from country towns is simply shrinking funding at a time when we should be expanding.

I tell the Premier that he needs to go away and focus less on Bunbury central and more on the Bunbury hinterland, because it all feeds into one. Without one, the other cannot survive; it does not matter which one. The infrastructure is here for things such as the entertainment centre. Not every town needs one of these, much as I would like one, because of the cost. On many occasions people come down the hill to utilise such facilities, but if they do not have jobs, they will no longer be able to. The list is a long one.

Another issue is roads. I do not know whether members have been out to the Ferguson Valley, but if they have not, they have missed out. The member would have been out there. There is good red wine out there! He would have gone out to have a look and probably would have had a tippie as well! The Ferguson Valley is a very pretty place—the Swan Valley of the south west. Pile Road needs money.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Haemorrhoid hill!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: That has been said many, many times. I have tried to get something done —

Mr B.J. Grylls: And you failed?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: How does one measure failure? Real estate values in Collie and Donnybrook are up. Unemployment rates have dropped from 9.8 per cent to four per cent. If we stick with the current minister, however, it will not be long before those rates increase again, because a lot of the employees of the Forest Products Commission come from Collie, and they will remember him. I will get them to sign on the roll down the bottom.

Pile Road could be one of the greatest tourist drives in the south west; there is no doubt about that. It goes through the Ferguson Valley to Wellington Dam and the back road into Collie and back down the Coalfields highway.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Every magazine in the world knows about Gnomesville. I took my wife's German relatives there and they thought it was the greatest thing. How much did the government put into that? Nothing, and it started during the term of a Liberal government.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Gnomesville?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Treasurer should go there, but they may not let him out! They will have a little stool for him and he will sit on it. They will say, "He's shrunk away so much, he's shrunk to that size."

Anyone who has been on that drive would certainly support the sealing of that road. One of the problems is that it straddles the boundaries of a couple of shires and there are no ratepayers. However, it runs through some of the best state forest in Western Australia; Wellington National Park is on the north side. That is something else that we should be working on so that we develop our tourism industry.

Collie has taken a punt and become an industrial town to some degree. Many people come to visit Collie and say, "You don't realise where you're living. You've got the best of both worlds—well-paid jobs and a great community that looks after itself." However, we are lacking infrastructure. We need to be able to travel through the back area to get to the coast. We need that help, and we need it now.

MR G.M. CASTRILLI (Bunbury — Minister for Local Government) [4.26 pm]: Maybe I have missed something, but I agree with some of the comments made by the member for Collie-Preston. He was talking about regional infrastructure, regional development, regional cooperation and spending money on a regional basis—everybody working together on a regional basis. I agree with the member, but I want Collie to stay on its own; I want Donnybrook to stay on its own. I want them to do their own thing. Now we know what he really thinks about Bunbury. What did he say? Let all the sludge slide down from Collie to Bunbury and wipe Bunbury out? I thought that the member for Collie-Preston was my mate!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have made some very nice comments about the member for Mandurah before, and I still think he is not a bad sort of bloke!

The Labor Party had surpluses in excess of \$2 billion when it was in government. If it halved unemployment and doubled the economy of Western Australia, why is it sitting on that side? I cannot understand that! Why did it

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not do all the things that the member for Collie-Preston talked about? It had eight years in government and a \$2 billion surplus! Why did it not do anything?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Several members interjected.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Regional infrastructure—what does the member think I am talking about? I said that I supported some of the comments made by the member for Collie-Preston. I support regional infrastructure, but why did his mob not do anything when it was in government for eight years and had a \$2 billion surplus?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Let us talk about the greater Bunbury region scheme.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Which you opposed.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The member for Armadale said that I had people with guns threatening her! What a joke that is!

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You did!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: She is saying that I had guns pointing at her. I thought she was better than that; I really did.

The greater Bunbury region scheme was tabled on 21 November 2001, and later on, during a speech in Parliament, I warned of the consequences of the greater Bunbury region scheme. This whole process started in the late 1980s. It was in the Bunbury-Wellington plan in 1995, but it was not gazetted. Then we were told that it was so out of date that it should be revamped. That took 11 years. The scheme contains so many inconsistencies that it is still out of date. On one hand LandCorp was trying to develop the waterfront of Bunbury while on the other hand the minister responsible for lands was holding up the greater Bunbury region scheme because of the change from parks and recreation to regional open space. One thing is happening on one hand and something else is happening on the other. The minister had to make up her mind. I warned people about that.

At least this government has started the process. It was such a mess, we had to go back to the beginning. We put \$3.5 million into the jetty, which the member for Collie-Preston said was a waste of time and a waste of money. A couple of projects will proceed; namely, the Eelup roundabout, to which we have committed \$30 million—\$15 million in 2009-10 and another \$15 million in 2010-11. Main Roads is completing some revamping of its budget with a view to planning for that project. The port access road will be completed by December this year or early next year. That is a great achievement. As the member for Bunbury I would love the Bunbury outer ring-road to be completed in one hit. Of course the traffic coming down to Bunbury on the new Forrest Highway will impact on the Eelup roundabout. All the way along that spine there will be some fantastic economic opportunities, including for Bunbury and further south; in fact, for this whole area. Of course it will bring additional traffic and activity. As the member for Bunbury, I would love to see that whole project completed. The Bunbury outer ring-road concept design was completed in 2001. We are looking at construction of stages 1 and 2 of the port access road. The federal Labor government promised \$136 million towards it.

Mr W.J. Johnston: John Howard refused; Kevin Rudd delivered. John Howard refused to fund it, as you know.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Where is the member for Collie-Preston? I am agreeing with some of the things he said.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Those are projects that we, as a region, will benefit from, including the port access roads, the outer ring-road and the waterfront development. The Minister for Sport and Recreation is responsible for other regional infrastructure on a smaller scale. We are waiting on the City of Bunbury to do more work on the Hay Park redevelopment and the soccer oval and grandstand to which we committed \$500 000, and for which I think the Minister for Sport and Recreation turned the first sod the other day. As the member for Collie-Preston knows, the Bunbury hockey stadium is a regional facility that people from all over the place come and enjoy. The member for Collie-Preston would not deny that. Hands Oval is the centre of football for the —

Mr M.P. Murray: You didn't see it on grand final day.

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Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am talking about the football centre in the south west. The Minister for Sport and Recreation has committed \$1.34 million to that. We are waiting on the City of Bunbury to do some extra work on it. The amount of \$1.67 million will go towards the athletics track as a regional infrastructure.

Mr M.P. Murray: Remember you were going to put up the boom gates and charge everyone to come in.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: How many years ago was that now, member for Collie-Preston—30 years ago? They almost put the boom gates halfway up the hill to Collie. They would come down here and we would go up there. The police had to put the boom gates halfway across.

I agree with him that not everyone can have a swimming pool or a fantastic facility like this. It is about time that we started working together—I am talking about the greater area—for this regional centre.

Mr M.P. Murray: Stop the takeovers.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The word “takeovers” should be banned and abolished. I am talking about creating new opportunities and a new identity. I think we understand each other, member for Collie-Preston; we have shared a few ideas. We disagree on some things but we agree on a few things. Is that fair comment?

Mr M.P. Murray: Fair enough.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am talking about regional cooperation, member for Collie-Preston; about working together for the greater good of the area.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: You spent too much time with Kevin Rudd.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The Prime Minister of Australia—he is my Prime Minister as well—and the Premier are of one mind. It must really hurt members opposite that he is like that with us, and he does not want to know about them.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He was too embarrassed to go to your conference.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: He would not even go to their conference.

The Treasurer is not here now, but I think the Premier will correct me if I am wrong. This region is enjoying a record capital asset spend in an economic crisis. Members opposite had eight years in government with \$2 billion surpluses and they reduced the unemployment rate. I cannot understand why they are sitting over there and we are sitting over here!

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [4.36 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. It is a good thing that there are still some people in the public gallery because they can see the passion and interest that is shown in the Parliament. They will have noted the personal attacks from the Premier. I think most people in the gallery would be surprised to see the Premier actually stand and attack people, not for what they say or for what they believe, but for who they are. That is a real surprise. It is interesting to those who might have been here earlier today when, during debate, the Premier referred to my family. I am sure that not many people realise that the Premier believes it is okay during debate in the Parliament to raise the family circumstances of members of Parliament.

It is very interesting that we are here and that I have the opportunity to speak on this motion. It is important that people in the gallery understand that we have important issues in front of us. It is a good thing to be in this magnificent facility here in Bunbury that was built by a former Labor government. It is another example of the regional infrastructure that the Labor Party has put in place right across this state. I am sure people in the gallery would understand that every single hospital in the north of the state was either rebuilt, replaced or under construction during the term of the former government.

I am sure also that people in the south west recognise what an excellent idea it was to hold regional Parliaments. It was a very good thing that Geoff Gallop came up with this idea and took the Legislative Assembly to Albany and the upper house to Kalgoorlie and, under Premier Carpenter, the Legislative Assembly went to Geraldton. This was an Australian Labor Party idea to ensure that Parliament reached out into the community so that the community could see the operation of the Parliament and understand what happens. It is also a good thing that the former Labor government held regional cabinet meetings right across the state to allow people to directly inter-relate. They were not just meetings inside a hall; they allowed ministers to go out and meet with the community so that people could talk directly to them. It is not surprising that the Labor Party did that when it was in government, because the Labor Party in Western Australia started in the regions. We were actually formed in Coolgardie, so it is not a surprise that we are so dedicated to infrastructure in regional areas, which is the topic we are addressing today. The Australian Labor Party continues to have many high-quality members, and we saw today the quality of the member for Collie-Preston. The Premier’s contribution to the debate is to laugh at the member for Collie-Preston. The member for Collie-Preston is well recognised in the south west as a

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person who will put the interests of his community before any political or other interest. Every person in the south west knows that the member for Collie-Preston puts his community first. That is something that members opposite need to think about. When the Premier laughs at an effective member of Parliament and tries to make fun, not of his effectiveness, but of his passion and interest in his own community, that says much more about the Premier than it says about anybody else.

We know that the National Party did well at the 2008 election, and we listened to the Leader of the National Party speak. However, what may not be known to members and to visitors in the gallery is that the National Party did not win a single seat in this chamber from the Labor Party. The only seats it gained at that election were at the expense of the Liberal Party. The Labor Party held its regional seats. The National Party has a long history of division. Mr Speaker, as a member of the National Party, I know that you are aware of the deep divisions that have been evident over the past 10 years between the National Party and the Liberal Party. I am sure that people will be aware of the Merredin by-election in 2001, and the very unkind things that the National Party said about the member for Cottesloe. It was pointed out by the National Party that, when a minister in the Court coalition government, the present Premier paid no mind to the regional community. He wanted to put up the price of electricity for regional residents. That was his idea as Minister for Energy. He wanted to increase the cost of delivering electricity to regional people. In the federal election in 2007, the Labor Party and the National Party had an arrangement in the seat of O'Connor, so that the Labor Party could help the National Party defeat Wilson Tuckey in that seat.

It is important for people to understand that we on this side of the chamber have great passion for the interests of regional Western Australians. I have already talked about the member for Collie-Preston, but we also need to think about the member for Albany. He came here today with a grievance to the Minister for Health. I will make it clear to the gallery what that is about. Backbench members of Parliament have very few opportunities to speak in the chamber. We do not often have the opportunity to get up and say what we need to say about our electorates.

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The comments from the member for Cannington bear no relationship whatsoever to the motion before the house.

The SPEAKER: I direct you, member for Cannington, to address the motion before the house.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I was saying, in addressing this motion about the infrastructure needs of the south west, we are lucky to have a passionate member in Albany, who is prepared to come here on behalf of his electorate.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Of course, the seat of Albany is one of the south west seats in the state Parliament. It forms part of the South West Region. The member for Albany brings to this Parliament his passion to represent the people of his electorate, and is dismissed and ignored by the Minister for Health. This resolution is about important matters, and that is why we are lucky to have passion on this side of the Parliament. We become involved in these important issues because we believe that it is important to have fairness. It is important to deliver for ordinary folk. People who succeed in life without the help of government are to be admired, but we need to look closely at the provision of infrastructure in the south west, because we need to think of not only people who succeed, but also disadvantaged and marginalised people. They are the people that the Labor Party will always come here to represent.

When the Premier interjects and wrongly accuses us of dishonesty or some other matter, which he enjoys doing, we will respond. Sometimes people coming to the gallery, seeing members behaving in the manner in which we have seen Liberal Party members behave this afternoon, are not sure why we do that. I was speaking to people outside this chamber yesterday about this issue. Why do politicians not behave themselves in Parliament? This is about important issues. We need to think about why the Premier makes personal attacks rather than dealing with the issues in front of us. For example, why does he say that the previous Labor government turned Inpex away from the Kimberley, when no such thing occurred? As the Premier knows, and as people in the gallery might be interested in hearing, Inpex never asked to go to the Kimberley coast. At no time did that Inpex proposal come to the government. It asked for the Maret Islands. We heard the Premier say that he does not want to have a port owned by a foreign government, but it is interesting that he is happy to have a foreign-owned telephone

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corporation operating in Australia—Optus. That is exactly the same—a piece of essential infrastructure that is owned directly by the Singaporean government.

In the brief time we have left, there is something else that people in the gallery should know about. We need to have a think about the question of cabinet solidarity. There is a tradition in Westminster parliaments, as exists in Western Australia, that all cabinet ministers make a decision together. When they make a decision together, they will vote in the Parliament together. That is an important protection for ordinary people, because it means that the leader cannot dominate the cabinet. If a cabinet minister cannot vote for a piece of legislation, he resigns. It is interesting that the National Party intends to remain in the government, but not to vote for government legislation. That is a very interesting issue.

The Labor Party has a very proud history in Bunbury. It has a very large number of local branches, and is very active in the local community. We have had very successful members of Parliament such as Phil Smith, David Smith, Tony Dean and Bob Thomas.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I would pull you back to the motion at hand.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We have a very good history of looking at the question of infrastructure in the south west because we have had such a long history of solid representation in this local community. For example, the Forrest Highway was delivered to this region by the Labor Party.

Mr M.J. Cowper: John Howard.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is interesting that the member interjects with “John Howard”. John Howard refused to fund the Bunbury port road.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.