

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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## **PREMIER'S STATEMENT**

### *Consideration*

Resumed from 16 February on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Mindarie)** [9.31 am]: Mr Speaker, I would like to make a speech concerning policing in Western Australia. At the outset, I preface my speech by saying that I have the utmost respect and admiration for the thousands of brave and conscientious police officers who police Western Australia, and who, by their devotion to duty, secure the streets so that they are safe enough for my wife and my children to walk about without the expectation of being assaulted or otherwise endangered. I thank all those officers who serve in the traffic branch and who stay up all night in difficult conditions, patrolling our streets to keep the streets safe enough for me to drive home with the expectation that I will not be killed by a hoon. I thank all of those officers serving in crime command who work so valiantly detecting crime by organised criminals and others, and who have achieved such remarkable results, especially in the interdiction of drug laboratories. They have made big inroads into the amphetamine trade in Western Australia. Finally, I thank, also, those officers of this state, including the undercover officers, who on a daily basis put themselves in danger by engaging with organised criminals and bikie gangs to bring evidence before the courts that will see these people prosecuted. All these people bring to the force great credit, and they should hold their heads up high, and we as a Parliament should sincerely thank them for their efforts, and I do.

Of course, I was the police union lawyer for over a quarter of a century. I represented literally hundreds of officers over a 20-year period. In that regard, I think I have the runs on the board and have shown my particular dedication to the service of hardworking officers. I particularly want to pay tribute to Sergeant Phil Birch of the Clarkson Police Station, who helps us out there in Clarkson; he is a wonderful man, it is a wonderful station, and it has wonderful staff. Of course, I have many, many personal friends who are serving police officers still, and I hold them in the highest regard. It is, therefore, with the greatest of regret that I have to stand in this chamber and raise a matter that has done the reputation of the Western Australian police service great damage. Indeed, in my view and in the view of others, the reputation of the Western Australian police force is so tarnished at the moment, as a result of the incidents involving Kevin Spratt, which followed so closely on the controversy involving Andrew Mallard, that many people around Australia view the Western Australian police force as having the worst reputation in Australia. That is something that Labor will not tolerate, and Labor will try to deliver to the Western Australian public a service without such a tarnished reputation as is being garnered by the Commissioner of Police and the police.

I will explain why I make those harsh comments, but before doing so, I say that I did not come into this Parliament seeking publicity and I did not come into this Parliament to make a controversial speech. As a result of the matters I am now about to explain, I approached the Commissioner of Police at the opening of Yanchep Police Station and said, "There are matters that are very disturbing in the Western Australian police service. I don't want it to be personal." And he said, "Come in and have a cup of tea." So I rang him soon after the opening of Yanchep Police Station, to go in and have a cup of tea at his invitation, but I could not get past his receptionist. I did leave a message; he never got back. I then had a conversation in the last week of Parliament before Christmas with Deputy Commissioner Chris Dawson, in which I expressed my disappointment that I could not go and put before the police department that which is of the utmost concern to me and which should be of the utmost concern to all Western Australians, particularly media representatives in Western Australia, who have been lied to—seriously lied to—by the Western Australian police department. I will now turn to that.

Mr Speaker might recall there having been published, by none less than the Commissioner of Police, a flowchart relating to Kevin Spratt. The Commissioner of Police took it upon himself to publish this flowchart at a press conference, during which he detailed what he said to be the continuing violent behaviour of Kevin Spratt that led to him being tasered on 41 occasions over a six-day period in the Perth police lockup. I have that flowchart before me now. Unfortunately, that flowchart, when examined against the police documents and examined against the evidence of the Corruption and Crime Commission, is a litany of lies. That flowchart was absorbed in good faith by the media, who repeated the lies that are contained in the flowchart. There had been a previous document distributed by the Commissioner of Police at a briefing when the Spratt matter first broke, and that document also contained many untruths about Kevin Spratt.

Kevin Spratt complained by letter to the Commissioner of Police about the actions that the Commissioner of Police was taking to vilify him—actions that the Commissioner of Police took not because Kevin Spratt was a dangerous criminal and they were on the lookout for him, but simply because Kevin Spratt put his hand up and said that he wished to make a complaint against the officers who had tasered him. From that moment on, the

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

---

police department sought to vilify Kevin Spratt; indeed, all this publicity came down upon the shoulders of Kevin Spratt, but not because he went out and sought it. He had served his time, he had gone out and tried hard to get employment, and it is very, very hard for an Indigenous person coming out of prison to get employment, as I am sure you would appreciate, Mr Speaker. It took him three months, but he got a job, and then the Corruption and Crime Commission, without warning him, released a DVD, wherein his face, they say, was sufficiently pixelated to not allow anyone to be able to identify him. A press conference was called, and this terrible sheet was distributed amongst the journalists in an effort to vilify Kevin Spratt. Kevin Spratt complained that his identity had been released to the media, and by letter dated —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mindarie, for my benefit and possibly, also, yours —

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Has the clock stopped?

**The SPEAKER:** — could you indicate whether this matter is before the court at the moment?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No, it is not before the court; I give you that undertaking. I have researched that this matter is not sub judice in any way, and I have taken senior counsel's opinion on it. The senior counsel's opinion I have taken on it is that there is a tribunal—a commission—conducting an inquiry, which has gone into recess, and an inquiry does not constitute a court and does not go against any rule of sub judice. I know the government would want to shut me down and say that a public inquiry equals a court; it does not. There is, of course, plenty of precedent that during inquiries by the CCC into matters involving the Labor Party, these matters were raised in this chamber, and you, Mr Speaker, were present when they were raised. I give the undertaking that there has been no charge preferred against Mr Spratt; there has been no charge preferred against any officer. The matter is simply not sub judice. I would not raise a matter that was sub judice in this place. So, if I could just go on.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you for the clarification, member.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Thank you.

Mr Spratt then complained about these matters to the Commissioner of Police, about being publicly vilified, and the Commissioner of Police wrote back by letter dated 22 October 2010, dishonestly saying —

It was in that context that your antecedents were released.

The Commissioner of Police was saying he was compelled to release this litany of lies because I was making misstatements. I will come back to that in a moment.

The Commissioner of Police says also in his letter of 22 October—I am not saying the Commissioner of Police was the author of this lie, but whoever did it has set the commissioner up to be viewed by many as a liar—“This agency did not identify you, Mr Spratt.” The fact is that Mr Spratt was not known to anyone in Perth before his picture appeared on Channel Seven that night. Mr Spratt did not know that the DVD was going to be released by the Commissioner of Police. A press conference was called, and an eight-page dirt sheet on Mr Spratt was handed out, while the deputy commissioner and other senior police moved through those assembled, briefing them on Mr Spratt. Immediately after that press conference was held, Channel Seven reporters went to Mr Spratt's parents' place and said, “Where's Kevin?”. They told him that he was at work, and they told him where he worked. He had been there only three days. Channel Seven then went to his place of employment. The Minister for Police wanted to know who was writing the letters for Mr Spratt. I was writing the letters for Mr Spratt. I was helping Mr Spratt.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You were providing legal advice.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No, I was not. Mr Spratt has also got legal advice from the most senior lawyer in the city that I was not giving Mr Spratt legal advice. But I was helping him to write his letters, as the Commissioner of Police knows.

**Mr R.F. Johnson** interjected.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Mr Speaker, could you tell Lord Haw Haw of Hillarys that I am not taking interjections this morning? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Commissioner of Police would want us to believe this eyewash that there was no communication to Channel Seven of the address of Mr Spratt. That is just a lie. Who is responsible for the authoring of that lie? I am not saying it is the Commissioner of Police. He may have just been handed this letter to sign. But the Commissioner of Police has to come out and give an explanation.

I now turn to the commissioner's flowchart. I have numbered each of the squares on the flowchart. *Hansard* will contain the speech, but not the flowchart with the numbered squares. I therefore seek leave to have this flowchart lay on the table for the remainder of the day, and afterwards for it to be incorporated into *Hansard*, so that any

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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member, or any person in the press gallery, will be able to see exactly what I am talking about. Mr Speaker, is leave granted to do that?

**The SPEAKER:** I am seeking advice on the practicalities of whether that document can be incorporated into *Hansard*. I would need to look at that document, member for Mindarie.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I am happy to just lay it on the table.

**The SPEAKER:** If I can look at it in the first instance, that would be best. I ask you to continue while I look at it. Thank you, member.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Certainly, Mr Speaker.

I will now go through the flow chart. As I have said, it contains a litany of lies. I will never forget that press conference, which the Premier of Western Australia has described as absolutely an extraordinary performance by the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police stood at a lectern and said that all the yellow squares on this flow chart denote acts of violence by Mr Spratt. The Commissioner of Police had Chris Dawson demeaning himself, mimicking Delvene Delaney—members may remember the lovely Delvene Delaney; she was the barrel girl on *Sale of the Century*—but sans the short skirt and the pretty face, at the whiteboard, pointing out these yellow squares. This constitutes nothing less than a litany of lies. I do not have time to go through every one of them, but given a longer period of time I would.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mindarie, just for your benefit, and also for the benefit of members of the house, I have instructed that the document be laid on the table for the remainder of the day. It is impossible to have what you have provided incorporated into *Hansard*.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The squares are numbered. I first turn to the square numbered 5. This square relates to Mr Spratt's arrest in King William Street, Bayswater, on 31 August 2008. The wording in the box says —

Spratt arrested in King William Street Bayswater re trespassing/attempted burglary & disorderly conduct; Spratt believed to have been opening fuel filler caps ...

Some police officers were driving along King William Street. They saw a drunken Aboriginal, and they fronted him and said, "You're the one who's been sniffing fuel caps." He denied that. In evidence at the CCC, the arresting officer said, "We have no evidence. I was standing with him at the back of the vehicle. I was in the process of explaining to Mr Spratt that the other man in the crew was at the microphone, just verifying his identity, and I was telling Mr Spratt that once his identity has been verified, we will drive him home." It was not arresting him for trespassing and burglary and sniffing petrol; it was, "We'll drive you home". Mr Spratt was drunk. He had had unfortunate contacts with the police in the past, and at that point he panicked and ran off, and he ran into some other policemen. They arrested him, and during the process of that arrest, he struggled. Mr Spratt was never proceeded against for what is stated in this yellow box: "Spratt arrested in King William Street Bayswater re trespassing". That was never proceeded with. That was just a ruse and an excuse for the interaction with Mr Spratt.

Mr Spratt was then conveyed to the police lockup. The barrel girl, Delvene Delany, then pointed to the next yellow box, which denotes Mr Spratt's next violent act. It has now come out, and it came out at the time, that Mr Spratt was calm at the lockup. In box 7, the lie is —

Spratt resists officers

Once at PWH Spratt resisted violently ...

We know that is a lie. We know that is a lie, because the Premier of Western Australia said, "I've watched the video. Spratt wasn't violent at the watch-house." We know it is a lie, and we know that the Premier of Western Australia has got it right, because at the CCC, each of the officers was shown this video, and they said, "No, he wasn't violent; and, no, he wasn't resisting us." Therefore, we know that in box 7, the commissioner was selling a lie to the public of Western Australia. It is disgraceful.

I then stood in this chamber and said, "The only person who was charged with an offence at that lockup is not the police who assaulted him; they charged the victim." The police commissioner then put out a press release to the press gallery—correction of Quigley's mistake—saying that all the charges referred to in box 7 are in fact just a repeat of the charges that Mr Spratt copped when on King William Street; in other words, it is just a replication of those charges. That is a lie. I have taken care to get hold of the charge sheets. One of the charge sheets shows that Mr Spratt was actually charged with obstructing the police while he was a victim in the watch-

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

---

house! Do not tell us that the police in this state do not have the worse reputation in Australia, when they go out and not only do this, but lie to the public about what they have done. The day of reckoning is coming. First, the Commissioner of Police in this lie has had his knees kicked out from under him by his staff, who went to the CCC one after the other and said that Mr Spratt was calm at the watch-house, he was not violent and he was not resisting. All the commissioner's staff have absolutely contradicted the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police. His staff have made him look like a liar. I am not saying that Karl O'Callaghan was the author of these lies. The author of these lies was likely to be a superintendent at the internal affairs unit. But Karl O'Callaghan owes the public of Western Australia an explanation of the involvement that he had in the distribution of these lies. Indeed, the reason that they can lie so confidently is that under this administration—under this Liberal administration—the Minister for Police is a dud, and the Commissioner of Police knows that he will never be brought to account by the Minister for Police, because he knows his political master is no more than a sycophant and he can tell him whatever he likes. The Commissioner of Police would not have behaved like this during the tenure of the member for Midland as Minister for Police, because she would have questioned him and sought explanations and not just been a suckhole to him. That is why the commissioner can speak with such confidence.

I will move on, because time is running out. The day of reckoning is coming for the Commissioner of Police. Although the Commissioner of Police said in his press release that Spratt was not charged as a victim at the watch-house, his staff have gone to the CCC and have, once again, kicked his legs out from underneath him by saying that Mr Spratt was charged. When they were asked on what basis he was charged, they could not identify on that video anything that Mr Spratt had done wrong for the charge that they gave him, which he copped three months in jail for. That is a disgrace, and it has brought disgrace on the Western Australian police service and on our reputation for honesty and integrity. Unless this is dealt with by the Minister for Police, the police in Western Australia will be regarded around Australia as having the worst reputation. There is no doubt about that.

I now move on. I will have to speed it up a bit. Box 10 says that Mr Spratt was on a person's property early in the morning. The box says that it was between 4 and 6 September. It was actually on 6 September. What happened is that at 4.55 am, he was walking along Guildford Road, drunk. He was homeless at that stage, and he had his clothes in a plastic bag, and half a bottle of booze. A car of racist bogans stopped on Guildford Road and took him on. Fearful, he ran. He jumped the fence; he broke a bit of the fence when he jumped it. He discarded his belongings, and he hid until he thought the way was clear. Once he thought that the bogans who were going to beat him up had gone, he made his way back onto Guildford Road. What happens when he gets onto Guildford Road? He is surrounded by police. That is because there was another offender—a sex offender. We know this—I will not go into it all—because someone had left their bodily fluid in a pair of underpants that were hanging on someone's clotheslines in their backyard.

May I seek an extension, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** In giving you an extension, member for Mindarie, I want you to be mindful of some of the accusations that are embedded in what you have said. In saying that to you, member for Mindarie, I would like to bring to the attention of the house that procedure in this place is very important. The comments made by the member for Mindarie, in effect, represent what this Parliament is about. Member for Mindarie, I give you the ability to continue.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** As I said, from where he was hiding from the bogans, he was confronted by the police. In box 11, the police state —

Spratt attempted to gain entry to dwellings at Guildford Rd Bayswater, located by police & arrested on suspicion.

Mr Spratt is not the person who left his sexual fluid in a person's undies, but he was arrested for that. We know from the record of interview conducted in the prison by the internal investigators that Mr Spratt did not do that. At the time the police published this litany of lies, they also knew that. How do I know that? Because Detective Sergeant Ron Klanjscek, the internal investigator interviewing Mr Spratt, said, "Don't worry about the burglary charge, because we've tested the undies with the bodily fluid on it, and it's not yours, Mr Spratt. Don't worry, we know that you didn't do this." But when the police approached Mr Spratt for doing that, they tore a Christian cross on a silver chain from his neck. He complained to the internals about the rough handling and the removal of his Christian cross from his neck. He formally complained about the theft of that sentimental item by letter after he got out of prison, and I helped him with that. They never gave him an offence report for the police theft of that silver chain and cross.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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The police then took Mr Spratt back to the Perth watch-house. We all know from the closed-circuit video footage what happened there. Mr Spratt was brutally dealt with at the Perth police watch-house, to the extent that a young female constable said that she was sickened at the extreme violence against Mr Spratt. The police then called in the Department of Corrective Services. We saw the DCS take the tape that the government and the Attorney General did not want us to have. Do members remember that I kept asking in this chamber for the release of the DCS tape? Remember that Mr Spratt was tasered a further 13 times! In the process of getting tasered 13 times on police premises by DCS staff with a policeman present—you could see it in the video—Mr Spratt was being asked to bring his arm around the front. Members can see this on the video. Mr Spratt was lying face down, and when he would not bring his arm around the front, the officer kept on tasering him in the back. At this stage, this man had sustained a dislocated shoulder, a broken collarbone and a punctured lung. Is there any wonder he could not bring his arm around the front? And because he could not move his grossly injured arm, he was tortured over and over in a woeful act that is a strike against the reputation of the Western Australia Police around this country.

I made a big mistake. When Mr Spratt was interviewed in prison, he made a specific complaint about this incident in which he was injured. I said that the police had to release this second tape—their secret tape. However, the Attorney General, with his leering grin, kept on saying, “There is no secret tape. Mr Quigley is wrong again.” I was a fool. When Mr Spratt, in this record of interview with internal affairs investigators, formally complained about being injured on 6 September 2008, I made a foolish assumption that the police would conduct an investigation. I made a silly assumption that in the process of that investigation, they would get hold of the tape because it was necessary for their inquiry. But this police service buried this tape. The police did go out to Hakea Prison, and they did say to Mr Spratt, “We want your authorisation for the release of the medical reports so that we can go back to Royal Perth Hospital and see how badly you were injured in our police lockup.” They did tell Mr Spratt to go back to his cell and make notes about the incident, but they never came back to see him; they buried the whole thing. It is disgraceful. Then they put in this litany of lies, which I am just coming to.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mindarie, before you proceed, can I again caution you on the accusations you make. I have been made aware that Kevin Spratt lodged a single judge appeal on 14 January this year. I am indicating to you, member for Mindarie, that the comments you might make in this place have the potential to prejudice what might happen to that appeal. I am cautioning you.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have been in contact with the senior lawyers on that case, and I know that what I am saying is not prejudicing that case. I give the house that undertaking.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** In their opinion—what about the DPP?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The Director of Public Prosecutions has spoken to the senior lawyers. I am not at liberty to reveal in this place what is happening, but I am not in any way prejudicing that appeal.

I am saying that in this particular case, the police then say that they went out to Casuarina Prison and Mr Spratt could not recall the incident of 6 September. That is wrong. He could not recall the incident of 30 August. He could recall the incident of 6 September. Mr Spratt made a formal complaint about it, albeit that the police had been deceptive and never investigated his complaint about being injured. The IAU investigators had that DVD as early as September 2008. As a result of the Mallard and Gray cases, two leading cases in the High Court, the police were under legal obligation to disclose that video to his defence lawyers prior to going to court. They did not do that. They failed in that duty. This was at a time in 2008 when Commissioner O’Callaghan was saying, “We have learnt from the Mallard case. We now understand our legal obligations of disclosure and will never do this again.” Oh, yeah! At the time the commissioner was saying that, they were doing this to Mr Spratt and keeping the video secret from his lawyers. They did take the video out to Mr Spratt himself on 27 January, three days before he was sentenced. They never showed his lawyer the video or alerted his lawyer to the video. They asked Mr Spratt what he wanted done. He said that he wanted them charged. It was only after he said, “I want them charged” that they said, “You had better get legal advice from the Aboriginal Legal Service.” They said, “You’ve watched that video. Do you want to make a complaint about the way the police treated you that day?” Mr Spratt’s response was, “Yeah. After seeing it, yeah.” They were dumbstruck. They thought they had him over the line and he would not complain. They said, “You do? Do you want me to provide you with time to consider your position and seek any legal advice?” Mr Spratt did not want legal advice; he wanted to make a complaint. It was the police who were forcing this on him, and they did not go to his lawyer, as represented to the public by Commissioner O’Callaghan. They did not go near his lawyer! They kept this video from his lawyer. They kept the video from the court and, as such, it constitutes an unjust and unfair hearing that Mr Spratt was subjected to. However, immediately after he was sentenced on 30 January 2009, they did re-attend at the prison and say, “You’ve complained about being injured. Would you sign an authorisation for the release of your medical report?” He said yes.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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The fool thought the police were going to investigate this. Their business was about covering up.

The line contained in this litany of lies at box 25 states, “ALS Solicitor views CCTV footage”. That is a lie. How do we know that is a lie? Because the Attorney General, in answer to a question late last year, said that the person who went there and the person who sent the subsequent email to the police saying they did not want charges was not a lawyer but a clerk from the ALS—just a law clerk. Did this law clerk go down to see Mr Spratt first? No. As I said, box 25 on this chart shows that an ALS solicitor—we know that is a lie—viewed footage at IAU. The internal investigations unit—this chart shows that it was “Compiled by WA Police Internal Affairs Unit”—knew that the person who attended was not a lawyer but was still quite happy to put on to this sheet that a lawyer had attended upon them and that this person was in receipt of legal advice, which is a lie. The next day it received an unsigned email from this woman, whoever she is. The Attorney General knows her identity and he can vouchsafe to this Parliament that she is not a legal practitioner and nor did Mr Spratt ever get legal advice. That is also a lie. To follow it up, the Commissioner of Police went on radio telling the public the lengths the police department had gone to to get him legal advice before the police were advised he did not want to lay charges. The truth is that the commissioner should have truthfully informed the public. The police did everything they could to keep the video away from his lawyer before he went to court. They did everything they could so this video would not be shown in court. To try to wrap this up, they got a clerk from the ALS to get her around to sign off on it. I would love to hear a tape recording of the conversation between internal affairs and this hapless, naive clerk from the ALS. This guy was never a client of the ALS.

The commissioner then went on radio and told the public that they had done everything to get him a lawyer. That was a lie. They did everything to not get him a lawyer. They did everything to frustrate him in getting legal advice. This would not be countenanced in any other state in Australia. The Premier described this press conference as extraordinary. It is unique in Australian criminal history. Nowhere in Australia has a Commissioner of Police—not in all the Carlton crew, not in the shootings that are happening with the bikies in Sydney, not in South Australia—publicly vilified someone who at that stage had done no more than say, “What has happened to my complaint? I want the police charged.” That is why they went out to vilify him. It would not be tolerated in any other state in Australia. Why do the police do it in Western Australia and why is it tolerated in Western Australia? It is tolerated in Western Australia because we have a person with the title of Minister for Police who has no idea how to discharge his responsibilities and hold the police to account. His response to this will be to attack me, not to get to the bottom of the creation of this litany of lies. I stress once again that I am not saying that Karl O’Callaghan and Chris Dawson were the authors of these lies, because this chart says it was compiled by the WA Police internal affairs unit. The authors of these lies were the superintendents down at the internal affairs unit. What discussions had they had with Commissioner O’Callaghan and Deputy Commissioner Dawson before they so willingly went into a press conference selling these lies to the public of Western Australia to vilify Kevin Spratt? It is beyond imagination why they would do it. It is beyond the Premier’s imagination. He finds it just extraordinary. This situation has to mark them down as the worst commissioner and deputy commissioner in Australia by virtue of their conduct.

The Minister for Police has a duty to this Parliament and to the public of Western Australia to call in the Commissioner of Police and get to the bottom of this. Such an action would not be tolerated in any other state in Australia. When this gets out nationally, of course people are going to think that we have the worst commissioner in Australia. Of course they are going to think that this is evidence of the worst police conduct in Australia. What else should they be left to think?

I had a friend who went to Paris last October. When he was in Paris scanning the media for news from Australia, he could not pick up a snippet of news, but what was being replayed on Paris TV was the videotape of the police torture down at the East Perth police lockup.

Before I sit down, I have been told that by categorising it as police torture, I am just going for publicity. That is what the honourable Minister for Police said; and that I am wearing my underpants on the outside. That is wrong.

[Member’s time expired.]

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland)** [10.05 am]: This year’s Premier’s Statement did not go off with a bang but a whimper. It was dry, uninspirational and contained little that was new. I have no doubt that the Premier and the Treasurer were quietly pleased with this year’s projected budget surplus that has climbed back to \$758 million in the *2010–11 Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*. I have no doubt they will continue to say that they regret the financial pressure that they have put on Western Australian households to achieve it. I have no doubt that they will continue to say that they regret the \$368 extra, on average, that Western Australian families are now trying to find from overstretched household budgets in order to make it through another year. That \$368 might not sound like much in Cottesloe. In Cottesloe it probably just buys dinner for two and a decent

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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bottle of wine at a flash restaurant, but on the other side of the city it is a really significant sum of money. I know that the Premier says that he regrets this extra imposition. I know that because he said so. After the budget was brought down, he said he was sorry he had to do it but that we all had to tighten our belts. Then again last month he reiterated his apology, but he noted that it was necessary. He was quoted as saying —

I did care. That was a difficult decision. I knew it was the right decision. And people in this state know it was the right decision even though they don't like paying higher prices for their electricity.

I apologise for the hurt. But we had to do it.

In his opening address to Parliament this week, he said again —

As Premier, I apologise once again for these increases, though necessary, and thank the community for bearing the effects of the price rises.

The Premier acknowledged that, especially when coupled with increasing interest rates, it was a stressful time for families and small businesses that have to face these massive price hikes. The Liberal–National government has upped the price of electricity by 46 per cent and the price of water by 30 per cent. The Premier has been saying for some months now—indeed, he said it again this week—that we will not see price increases of this magnitude this year. The forward estimates, though, have them locked in at increases of 22 per cent for electricity and 8.4 per cent for water. If we cannot believe the forward estimates—estimates that were again repeated in the midyear review—what can we believe? If the increases are not to be of that huge magnitude, what magnitude will they be and what should householders be setting aside now for further increases by the Barnett government?

In the greater Perth area alone, over 90 000 households manage on less than \$500 a week. Of those 90 000 households, no fewer than 80 000 have experienced real hardship in paying the utility bills imposed by this government. The majority of those vulnerable households are the homes of the elderly, single parents, sole providers with dependent children or people with disabilities or life circumstances that prevent them from seeking employment.

The Premier has said he is sorry thrice and that he cares. The truth is that he does not care enough and he is not sorry enough—not sorry enough, Premier, not to do it; not sorry enough, despite the budget surplus, to spare Western Australian families the financial pain of these revenue grabs; not sorry enough to forgo a little extra cash and find alternatives to squeezing household budgets; and not sorry enough to abandon his rigid economic orthodoxy and be the compassionate Premier that he claims to be. The Premier says that he cares and that he is sorry, but it is not enough. What is this government's rigid economic orthodoxy? First and foremost, it is a commitment to privatisation. It is the irrational belief that the private sector always does it better, that the services provided by government are expensive and second rate, and that the market is the best determinant of everything from the price of a bottle of milk to the price of a CEO. On that basis, this government is privatising health care and even schools without serious oversight or any community debate.

The introduction of independent public schools has been conducted without changing a single line of legislation or a single regulation. This has ensured that this smoke-and-mirrors privatisation of one of the most important functions of state government has been conducted without any public debate, without any parliamentary debate, and without any scrutiny by either house of this Parliament. We just have to take the Premier's word for it that it is a good idea, that the minister knows what she is doing, and that the experience of education privatisation in other places will not be replicated here. We have to assume that the experience of charter schools in the United States will not be replicated here, whereby public money funds privately run and parent-controlled schools. Detailed studies of educational outcomes in those schools, scholarly and careful assessments of educational quality, show that only 17 per cent of students do better in public schools, 37 per cent do worse and 46 per cent do much the same. We have to assume that teachers will find it more empowering and that students will find it more engaging. This is despite a study of the effects of devolution of control to schools that found that there was little difference in student learning and that teachers had no more professional autonomy in a devolved system than they have in a centralised one. What we do not have to assume is why. We know that faith in the marketplace and in economic orthodoxy has driven this policy. There was not enough faith, though, to debate it properly in this place and to respond to some of the matters that I have raised here, but just enough faith to slide this policy in the back door and hope that short-term success does not become the medium-term embarrassment that independent public schools in Victoria became under Jeff Kennett.

We see the same irrational faith in the government's approach to health care. With considerable help from Canberra, this government is continuing to build the hospitals that were begun by our Labor government. Fiona Stanley Hospital and the Midland health campus are cases in point. Both were begun by the previous Labor government. Both have had funding for their construction supplemented by hundreds of millions of dollars from

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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the commonwealth Labor government. But this government's plan for these significant investments of public money, of taxpayers' money—that is, everyone's money—is to turn them over to a private company and let it run these facilities for profit. That is another piece of blind faith hedged by hollow guarantees and assured by fiat. The government has not ensured the jobs of the staff at Swan District Hospital, although it has advised the staff that they are free to apply for jobs at the new hospital. It has also advised staff that they can apply for jobs at the other remaining publicly run hospitals. It has not assured the people who will be served by these hospitals that the hospitals will be appropriately run and maintained.

The government has no mandate for the plan to privatise our hospitals. It certainly has no mandate for privatising the new Midland hospital. When the Richard Court government outsourced health, it was a disaster. This government has not assured the people of this state that this measure is financially prudent to begin with. If there is any truth in the assertion that the private sector does things better, that truth is based upon the assumption of perfectly free markets that moderate costs to consumers. There is no perfectly free market here; rather, there are a couple of companies that are in the position realistically to tender for the contracts. Those firms have to submit a bid to government that is attractive in cost, while, at the same time, they have to have a percentage return to shareholders that justifies any initial investment. There is necessarily a pressure on any successful firm to cut costs in order to maximise shareholder return, and that shareholder return is the money that is paid into the health system by government for the provision of health care but spent through shareholder dividends on anything that pleases the shareholder. How is that efficient? How is that good management? How does it benefit the public? I can tell the house who the losers will be in this. First and foremost, the losers will be the hospital workers, who will have to work harder and longer for less so that the private company can return a dividend to its shareholders; and, secondly, it will be the community members in the broader eastern region, Midland and beyond—the mums, the dads, the children and the elderly who need hospital treatment, which treatment will be compromised by the need to return a profit to shareholders. Cleaning and sanitation will be compromised, the timeliness of service will be compromised, and the standard of care will be compromised because the bottom line is profit, not a standard of service. People's lives are at stake, but it seems that the Barnett government is prepared to take this gamble.

All of this is happening with the elephant of Royal Perth Hospital in the room. In order to fund an election promise that was extravagant but designed to win the seat of Mount Lawley for the government, the commitment was made again and again not to close Royal Perth Hospital in any way—to keep it as it is. How is this an efficient use of public resources? The Education and Health Standing Committee of this house, which is not a committee dominated by Labor, found in its report last year that the government's current policy of retaining Royal Perth as a full tertiary facility rather than scaling back its offerings is generating wasteful and unnecessary duplication, robbing the newer and decentralised hospitals of beds and retarding the development of Joondalup Health Campus to a full tertiary facility by some years. That is more blind faith, more voodoo economics and more policy built on crumbling assumptions and discredited theories. And what for? What is the purpose of budget surpluses? It is not purely aesthetic; it is not just about a beautiful set of numbers. Budgets and economic policies in general should serve the people of this state. This government, though, seems to think that it is the other way around.

Thanks to the astute policies of the commonwealth government, Australia has dodged the global financial crisis and is returning to prosperity. Our Premier never ceases to remind the nation that the driver of that prosperity is the mining boom in Western Australia. But how is the boom being harnessed to serve the needs of the state? How are Western Australians benefiting from this apparent explosion in economic activity? The answer is: not as much as they should be. Our workshops should be hives of activity. Light manufacturing companies should have their order books full. The skills of a generation of workers should be passed on to the next. But here we are deafened by the silence. Instead, the Premier himself has ensured the export of \$300 million worth of contracts through his oversight of the Gorgon project. What a sterling example! What else will private employers do? We should and we must use this boom for the benefit of our community, not merely for the profitability of transnational mining companies. Good policy would demand that we use the breathing space that the boom has given us to reshape our economy and reshape our state, so that when the resources give out, or when the demand for them does, we are not left behind. We do not want to become a rust-belt state, with industrial wastelands and craters where wealth once used to be.

What is this government doing, though? It is moving the Department of Training and Workforce Development to Osborne Park from a site that it owns to one for which the government will pay \$3 million rent a year. Only yesterday we found out that the fit-out cost for this new building will be \$6.6 million. Other than that, what is the government doing? It is not doing much, it would seem. I have to ask: how will splitting the departments of education and training and moving the training department to Osborne Park benefit or build this state? How could policies to send our jobs overseas and our firms broke be in Western Australia's interests, while bravely



Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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rearranging the bureaucratic deckchairs at the Department of Training and Workforce Development? Whereas we paid nothing before, we will now pay \$3 million a year rent. That \$3 million, and the \$6.6 million that will be spent on the fit-out, will have to be diverted from recruiting and training apprentices to paying rent. But this is consistent with the economic approach of Liberal governments. What is the biggest compliment that can be paid to them? It is not that they had great vision or inspired people through difficult times or built for the future; it is that they managed well. What a compliment—they managed well! The only problem is that they manage by outsourcing to private companies. In just over two years in government, this government has stood on the shoulders of the previous Labor government and opened projects that we began. It has opened our roads, schools, police stations and hospitals. When will it do something for itself? If it had not been for the commonwealth's Building the Education Revolution money, infrastructure spending on schools would have gone backwards over the past two years. If it had not been for commonwealth infrastructure money on major projects, the Reid Highway overpass would still be on the drawing board. The long-awaited Perth foreshore development progressed just this week to some new drawings that really raise more questions than they answer. I refer here to traffic management issues among myriad other things.

Of course our Premier can point to the great projects of the north west and argue that those are building for the future. They might, they could, they should; but they are not—they just help the Premier manage. It is no secret that the Premier imagines himself as a latter day Charles Court, opening up the north west and tapping into a whole new source of wealth for the people of this state. He has learned his lines from the Court family playbook; although he is slightly more sophisticated in the way that he tramples on Indigenous rights and blames Canberra for everything that goes wrong. The people of this state deserve better. The people of this state deserve to have the surplus used for better things. The people of this state deserve a future that this prosperity ought to be building for them.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The Premier promises sound management. Why should we be satisfied with such a mediocre claim? Why should we be satisfied, especially after another round of increases in fees and charges? Why should we be satisfied with a government whose best economic ideas are decades old and are demonstrable failures? Why should we be satisfied with more privatisation, more outsourcing of essential government services, and more exporting of Western Australian manufacturing jobs and the export of our skills? Why should we be satisfied with a government that is squandering our present and not planning for our future?

I look forward to crossing swords with the Treasurer in my new role. I hope that he can spare the time from his responsibilities in running the state's justice system to also run its multibillion-dollar economy. During the life of the last government, members opposite took some pleasure in referring to my former colleague Hon Jim McGinty as the part-time Minister for Health. I am sure the Attorney General will understand when I return the compliment and refer to him as the part-time Treasurer. I might be new to this job but I am not new to this place, and I am not new to government or its processes. I am not new to the task of holding this squalid and arrogant government to account. Moreover, I am confident in the power of Labor ideas and its history. The Labor Party has always been a building party—a party that has made infrastructure, a party that has generated skills and trades, and a party that has ensured universal education and health care. Those are our enduring achievements, emerging from our determination to build a community that is fair and prosperous, where everyone has a durable and sustainable future.

Before I close, I wish to move an amendment to the question that the Premier's Statement be noted.

*Amendment to Question*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that the Liberal–National government be condemned for its continuing failure to maximise skilled work and apprenticeships from the boom

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee)** [10.25 am]: I rise to support this amendment. It is an important amendment to support because this government has been missing in action when it comes to supporting the businesses of Western Australia. It has also been absent in supporting the future generations of this state. Our children, our children's children, and the ones that come after them will be significantly and deeply affected if we do not act by getting skilled work into this state over a sustainable period. I will address the amendment to the motion in three ways. We have here an opportunity. We have a problem that is getting in the way of our opportunity, and there is an effect on the basis of that problem. If I have time, I may even make a contribution about what I think would be some of the solutions, save being called nothing but a negative naysayer.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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The Premier is on the record as saying that the workshops of this state would be full. Much has been made of it in this chamber and publicly. He did not actually indicate when that would be. He raised the expectation, particularly amongst the fabrication industry and those people who support the supply chain to the resource sector, that in fact the good days are coming back again. In fact that is not the case. I can tell the Premier when those workshops will be full: the workshops will be full when there are fewer than half a dozen of them left! We have already seen some workshops and businesses go out the back door. We have already seen some businesses close up because they simply could not access the greatest wealth boom in this country, and probably globally, that any other province in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development world has ever seen.

By way of background, the resource industry itself contributes over \$70 billion to the economy. The Department of Mines and Petroleum's own data indicates that the industry contributes \$73 billion worth of economic output in WA. Further than that, in the gas sector, Western Australia's share of Australia's natural gas reserves is over 70 per cent. Western Australia is the repository of over 70 per cent of Australia's gas supplies. More than half of Australian mineral and petroleum exploration exists in Western Australia. That is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. More than that, it is a once-in-a-dozen lifetimes' opportunity. Why? It is because global demand for our commodities has created what some people are now calling a super cycle. There are various names that economists are grabbing to describe the current situation. It was evidenced yesterday by the super profits that have been generated out of BHP Billiton, and the week before out of Rio Tinto. We are waiting to see the oil and gas sectors' profits. We now see commodity prices for iron ore in excess of \$150 a tonne. There are various reports out there—I have been researching these—such as the Goldman Sachs report of November last year, as reported in *The Australian Financial Review*, that identified the potential for iron ore to increase to \$250 a tonne. There is a saying in the Pilbara that a tonne not shipped now is a tonne you will never get back, because of the price. They are going flat out to get their product to market—our product, our resources and our children's children's resources. We cannot look our future generations in the eye and say that we have done them justice when we are seeing workshop closures in the Kwinana strip and we are seeing the outsourcing of offshore services left, right and centre.

At some point the party will be over. That same Goldman Sachs report stated, as other economic analysing houses have reported, that once it reaches its peak—it is said that that will be as early as three to five years from now—it will come back, at what pace they cannot say, to its historical mean of around \$70 to \$90 a tonne. It will therefore go back to the way it was. Again, a tonne not dug now is a tonne that we will never get back at those prices. The reality is that we need to make this one-time-use resource in this one-time window to the best benefit of Western Australia so that when the party is over or when the music stops, we will know what the residual effect will be to this state and its future generations and what the sustainable future will be for Australia and beyond Western Australia. That is because this entire country is riding on the back of Western Australia at the moment.

Let us turn our heads to the problem that several large manufacturing houses have cut their apprenticeships and their workload. I have toured those places and have talked with the owners at length—as I note the Premier did last week, I think it was. Their concern is not the fact that their workshops are empty; it is the fact that their forward order books are empty. When we go beyond that and delve into it, the critical issue is that the number of tenders they can get access into is in decline. It is a significant issue; the Premier himself has identified it and I have yet to see any concrete action, other than just words.

Since 2005 fabrication work undertaken by the sector has not increased at all. Some key facts are really important to understanding the size of the problem. Twenty million hours of steel fabrication work has been taken offshore within the space of two years. That is the equivalent of 2.2 million working days, or 444 000 working weeks, or more than 8 500 working years for a skilled metal fabricator. Those figures are from evidence presented to the National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce.

During 2009–10 the Australian Steel Institute estimated that only eight per cent of the required fabrication work for the resources industry was undertaken in Western Australia. This is the exact converse of the volume of domestically retained fabrication work at the commencement of the resource-driven economic boom, when Western Australia retained 92 per cent—eight per cent versus 92 per cent—of the available fabrication work. Again, that was evidence given to the National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce. Analysis further conducted by the Australian Steel Institute determined that for every 1 000 tonnes of steel fabrication manufactured in Australia, 60 jobs are created and almost \$2 million in government tax revenue is generated. Using this multiplier on projects such as Gorgon, which may require up to 250 000 tonnes of steel, up to 1 500 skilled jobs have been lost offshore from this one project alone.

Where do we see it? We see it when we go to the Pacific Industrial Company and look at the time clocks where employees clock on—we see row after row of empty spaces for cards. That company started 50 apprentices a

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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year; it now starts 10. We could play three games of indoor cricket in one of the company's sheds—it is that empty—and a healthy game of footy outside in the car park, because it is empty. A traditional week for a steel fabricator is not 38 hours or 40 hours; they typically do 55 hours a week. Why? It is because that is the way that industry is set up. The fabricators who do that enjoy the overtime that they get from a longer day and they also sometimes work on Saturday. They ran afternoon shifts in the last boom. They are not running afternoon shifts now, they are not working on Saturday, they are not employing apprentices and they are not getting extra hours. Those fabricators, boilermakers, welders et cetera, and everybody else along the food chain, are actually working fewer than 38 hours in some cases. We are therefore getting underemployment and underutilisation of the capability.

If that is the problem, what is the effect? The effect is substantial and deep. What we have, as I said before, is unemployment and underemployment. The unemployment rates—as we heard in this chamber in the last couple of days and as I have certainly been banging on about for the last few months—of 10 per cent in Kwinana and seven per cent in Rockingham are the highest. There is a significant difference between statewide unemployment statistics and unemployment statistics in areas of Perth that are situated alongside traditional manufacturing sectors. It is having an immediate effect on those fabrication houses and their neighbourhoods. We are therefore saying that not only are local jobs at risk, but also local jobs for local people are at risk. Those people in Rockingham, Kwinana, Medina and Cockburn are all suffering. They are all not getting access to this boom, and it is creating a two-tier economy in our own state. We used to hear about that nationally, but there is a two-tier economy right here in Western Australia. There are those who are enjoying the benefits of the boom and those who are literally watching it go past their front door, along to the dock and overseas.

Of course that really affects the principal point of my entire support for this amendment and my objection to the way this government has conducted itself in relation to local jobs and skilled work; that is, it affects our kids. Future generations will not have the opportunity to engage in and have a meaningful, skilled life. We know that because the youth unemployment figures for teenagers in the south west metropolitan area, which covers that entire area, is approximately 25 per cent.

But there is more to it. As always, there are second and third-order effects along the chain in the number of engineers engaged and the number of university places available for those engineers to support that industry. For every \$1 million worth of retained manufacturing business, a further \$985 000 worth of value-added goods is generated. Metal products are the highest value-added product in the manufacturing sector—the highest in this state. Tax revenue of \$333 900 is generated for every \$1 million of retained manufacturing business; \$95 000 worth of welfare benefits is saved; 10 full-time jobs are created or saved; and important skill sets required for ongoing industry development are retained. We cannot have an industry without making an investment in its future and without looking at the opportunity, which is this one-time-use resource in this one-time-window boom that we are going into, and without looking at the context of its intergenerational effect.

The second effect it has is in training, and apprentices directly, as I said. It is important, as the Premier in his statement identified a 47 per cent increase in traineeships and apprenticeships. His base point is particularly interesting to note. But if he would care to have a more considered and realistic view of it and looked at the statistics from September 2008, he would see that the total number of apprentices in training was 23 000. By July last year, 2010, the total number of apprentices in training was 19 380. That is a total decrease of 3 620. That means 3 620 apprentices did not start. I might drill down into that for a second. Once apprentices leave, or are put off and can no longer be sponsored or are not in a group scheme, they end up getting other lesser-skilled jobs that need less training, and they are then lost to the industry. That is because once they start down the life journey of earning money and use that money in a consumer and materialistic approach to living their lives, they become economic conscripts to their own wages, to low skills, to a low future and to a horrible cycle of interdependence on state welfare and national welfare.

Manufacturing is a key piece of this state's strategic industrial plan. Manufacturing is one of the most resilient industries, if it is cared for, and it pays back in spades. I have already identified what it provides for \$1 million worth of fabrication in this state. The manufacturing industry has been a stronger and more consistently productive industry than the mining industry since 1990—believe it or not—particularly in the decade since 2000. That statement is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The ABS also notes that Australia's annual production growth has reduced by almost 30 per cent since 2001, led by the productivity losses in the mining industry, simply because it is a boom–bust industry. The mining industry is in a big boom that will be long and strong for a number of years. We need to know what this government will do to provide the social, commercial and legislative leadership to ensure that that industry sector and the wider business community of Western Australia have the opportunity to access it in a meaningful way. Businesses within the manufacturing industry are the most likely to introduce innovation, with more than 40 per cent in 2009 investing time and cost in innovating their production methods. The Premier himself, I noted, stood and marvelled at the number of

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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innovations and the amount of capital investment that is undertaken by the fabrication industry. He said so in this place, and I align myself with that commentary. I have been to see the people involved in that industry. They are not Luddites; they are not stuck in the past. They are not the sort of people who do not understand how to have an efficient process. They are investing, and were investing heavily—probably not so much now—in their own future by building new capacity into their plant equipment, including things such as automation, such as robots and other computer-controlled technologies.

Noting the time, I will give the house one example of the effect of this. What is going to be the effect? One of the manufacturing houses I saw is manufacturing a big bucket reclaimer for a major iron ore company. Members might have seen the big wheels that reclaim the stockpiles for loading onto the ships. That company is manufacturing one of six bucket reclaimers; the other five are being made in Korea. That in itself is a problem. Those bucket reclaimers also have maintenance needs; they need through-life support. The boom is about not only construction but also through-life support for the actual infrastructure that these resource companies need to maintain. These bucket reclaimers have reached their end of life; they have been retired or are coming up for retirement and will be replaced. The resource companies outsourced five overseas and one is being made in Western Australia. Why is that important? What is one of those little insights that tell us that this will have a deep and lasting effect and will bring down the threshold of capability for this industry? There is a particular collar that holds one part of the big swing arm over. This collar is a big piece of steel that is about 200 millimetres thick. There is only one engineering firm in this state, called Park Engineers, that can bore the holes and cut the piece of steel; none of the other fabricating houses can actually do that. What do we think will happen when that business no longer has enough in its forward order book to sustain employment? If that business goes out the back door, none of the other fabricating houses will be able to produce at that thickness of steel—200 millimetres—and bore it to the accuracy needed for these highly technical machines. Either they will have to invest in the same machinery, which will not be effective, or we will reduce again the threshold of capability under which this industry can participate.

What we have seen in this current boom that we did not see in the last boom is the advent of modular construction. Modular construction did not exist when the North West Shelf train 4 was built; it was constructed by hand onsite—stick welding, as they call it. Every other train since then has been built modularly and the industry is looking at modular construction for a range of things. Our industry will not be able to compete in that sphere if this government is not willing to undertake what is needed to help that industry reorientate itself, understand the future economic and global circumstances in which it competes, and assist it. This Premier is an absolute free-marketeer. He said that he will not intervene. He will not undertake any intervention to ensure the future of our children and our children's children. He will not make an investment in intergenerational sustainable employment for skilled people in this state. The Premier has proven it and the best that he can do to intervene is to simply have a cup of tea with a few of the bigger houses. He brings them in and says, "Lads, have a cup of tea with us. I'm taking a bit of heat up the hill here. Can you throw us a few bones so we fill up those workshops? It won't take you long." It is true that it will not; the capability of this industry is actually not very big by global standards so it is not that hard for the Premier to enshrine in some way the capability of our future generations to get access to and a fair shake of this one-time, one-use resource and this one-time, one-use window of time.

This amendment to the Premier's statement should stand. This amendment condemns this government for inaction. This government is meant to be about action; it talks a good fight, but it cannot lead.

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition)** [10.45 am]: I support this amendment to the question. The sort of political strategy that the Premier has adopted is pretty clear. He has tried to get himself personally identified with big projects. He has tried to diminish the economic record of his predecessors. There are three minor problems with that and one big problem.

The first minor problem is that the size of the Western Australian economy doubled during Labor's seven and a half years of power. Therefore, it is not the case that someone such as the Premier is needed to get the state moving. The Premier inherited a state in the best economic and financial condition that any Premier has inherited government. The second minor problem is that the projects he seeks to identify himself with have, in one particular case at least, been substantially delivered by his predecessors. He sought to identify himself with the Gorgon project. However, all the substantial work on that project was done by Labor, against objections from the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, about things such as the location of the project, which, had those objections been listened to, would have scuppered the potential of that project. The third minor issue that I think needs to be noted is that the Premier has identified himself with the Browse and Oakajee projects and, quite frankly, there are question marks over his progress to date on both those projects.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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Leaving aside those three less substantial issues, the biggest issue is this: big projects are not enough on their own; getting the projects is only part of the job. We are no longer in the mid-1990s when resources were spoken about as the old economy, when investment in Western Australia was faltering and when the economy, on the watch of the now Premier as the then Minister for Resources Development, was actually getting smaller. We are not in that circumstance. We are in a circumstance whereby there is huge global demand for commodities. We are in a circumstance in which, as an oil and gas person said to me, “For the next decade Western Australia will be the hottest investment location on the globe.” We are in a circumstance in which people want to invest in Western Australia, want to consume our commodity exports and are prepared to pay higher prices for those commodity exports. Therefore, quite frankly, we do not have to be quite as humble as we were in 1997 and 1998. We have more capacity to stand up for the public interest and to stand up for the interests of our state. Therefore, getting the projects is only part of the job and the Premier is not doing his full job unless he also acts to ensure that every Western Australian gets a fair share of this prosperity. The Premier is not doing his job unless he acts to ensure that there are sustainable future benefits from this growth. Talk to every Western Australian: there is an anxiety in Western Australia about what happens next and what we will get out of this growth. There is a thirst amongst Western Australians for us to have a broader, more diversified, sustainable economy for the future. It is important that the government recognises that feeling in our community. It is important that the government starts to act, and that the Premier takes up the full responsibilities of his position as Minister for State Development. Not only do we have more capacity to stand up for the public interest and for the broadening, diversification and sustainability of our economy and inclusion in the way it operates, but also we have more need to do those things right now. Why do we have more need? It is because the world is changing. Just as there is increased demand for our resources, there is now increased competition for the resources development work. There is now much fiercer competition for the work that we used to expect—that perhaps we used to take for granted—would flow from our resources projects. There is a new set of circumstances, a new opportunity to stand up for the public interest of the state, and a new requirement in the face of fiercer competition for the government to show leadership.

The Premier has been long on excuses but short on action. We saw that during question time on Tuesday. We got an academic analysis of some of the things that are happening that make it more difficult for the fabrication work from resources projects to flow to Western Australian companies. Fine. It was an interesting answer. But what was completely lacking was any government response based on that analysis. We need not only determination and commitment on this issue, but also a level of sophistication. We need a decent industry policy in this state that outlines the state of the industry and the challenges, and how the government is going to work with business and unions to overcome those challenges to make sure that Western Australians get their fair share of the resources prosperity which this state is experiencing and which it will continue to experience for some significant time into the future. It is important that we identify every cause of our current circumstances, but it is even more important to take action—to do something. Where is industry policy in Western Australia? The government is completely silent on industry policy. The government apparently has contempt and disdain for this very important part of its governmental responsibilities. Where is the government on the fabrication industry? Where is the government on the engineering and design sectors? Where is the government on information technology? Where is the government on biotechnology? Where is the government on the defence industries? We hear nothing from the government on these important sectors of our economy. All we hear from the government is about the resources sector and big projects. I am a strong supporter of our resources sector. I personally played my part in government, insofar as I could, on the question of big projects. There is no difference between the government and the opposition in our support for the resources sector or our desire to see the projects come to Western Australia. Where there is a big difference is that we are prepared to do all of the job; we are prepared to take action to ensure that the benefits from the resources projects flow to Western Australia and, beyond that, we are prepared to think and talk about and propose solutions for other sectors of the economy that also need to progress.

The member for Willagee was right: while the eastern states like to think of there being a two-speed economy in this country, with Western Australia being in the fast lane and therefore not especially deserving of consideration, the fact is that there is a two-speed economy here in Western Australia. A lot of people are benefiting from the mining and resources boom. Some people will set themselves up for life as a result of the income they make from working very hard in very difficult and uncomfortable locations using skills on which we should place more value—that is, the skills of tradespeople. Good luck to those people. I want those people to succeed and prosper. We, as a political party and in government, will do everything we can to ensure that they get the best opportunity to prosper. But there are other people and industries that also need to prosper. Where will all our young people work in the future if we do not pay attention to the needs of these other industries? My criticism of the government is that it is not acting to ensure that benefits flow to the full extent possible from our magnificent resources development.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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My second criticism of the government is that it is not acting to build the future of Western Australia. What are some of the things that the government could do? There is an interesting campaign in the community. It is a long time since we have seen a campaign that brings together business and the union movement—that brings together blue-collar and white-collar unions. Does it not tell us something when everyone comes together to run this sort of campaign? I know that Western Australia benefits very much from free trade, so I am not inclined to take a protectionist approach. I have looked closely at what this alliance is requesting of the government. Quite frankly, what they have put forward is a very sensible approach. They are saying that this is an issue of great public concern for which there should be more accountability and transparency. They are calling for some public debate, public scrutiny and parliamentary scrutiny of what we are getting from these resources projects, and that this should be done through a piece of legislation that provides for those mechanisms. What is wrong with that? What is frightening about that? That does not seem to me to be an unreasonable demand. It seems to me to be very, very reasonable given the level of unemployment in the relevant trades and areas that service these businesses, and given what the businesses are reporting. The resources sector in this state is absolutely thriving and prospering, yet sectors that would normally expect to prosper in partnership with the resources sector are missing out. They are asking us, as members of Parliament, to give some structured scrutiny and attention to this issue and to ensure that there is some accountability. That is a very, very modest request. I support it, as do my colleagues on this side. We will ensure that members of the government are forced to debate this issue over and again until the Premier gets away from his disdain and contempt for industry policy and is forced to roll up his sleeves and take some action. There are things that the government could do. Where is the summit of businesses, unions and resources sector proponents convened by the government? Where is the advisory council that might look at long-term issues in this area? Where is the identification of missing pieces of technology or investment? Where is the analysis of whether we need to form more alliances between different firms to get the scale needed to gain this work? Where is the requirement on the resources companies to do the design and engineering work in a way that facilitates Western Australian participation? There are all sorts of things the government could do without contravening neo-Liberal free-market economics. There are all sorts of things the government could do that would be perfectly appropriate for a state government that cared about its jurisdiction, its people and the future of this state. There are perfectly appropriate things for such a government to do, but it does not appear as though we have a government like that.

One of the disadvantages and particularly disturbing features of our current situation is the impact on training. We are not training young people in sufficient numbers for the future boom. There will be big consequences for this state as we face an increasing skills shortage. What we are getting from the Minister for Training and Workforce Development is sly spin rather than an acknowledgment of the issue and concentrated, coordinated action to overcome it.

I went through some of the training figures yesterday. It is again worth noting, as the member for Willagee noted, that there has been a decline in the number of apprentices in training during the last two years of the Barnett government. We have 3 620 fewer apprentices in training than we had in 2008. It seems to me that the situation is not improving. In 2010, 7 924 apprentices began training compared with 8 779 apprentices in 2008. Therefore, we had 855 fewer apprentices begin training in 2010 than we had in 2008. It was even worse for traineeships—2 831 fewer people commenced training in 2010 than in 2008. The Minister for Training and Workforce Development is being let off the hook. This is one of the most significant underlying economic issues for the future of the state, and he is skating by with sly statements, misleading statistics and spin. It is time for this minister to face the fierce blowtorch of accountability. We need to do that in the interests of the state, of small and medium businesses, of non-government organisations, of the public sector and of the resources sector itself, all of which will be negatively impacted by labour shortages and skills shortages if this minister does not vigorously step up to the mark with some strong urgency to his approach. We have not seen that so far, just as we have not seen the Premier come to grips with this issue.

Members opposite will worry about things like interfering in contracts, interfering in the operation of markets, protectionism.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Sovereign risk.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** And sovereign risk. Those are the straw men that might be raised in objection to the opposition's approach. I ask members of the government to put that aside and to think about the issues affecting our people, to think about the future of this state and to take account of exactly what the unions, both white and blue collar, and the relevant businesses are asking for. They are asking for more debate, more scrutiny and more accountability. They are asking for government leadership. It is not wrong for the government to take an interest in industry policy. Industry policy is something that all governments should take an interest in. This is not only about the businesses and the unions that are currently complaining. What is happening here is only the most glaring example of a government failure across industry policy.

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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I repeat: Where is the government's policy on the fabrication industry? Where is the government's policy on the engineering and design sector? Where is the government's policy on information and technology? Where is the government's policy on biotechnology? Where is the government's policy on defence industry operations in Western Australia? The tragedy of it is that one of the weakest government ministers, a failed government minister, Simon O'Brien, is the minister who has been given responsibility for the commerce portfolio and, therefore, industry policy, which falls under that portfolio. If you want nothing done, if you want no clarity of thought, Simon O'Brien is your man. The Premier had a chance in his cabinet reshuffle to put someone competent and committed in that portfolio, and what he did was take the minister he nearly sacked, and should have sacked—a failed, incompetent transport minister—and say, "We'll give him commerce; he'll do." That is a declaration of the Premier's lack of interest in this very important set of issues.

Quite frankly, the public of Western Australia deserves more. The future of our state deserves more consideration than it is getting from this disdainful and contemptuous Premier.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [11.04 am]: I was waiting for a response from anybody on the government side on this critical issue. I would like it to be recorded that no minister from the government is in the house at the moment to respond to this issue. There is not even a parliamentary secretary in the house who may respond to this issue. This is probably one of the most critical issues facing Western Australia. It is about the destruction of our capability to engineer, design, fabricate and construct our own materials and our own infrastructure for the extraction of resources. It is about the killing off of that industry. Murray Cowper, the parliamentary secretary, has just wandered into the house. Finished his cup of tea, has he? Is he nice and relaxed? He has probably wandered in to say a few words after I have finished. That is how much interest this government has in this critical issue.

Picking up on what the Leader of the Opposition highlighted about how to resolve this crisis facing Western Australian industry, it is by way of legislation. We have tried everything in Western Australia to get more work for our fabricators, engineers and designers to take some control over our own ability to extract resources. We have trained people. We have funded companies. As has been said numerous times in this house, other companies have invested tens of millions of dollars in their own capability to take on major resource projects. The state government and the federal government have invested \$300 million into the Australian Marine Complex to be able to compete with those companies in South and North Asia, which are basically taking the work away from Western Australia. The state government and the federal government have invested in that infrastructure to enable and encourage our companies to compete. None of it has been successful to date. Over the last two years of the Liberal–National government, we have gone into freefall in this area. Between 2003 and 2008 during the last boom when a Labor government was in place, we had an industry policy in place, and the workshops of Kwinana, Welshpool and Bassendean were full. The companies knew they had an active, interventionist government that would take action against them unless that work was done in Western Australia. They have been given a clear indication now from the Liberal–National government that nothing will be done. It is, "No problems. Take all your work to China, take it all to Thailand, take it all into Indonesia." It is a nod and a wink, because this government will do nothing.

Imagine for a minute that China had the same amount of resources that we are lucky to have here in Western Australia. If China had those sorts of resources, would it allow companies such as Rio Tinto, BHP or Xstrata to wander into its country, develop those resources and have all the infrastructure and equipment for that resource extraction engineered, designed and fabricated somewhere else? Can members imagine the Chinese government allowing that to happen? Of course it would not. What about the home of the free market, the United States? The United States has major resources—everything from gypsum to copper; Kennecott and others like Utah Mining are massive mining companies. Do members think the state and federal governments in the United States would allow Utah mining and Kennecott to say, "No problems. We will have all this equipment fabricated in a car park in Thailand or in Indonesia or China"? Do members think that any administration in the United States, whether Republican or Democrat, and any state government in the United States, would allow that to happen? Of course they would not.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** What is the population in the United States?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** It is not a question of population. That shows us why the member for Murray–Wellington should not even be responding on this issue. It is about capability. It is about capacity. The member does not know what he is talking about. I know what we are going to be faced with when he does speak—just a buffoon's response.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The opposition spokesperson has left the chamber. Was it something I said?

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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I ask members to think about this. Whether members are on the side of the Liberal–National government, or on our side, I ask them to consider the proposition that I have put. Whether we take communist China or the free market of the United States, would they let the same thing happen to their industries as is happening to our industries? Of course they would not. Would they intervene and put legislation in place to prevent that from happening? Of course they would. They have already done that. Therefore, the proposition that has been put by the Leader of the Opposition is not without precedent. We need to say: enough is enough. We now have to direct these companies to be good corporate citizens. They will not do it by encouragement. They will not do it by incentives. The only way they will manufacture, design and engineer in the country from which they are taking the resources is if the government directs them to do so. That will have to be by way of legislation.

I assure the government that this issue will not go away. We will go after the state government for its inaction on this issue from now until this issue is resolved. We will do that by raising it in this Parliament every single week, until legislation on this issue is passed. It is disgraceful that the Western Australian engineering and design industry, and all the other industries that are related to it, are in this situation.

The new Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Small Business, the member for Scarborough, is in the house at the moment. I would like to hear the parliamentary secretary say a few words on this issue. The small businesses on the Kwinana strip and in Welshpool are suffering terribly because of the flow-on effects of what is happening to the major industries in this state. I would like to hear what the parliamentary secretary is going to do about that. The member for Scarborough has taken on the mantle of parliamentary secretary. She should stand and say what she is going to do for small businesses in Western Australia, because they will go down the gurgler, the same as the larger manufacturers and the designers and the engineers, because they rely on them. They will all go down the gurgler together.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Scarborough!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Just to wrap up, the Premier is very proud of the fact, as he has said in this chamber on a number of occasions, that he is overseeing an investment in the resources sector of \$138 billion worth of projects over the next 10 to 15 years; I believe that is the timescale for these projects. That is an unbelievable injection of money for any country, never mind a state of a country. It is a massive injection of money, particularly into those two industries of mining extraction, and oil and gas. This is an opportunity, not just for Western Australia but also for Australia, to change its entire capability and skill base for generations to come. The Gorgon project is 20 times bigger than the Snowy Mountains scheme ever was. The Snowy Mountains scheme changed the capability and skill base for New South Wales and Victoria. The Gorgon project is literally a once in a lifetime—a once in a 100 year—opportunity to grasp the benefits of that investment, and to change the nature of the economy in Western Australia from one of pillaging our resources to one of building industry and building a smart economy, with a wide and diverse skill base. That is the opportunity that we can grab if we want to. However, from what we have heard from the Premier over the past couple of days, that opportunity is going to slip completely through our fingers. We have asked the Premier to intervene directly in the market by way of legislation. We have asked him to create an industry policy. His only response has been, “I have met with 17 companies, and they have indicated that they may give us some work.”

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman:** Crumbs off the table!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Yes; as the member for Joondalup has said, it is crumbs off the table. If we get, out of \$138 billion worth of work, 10 000 tonnes of steel, it is not even a crumb!

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman:** And they want it done for the cheapest possible price.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The total cost of the Gorgon project is \$50 billion. There is 400 000 tonnes of steel in the Gorgon project. All of that went overseas. They did not give us anything. When they were going through their approvals processes, they promised the world. They promised that the Gorgon project would be a major change for Western Australia, and it would be boom times for our engineering and fabrication industries. However, now that they have their approvals, they are giving us nothing—absolutely nothing. The whole of their engineering and design work is being done overseas, and all their fabrication work is being done overseas—the whole 400 000 tonnes. That is the reason the Leader of the Opposition has stood in this place and said that we need to go further. We have to direct these companies to do the right thing by both Western Australia and Australia, by way of legislation that will force them to design, engineer, fabricate and construct in Western Australia.

I now wait with bated breath to hear the dulcet tones of the parliamentary secretary in response.

**MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington — Parliamentary Secretary)** [11.18 am]: Members opposite have raised some very valid points. In December last year, the government launched the Skilling WA program. That is



Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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a strategic plan for how this government will go forward and deal with the issues that confront this great state. We have been told by Monash University that there will be a requirement for some 239 000 additional workers in Western Australia in the next seven years. The population of Western Australia is about two million people. If we accept the notion that those 239 000 additional workers will bring with them wives and children, that is a significant number. It probably equates to an additional half a million people in this state. That throws up a great problem for the government in providing skilled workers. It applies across government and also to education. I am sure that the Minister for Education will be confronted by issues about how she will provide skills for that workforce. Policing will be impacted on, as will health, hospitals, roads and infrastructure. It will wash right across Western Australia.

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Joondalup!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** If the member wants to speak, he should get to his feet and speak when I sit down. I am not going to entertain his interjections.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Albany!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I have not read any notes.

We will require a significant way to draw 239 000 workers to Western Australia. We will need to train not only the local workforce, but also those people in the community who have been disadvantaged to get them up to speed. I have some great examples in my electorate. We are doing just that with disadvantaged Indigenous people at Fairbridge Village. I encourage members who are interested to have a look at what it is doing with traineeships and apprenticeships for Indigenous people and long-term unemployed people. It is a fantastic example of what can be done. I am extraordinarily proud of what is happening at Fairbridge. No-one can detract from the fantastic work it is doing. Recently, a company came across from Queensland. I informed it of what was happening there and it was very impressed with the way that Fairbridge, in concert with the state and federal governments, is dealing with this particular issue.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** We will also require an immigration program of skilled workers.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** For what jobs? Where are the jobs?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The jobs will be in Western Australia. There will be 239 000 additional jobs in the mining and oil resource sector.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Doing what? What are they going to be doing there?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I have a vested interest in this matter, because I have three teenage children. I am interested in their future. They will have to make a decision about what they will do in the future. We need to rethink what is more important—a university degree or an apprenticeship. One of my children has gone into an apprenticeship, which I am very pleased about, and another one will leave school at the end of this year and will hopefully go into an apprenticeship in the local community. There is a great example of foreign and capital investment in building new infrastructure in Pinjarra. It is a \$25 million investment.

**Mr P.C. Tinley:** It is a shed.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Has the member been there?

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Has the member been there?

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Answer the question. If the member wants to interject, he should interject with some sensibility, not just because he has a loud voice. I, too, have a loud voice, member!

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Willagee!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** With that investment, there will be 151 new jobs in that town, including some 30-odd apprentices. This company has a parent company that operates out of Kalgoorlie. It has a connection with the

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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Thyssen steel mills. It is putting in at that location a new training centre with capacity for 200 apprentices. I will take that to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development in the next few weeks to see whether partnerships can help to resolve the issue of finding 239 000 new workers for this state in the next seven years.

It concerns me that I have only just been given notice of this amendment. I was in my office doing some work, not drinking coffee as the member suggested. If members want to have a reasonable debate about this issue, that is fine, but it seems to be driven more by their union mates than anything else. They are just paying lip-service to their union mates by coming in here and banging on about something.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The whole-of-government plan is to provide a framework and strategy to build, extract and retain skilled workers by focusing on five strategic goals, including increasing participation in the workforce, particularly among underemployed and disengaged mature age workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other underrepresented groups. A classic example of that can be seen at Fairbridge, and I encourage members to come and look at it. It is a wonderful program. The other goals include supplementing the Western Australian workforce with skilled migrants to fill employment vacancies unable to be filled by the local workforce; attracting workers with the right skills to the Western Australian workforce and retaining them by offering them access to rewarding employment and a diverse and vibrant community and environment to live in; providing flexible, supportive and innovative education and training that enables people to develop and utilise the skills necessary for them to realise their potential and contribute to Western Australian prosperity; and planning and coordinating a strategic state government response to workforce development in Western Australia.

Skilling WA has been developed with input by and the cooperation of peak employer groups, industry bodies, a range of employers and government agencies. This will mean more training opportunities. Since its release, the state government has committed to investing \$24.6 million for almost 8 000 additional training places in 2011 to help Western Australians develop their skills. This builds on the 7 600 new training places funded in the 2010–11 state budget. We are working with employers to remove those barriers that currently stop people working. The state government has established the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre in Western Australia under the “Training together — working together” initiative to connect Aboriginal people with employees and to get the training and support required for Aboriginal people to obtain meaningful, long-term employment.

Although the first priority is training and preparing the people of Western Australia for the workforce, we all know that it is not sufficient, and the targeting of overseas migration will supplement our skilled labour needs. Therefore, the minister has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian government, paving the way for Western Australia to access greater priority for the processing of state-sponsored migrant nominations that will fill those skilled occupations in demand required by the state. This program will see 6 000 migrants receive state sponsorship this year, which represents 25 per cent of the national state-sponsored visa program. The state government will continue to work with industry, employers, training providers and the community to implement the range of initiatives outlined in “Skilling WA — A workforce development plan for Western Australia”. I have copies of the report in my office if the member would like one. In addition, in order to meet the expectations of industry and the community, a new governance framework has been developed for and in consultation with state training providers. The establishment of a framework is one of the strategic aims of positioning Western Australia for the future.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** A key strategy of Training WA is the development of a vibrant and diverse training market through increased competition for public funds with the training provider market. This includes measures such as providing state training providers with a greater level of independence so that they may compete effectively in an open training market with the aim of delivering innovative and dynamic training delivery solutions to all Western Australians.

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman:** They’re not going to have any workshops to train the people in; they’re all going to close down because there’s no work there!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I think the member for Joondalup wants to get to his feet, so I will not keep him waiting much longer. I will sit down and allow him to have his say, rather than snipe, as he always does, from the bunker.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Maybe he will put his head above the bunker and have a go at some time. Get a bit of ticker!

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The group has collaborated with the Department of Training and Workforce Development to provide a robust governance framework to ensure that the state training provider will be able to work with greater autonomy, have clearer accountability and have streamlined and transparent reporting relationships.

*Tabling of Paper*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The parliamentary secretary is reading from a document. If it is an official document, I ask him to table it.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I would be more than pleased to table this document for the benefit of the member for Cannington. In fact, these are notes taken from a speech given by the minister in the other place.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The document will be tabled upon completion.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Joondalup!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The working group ensured that the framework consolidates the use of existing systems and processes and minimised the need for the introduction of new processes. The framework recognises the diversity across 10 state training providers and, as such, has been designed to be flexible to meet this diversity. I will table that document for the benefit of the member for Cannington.

[See paper 3126.]

Several members interjected.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** It goes to the folly of the amendment that is before the house, because if members opposite were dinkum, they would get up and speak to the amendment themselves. I will sit down very shortly, but I make some observations. Yes, we are faced with a lot of challenges, not just in training, but right across the board. I understand that it is the opposition's responsibility to hold the government of the day responsible, and good on it; well done.

**Mr A.P. O'Gorman:** You're not responsible; your government is completely irresponsible.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I cannot believe that the member for Joondalup does not want to get on his feet; I cannot recall the last time he gave a speech.

We will be confronted with a range of issues, not only in training, skilling, providing apprenticeships and workforce training—it is acknowledged that there are a lot of challenges out there. However, this government is prepared to tackle them head-on and have a go at them. The economy is changing. We are trying to have a period of sustained growth; we are trying to encourage young people into this period. I have been saying to my own children and their friends that they are now in a period that no other generation in the history of this state has seen. They have greater opportunities than perhaps any other previous generation had. It is only a matter of them wishing to seize upon these opportunities and great things can occur. They might want to have a go and get out there and be skilled or they might want to go to university and get a formal degree. However, I think that an apprenticeship is probably more needed in our society today. It is my view that, in this day and age, a certified tradesman is probably more valuable than, perhaps, a university graduate. I am confident that there will be great opportunities for our young people. We are not going to be without a number of challenges. Yes, there are going to be some problems, but they are not going to be about simply providing skilled workforces; they are going to go right across the board. We will need to get people into this state, given that we have a population of merely two million people. One of the previous speakers asked whether this situation would be allowed in China or in the United States. Those countries probably have a greater capacity to provide the skills and have the industry already in place to provide that sort of infrastructure. We are talking about our workforce increasing by something like 20 per cent. Imagine that the workforce in China increased by that amount. The infrastructure requirements of that country would be huge. Because of what is happening in Western Australia and our small population, we will be faced with a number of challenges, but we are Australian can-do people with an Australian go-ahead attitude, and we are a go-ahead and can-do government.

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [11.34 am]: I want to make a very short contribution in support of the amendment that the Liberal–National government be condemned for its continuing failure to maximise skilled work opportunities and apprenticeships from the boom. My very first speech to Parliament focused largely on

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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the fact that Western Australia needs to broaden its economic base. I spent a lot of time, back in 2006, on that topic because in a very short period, about seven years, the size of the Western Australian economy had doubled. That is something that we can say, but if we think about the fundamental changes to the Western Australian economy in seven years, during which the economy doubled in size, and the chance that this will occur again over the next five years, we start to realise the sorts of repercussions that this is having in areas all over our state. The member for Cockburn eloquently outlined to the house the impact on the industrial strip in Kwinana of this economic growth. My electorate has a significant industrial area in Welshpool. Many of the businesses and fabricators in Welshpool are going through a similar situation to the one that is occurring in Kwinana; that is, because there is not a sufficient pipeline of work, apprentices are not being taken on. Many members here this morning have already outlined the fact that, since 2008, the number of people in apprenticeships has dropped by, I think, 3 620. That is an extraordinary figure. The parliamentary secretary made the point that we are a can-do country. Yes, we are. A key point that he outlined was the fact that our visa entry requirements have to be more aligned with the skills that we need. The problem is that bringing people into Western Australia does not solve the problem that we have in training our own people. That is the fundamental reason that the opposition has moved this motion today. What we are asking the government to do is not outrageous. Again, as the member for Cockburn outlined, the United States is a lot more aggressive about protecting its own employment and assets from foreign investment, for example, than Australia will ever be. If we talk about countries committed to the free market and protecting local content and investment in significant assets, Australia far outstrips the United States. The fact of the matter is, and the Premier outlined this in his Premier's Statement on Tuesday, sections of our economy are still weak. They are still weak because the confidence in future employment and future work in Western Australia is simply not there. The Premier outlined, I think, \$170 billion in projects over the next five years, which is why we will see the structure of the Western Australian economy change again. But rather than broadening, our economic base is narrowing further and further into oil and gas and resources. They have always been the backbone of the Western Australian economy. They are huge industries; no-one denies that. But the problem is that as soon as the demand for our resources and the energy that we sell to the world decreases, we will have lost the opportunity that we now have to ensure that our people, Western Australian people, are trained, skilled and moved into various industries. I am on the public record as having spoken about resource nations or subnations, such as Western Australia, using benefits from a resource-based economy for a future fund or whatever it may be called. Whether governments take up that option, the key reality is that training our own workforce and ensuring that our economy is broadened from simply the resource sector is the one thing that government can do to ensure that the benefits of that resource economy are maintained. The Premier said yesterday in question time, and I quote him approximately, "The opposition's solution is prescriptive and that is not the approach of this government." Heavens above! This is one of the most prescriptive Premiers the state has ever seen. All the opposition asks of the Premier—all I ask—is that he do what he has been doing anyway, and apply the same prescriptive attitude that he has for the traditional owners in the Kimberley to key international corporates here in Western Australia. That is all I ask. The Premier said on *4 Corners*, and we all saw it, "If those Aborigines up there want health and education, they can have their gas up!" All I ask is that the Premier adopt the same strong, aggressive attitude to international corporates who are used to playing this hard game with governments all over the world, including those of the United States, Canada and many other western countries that have managed to adopt very strong protection of local content, much stronger than the opposition is proposing. All I ask is that the Premier apply that same strong attitude that he takes the traditional owners in the Kimberley to international corporates that are mining our oil and digging up our iron ore. It is not something that is unreasonable and it is not something the Premier is reluctant to do. We have seen that he is able to do it.

I want to conclude with one other remark. The Premier was very proud, during the teeth of the global financial crisis, to have his \$100 million payroll tax rebate. Again, he missed the point with that in the same way he is missing the point with the amendment the opposition moved this morning. That payroll tax rebate had no impact whatsoever on job protection. The rebate came in months and months after the global financial crisis impacted on the businesses that were entitled to the payroll tax rebate. This is a problem for the Premier. He has attached himself to big projects and acts as a bully to those groups that are not so politically powerful; that is, those projects that are not leading to skills development and jobs for Western Australians.

The member for Murray-Wellington asked how we solve this problem. We align our visa requirements with the jobs we have; that is, bring people in. That does not train our people but simply brings skilled people in to fill that vacuum. The problem we will have five years from now, as the Premier said, when the heat starts to come off the economy, we will go back to the average growth levels of the past 20 or 30 years. A huge layer of Western Australians will simply miss out on training. As people go back to other countries or states from whence they came, there will be a huge layer of Western Australians without the skills that should have been developed during this time—that is now. They simply will not have the capacity to go off and set their own businesses up or train other Western Australians. People have moved offshore to chase employment. As the Leader of the

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
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Opposition referred to yesterday, 20 million employment hours have already been sent offshore. That is an extraordinary figure. I dare say we are probably too late, member for Cockburn. We missed the boat, when the government went to sleep during the global financial crisis. I dare say we have missed that boat. Between 2008 and now there are 3 620 fewer apprentices in apprenticeships. It will take time to turn that around. I am glad one of the member for Murray–Wellington’s kids has received an apprenticeship. That is a wonderful outcome.

**Mr M.J. Cowper** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I did not interject on the member!

The reality is unless we take this opportunity, an opportunity that is fast slipping out of our hands, we simply will not be able to get the people into training and therefore into jobs. In 10 to 20 years from now these are the senior people training our next apprentices in skills development. I am interested in those people, member for Murray–Wellington. The member’s kids are teenagers; mine are one and two years old. Unless we get more kids into apprentice training now, mine will miss out. That is not acceptable.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** The problem is at that location, about —

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is the member talking about Fairbridge?

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** No. They want to have a workforce of about 150. They want about 40 to 50 apprenticeships to go with that. The problem is they only employ about 70 or 80 at the moment because they cannot get tradesmen to be the masters of those apprentices to come to their factory. Perhaps our good friend the member for Cockburn could tell his friends down at Kwinana that they are seeking people for these jobs.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The member is exactly right; he has reinforced the problem I am raising—they cannot get the people to train the apprentices. These are the people we are worrying about now; we will need those people in 10 to 20 years from now. Bringing people in from other parts of the world fills a vacuum, but when they leave, all the people without skills and training remain in Western Australia. That is the reality. As I said earlier in my statement, I ask the Premier to adopt, on behalf of Western Australians, the same attitude that he takes to the traditional owners in the Kimberley to international corporations who are very comfortable in dealing with aggressive, nation-focused governments all over the world—not China, but the United States and Canada, who have much more aggressive local employment content and local investment policies than the Australian government will ever have.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (22)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. McGowan	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms A.S. Carles	Mr M.P. Murray	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr A.P. O’Gorman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	Mr D.A. Templeman ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley	
Mr F.M. Logan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr A.J. Waddell	

Noes (26)

Mr P. Abetz	Dr E. Constable	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr F.A. Alban	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr P.T. Miles	Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr J.E. McGrath ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan	
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr C.C. Porter	

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Pairs

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr B.J. Grylls
Mrs C.A. Martin	Dr K.D. Hames
Mr T.G. Stephens	Mr J.J.M. Bowler
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mr V.A. Catania

Amendment thus negatived.

*Consideration Resumed*

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [11.49 am]: I would like to reply to the Premier's Statement. It was very interesting to hear the Premier stand in Parliament and talk about new things happening in Western Australia. I must admit the Premier made an apology for the gas and water bills, but I never heard anything about the poor pensioners in my electorate. I received a letter from a pensioner in my electorate which states —

... I am extremely concerned over all these Utility price rises and every time there is a rise in these chargers, as a pensioner one has to work around it to meet the extra cost and by doing so one normally has to go without a affordable luxury once in awhile to meet the extra cost and too many pensioners today are living well below the poverty line as it is and it would seem that the Government of the day have no compassion when it comes to pensioners, surely pensioners could have been exempt from these rises and those earning a good wage should have borne the extra cost if need be would have been a fairer solution if the increases had to be justified.

That letter is from Ernie Roberts from Albany, one of my constituents. The letter goes on a lot more saying that now he is going to use his wood burner, as he cannot afford gas. He is just one pensioner in my electorate. A lot of pensioners in my electorate are using the hardship utility grant scheme, but it is not only pensioners who are using it. I was at a function on Saturday night and was sitting next to a person who is probably on a really good wage. He and his wife both work. He said that they are struggling to pay their water rates, gas rates, land rates and electricity rates. What we have there is the working poor. He has three children, but he said that every time the bills come around, they have to rearrange things. The kids cannot go and play extra sport, and they cut down on all the luxuries. These are people in my electorate who have two fairly good jobs, but they consider themselves the working poor. They cannot go on holidays and they cannot take their kids to the movies—things that we all take for granted. Because of these rate rises, they are struggling.

HUGS is a very good scheme, but people have to be referred to a financial counsellor before they can enter the scheme. There is only one financial counsellor in Albany and that person is inundated with applications. People are therefore waiting between two and three months before they can consult the financial counsellor. This is something that they have to do so that they can pay their bills. A lot of people will not go to a financial counsellor, because they do not want to be seen walking in there because of the old Australian way: "She'll be right. I can pay my bills. I don't want to be the person seen going into a financial counsellor." Every husband and father wants to be able to look after their children, and they do not want to be the one to go there, so they are just going without and turning off their power in winter. Seniors in my electorate come to me and say that they cannot afford to use their gas fire in winter, and in summer they do not have air conditioning. Some people might say that they do not need air conditioning in Albany. It does get pretty hot down there sometimes. Seniors in their little units find it especially difficult to keep cool in summer and warm in winter.

It is all right for the Premier to come into this place and say, "We're going to build this big thing here and this big thing there", but he is forgetting about the little people. I think it is a cruel and heartless government, given all the costs that are increasing. Now we are being told that there is a recommendation for gas prices in Albany to increase by 46 per cent. If people come to Albany at night—I know it is not the greatest metropolis at night—there will be no lights on.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** You're getting a pipeline.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, a pipeline. That is a good thing. As the member for South Perth has raised the issue of the pipeline, I ask: has there been any business case done on the pipeline? No. We are going to have a gas pipeline. Is there a demand for it in Albany? No. It is great to have a gas pipeline but it is not going to make gas any cheaper for the people of Albany.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** You don't want it?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** All I am saying is that a business case should be done before the government puts \$300 million into a project.

**Mr F.A. Alban:** But you want it in your lifetime, surely!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I want a lot of things in my lifetime, but there are a lot more things I want.

**Mr F.A. Alban:** Gas is too dear! Electricity is too dear!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Excuse me, if you want to speak, little Frankie, you can get up and speak. I am speaking about my constituents.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am speaking about my constituents. I care about them. He does not. He is a Perth person. I am talking about country people.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Albany, please sit down. When you refer to another member in the house, please refer to them by their constituency and not by some nickname. Member for Swan Hills, can you let the member for Albany continue, please? Thank you.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Noted, Mr Deputy Speaker.

We were talking about the gas pipeline. It is not going to make gas in Albany any cheaper. I am all for it, if there is a business plan, and to see what will happen. When the government spends all that money and there is no business plan, to me it is a gimmick unless the Premier can come back and say, “We’ve been asked questions in Parliament about the business plan. There’s no business plan. The \$300 million in funding is available only if private enterprise comes in.” When we were in government, we went to Alinta to see whether the pipeline was viable. Alinta said, “No. The government is going to have to subsidise it.” It will be a good thing, therefore, if the government comes up with a plan.

I want to talk now about the remarkable sense of community in Albany. Albany has suffered a lot of events with all these prices going up. We have suffered over the years. We had the wool stores close, we had the whaling station close and we had the spinning mills close. But we always survived. The people in Albany are really struggling at the moment.

Another issue is that the member for Vasse came to Albany and made a great announcement that Albany would get air services from Skywest for five years. I will be raising this issue later. However, I know that the whole community is against this announcement. The only bonus Albany people will get from it is the ability to fly to Perth through the member for Vasse’s electorate! That will put an extra hour onto the flight. People in Busselton can get to Perth in an hour and a half anyway on the freeway. But, now, people flying from Albany to Perth will have to stop in Busselton and have a cup of tea, as it will take two and a half hours to get to Perth.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** You’ll be seeing the best part of the state!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** We fly over the best part of the state when we leave Albany!

The issue is that when Qantas tendered for the contract, it was told that it had to also include Esperance. Flights from Esperance to Perth run at a loss. Albany is therefore being dictated to by the state government, which said that whoever takes the contract for Albany must pick up Esperance and must drop off to —

**Dr G.G. Jacobs:** Ravensthorpe!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Ravensthorpe—sorry, member for Eyre. Ravensthorpe is on the Esperance route anyway. Albany residents, therefore, have to pick up the loss there and go to Perth through Busselton.

Albany is a major regional city. There are huge projects coming up in Albany in the next 10 years. We will have the 2014 Anzac celebrations. We will have Grange Resources’ development project. Skywest provides no tourism opportunities on its planes. Its planes are mostly late, its schedules are all over the place and local businesspeople do not agree with them. There are a huge number of problems with Skywest in Albany, which I will be raising at a later date.

I have to say that one thing that has not changed in Albany is the sense of community. The community dynamism is driven by the countless number of people, both volunteers and paid professionals, who, through their determination, guts and sheer hard work, are constantly making improvements to the quality of life that we enjoy in Albany. The recent Australia Day celebrations were an opportunity for us as a community to recognise and pay tribute to many of those great people who are collectively our local heroes. I am talking about people such as Evelyn Savage, who was awarded the over-25 Citizen of the Year award for her many years of dedication to the St John Ambulance Western Australia service in Albany as an ambulance officer and first-aid training officer. This is not the first time Evelyn has been recognised in her incredible 37 years of service to the St John Ambulance association. In 2003 Evelyn was awarded the St John Ambulance Meritorious Award for assisting in a difficult and dangerous rescue at The Gap and Natural Bridge in Albany. She has also been a stalwart of the Albany amalgamated bingo club for over 25 years. And in that time she has helped to raise more than a quarter of a million dollars for medical equipment through the club.

The winner of the under-25 Citizen of the Year award was Lucy Sharpe, a member of the Albany Youth Advisory Council, who has taken on the issue of youth homelessness with a passion. Albany Girl Guides leader Geri Pegler accepted the Active Citizenship Award for a community group on behalf of the association in recognition of more than 90 years of service to our community. Also on Australia Day, one of our great community stalwarts, Laurie Carter, who has spent many a time in my office, was awarded the Medal of the

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Order of Australia—OAM. Laurie turned 84 years of age last Friday, but is still delivering Meals on Wheels, in many instances to people considerably younger than he is. Laurie co-founded Meals on Wheels in Albany in 1965, a time when some members of this house were but a twinkle in their parents' eyes. Laurie is one of the true local heroes of Albany.

Speaking of heroes, Jason Grocott of Albany had his courage recognised by Royal Life Saving WA with a gold star for bravery for saving a 62-year-old man from drowning at Middleton Beach. It is not only volunteers who deserve recognition, of course. Just because people are paid to do a job, it does not mean that their service to the community should go unrecognised. Mark Selby, a career paramedic with St John Ambulance in Albany was presented with a clasp of honour by Western Australian Governor Ken Michael in recognition of his 25 years of service to the organisation. Five long-serving police officers were recognised earlier this month when Albany police Superintendent Dene Leekong presented long-service clasps to Inspector Greg Crofts; Senior Constable Kevin Butler, an Eagles supporter; Senior Constable Paul Hancock-Coffey; Senior Constable Michael Fazio; and Denmark Officer in Charge Dave Dench.

At the other end of the age spectrum, 13-year-old Asha Healy from Albany is the only Western Australian appointed to the prestigious Scouts National Youth Council. Asha is the youngest person selected to the 25-member council and will serve a three-year term. I am sure that Asha's parents, Gary and Meredith, are very proud of their daughter's achievements, as they should be. Fourteen-year-old swimmer Jemma Pouwelsen will be the first female from Albany to compete at the national long-course swimming championships later this year. I have high hopes for her future in the pool. Another young sports star from Albany recognised recently is 15-year-old Beth Wimbush, who is the only Western Australian to be named in the female team of the championships following her stellar performance at the Cricket Australia under-15 female national championships in Sydney last year. Beth is an outstanding young sportswoman and has showed great skill in both soccer and cricket. I am sure that Beth has a great future ahead of her in sport and she is a great ambassador for the young people in Albany. Yet another 15-year-old who has done Albany proud is Ketisha Gill, who won a bronze medal for Australia at the Oceania Taekwondo Championships in New Caledonia last year. Late last year, Steven Moss, a 22-year-old Albany man was nominated for the 2010 The West Australian ANZ Sports Star of the Year Award in recognition of his outstanding abilities in waterskiing. I would not be surprised to see Steven represent Australia at the highest level in the not too distant future.

Of course, the people of Albany are known for more than just great community service and sporting prowess; we have some of the best and brightest in the academic and cultural spheres too. Three Albany students have joined the exclusive "99 Club" scoring an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank in the top one per cent of year 12 leavers. Robert Clark and George Knowlden from Great Southern Grammar scored 99.7 and 99.5 per cent respectively, and Dux of St Joseph's College, Brenton Atkinson, scored 99.45 per cent. I am sure all of them will excel in their future studies. Local musician Mike Hyder has been nominated in the Music Council of Australia's annual music in communities awards. Mike has a long history of performing, and teaching and mentoring young musicians in Albany. His nomination is thoroughly deserved.

I was honoured to be part of a very special ceremony recently that marked the 100th birthday of Kathleen Ebert. Kathleen is one of 15 Albany centenarians who have been honoured in the last 10 years with a tree planting ceremony conducted by the City of Albany. It was great to see so many of Kathleen's family at the event in Eyre Park, especially her great-grandchildren Shelby, Charlie and Cyrus who helped with the tree planting.

On a sadder note, I pay tribute to two very special people who suffered a great tragedy but who have worked tirelessly to ensure that no-one else suffers a similar fate in the future. In 2008, 17-year-old Kieran Watmore was admitted to Albany Regional Hospital suffering a bout of tonsillitis. Kieran was fit and healthy and no-one expected his condition to be life-threatening. Tragically, Kieran died in the early hours of the next morning apparently from asphyxiation that the coroner found to be linked to the administration of painkillers. Kieran's parents Jim and Helen were understandably devastated and shocked by Kieran's death. They spent countless hours trying to not only come to terms with their son's death, but also uncover why a seemingly minor medical condition could have such a tragic outcome. Jim and Helen spent many months pursuing answers from the WA Country Health Service. Although I gave them as much assistance as I could, it is to Jim and Helen's great credit that they fought and fought and fought to get the answers to why Kieran died. Many people would have been discouraged by the enormity of taking on a huge bureaucracy like the Western Australian health department, but Jim and Helen pursued the case doggedly until they finally got their answers.

Tragically, Kieran's death was entirely avoidable and was shown by the coroner to be most likely due to systemic deficiencies in policies and procedures relating to the monitoring of oxygen saturation levels, analgesic administration and communication with on-call doctors. Following the inquest into Kieran's death, the coroner



Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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made a number of recommendations to improve and standardise various policies and procedures—something that will help to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am sure that the coroner's investigation was greatly assisted by Jim and Helen's persistence and determination in getting to the bottom of what happened to Kieran. It is to their credit that they never took their eyes off the ball in their long fight for answers. As Jim said to me many times, nothing he could do would bring his lovely boy back, but he felt that it was his duty to try to spare any other parents from going through the heartbreak that he and Helen had.

Some of the people and organisations that Jim and Helen continually wrote to through this long process were the director of health and disability services; the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Health; the manager for health and performance conduct; the Australian health commission; the case manager of the medical board WA; the director of the Office of Health Review; the acting director of professional government for nurses and midwives; the CEO and registrar of the medical board of WA and the State Coroner. People who are in difficulties such as this should not have to go through all these things; these things should be done for them. We hear all the time about the insensitivity of the health department. I do not blame the government for this; I blame the health department, which is so insensitive. I know that the Minister for Health stood and apologised, but nothing we can do can bring a child back. All the parents want is answers, and when people have to go through what Jim and Helen had to go through, reliving it all the time, it is an absolute shame. I just hope that some of those bureaucrats who have had these people into their offices and had to explain what they should have done in the first place will listen to what these people did. I have only admiration for Kieran's parents.

With the new parliamentary year underway, we find ourselves just over halfway through the first term of the Liberal–National government in Albany. In December last year Hon John Day, Minister for Culture and the Arts, officially opened the magnificent Princess Royal Theatre in Albany, more commonly known as the Albany entertainment centre. As members on both sides of the house know, this was a Gallop and Carpenter Labor government project that has been warmly embraced by the people of Albany. I personally thank Andrew Hammond, the previous CEO of the City of Albany, and Bruce Manning from the Great Southern Development Commission. From the speeches made on the day, people would have thought it was Hon John Day and the Mayor of Albany's project, both of whom had nothing to do with it. I remember the Mayor of Albany when he was only a councillor bringing people into my office to complain about it, yet he has the gall to get up in the opening ceremony and take credit for it. It was very interesting. He tried to rewrite history, but this history will be in *Hansard* forever. The Mayor of the City of Albany, Milton Evans, did nothing towards the entertainment centre; he was more or less a person who was trouble enough at the start. However, I must congratulate the people who did the opening ceremony. It was all local people in the opening ceremony and I know that the minister was very impressed by the performance. I know that a lot of people from overseas were there too, and it was tremendous.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I know; I was in charge of the invitations.

I congratulate the government on starting the new hospital in Albany. I think it is tremendous. I do not care who is in Parliament, government or whatever, it is just great to see the work starting on the new hospital. It is something that we desperately need in Albany, and I am glad to see it happening. The government has done, or not done, a number of other things in Albany. It has abolished the Waterwise rebate scheme, which had helped to save water and save money for consumers. It has renewed Skywest's monopoly, which I have already spoken about. It has not set any money aside for the ring-road. Then there is the gas pipeline. Who else but the Premier and the Minister for Regional Development would spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a gas pipeline for which not one customer has been identified and when no business case has been prepared? There is also the milk war. The Minister for Agriculture and Food will not protect dairy farmers from this gross market distortion, just like he will not protect organic and non-GM farmers from the genie he let out of the bottle. Is he the Minister for Agriculture and Food or is he content to be the minister for multinational big business?

It is important that flashing school speed zones be established. A young child escaped from the kindergarten at Albany Primary School yesterday and ran out on the road. Thank goodness no cars were passing at the time. Flashing school speed zones are really needed in an area like Middleton Beach Road, which has a tremendous amount of traffic. Albany Highway and Chester Pass Road also need flashing school speed zones.

Another issue concerning non-accountability involves the City of Albany. I have a lot of issues with the City of Albany. Before Christmas I spoke to the Premier about this, and he brought in Minister Castrilli. The Premier

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promised me that he would come back with an answer to my issues in two weeks. He did not get back to me so I sent him a letter. I did not get a reply to my letter, so I went to the local media. He would not talk to them, so I sent him another letter. He just does not care about us. I would understand if he said that he could not do anything, but he said that he would sit down with the minister and come up with an answer. The City of Albany has a new chief executive officer, Faileen James. I met her the other day and I am really impressed with her. I told her all the things I was concerned about and she said that she would look into them. The culture at the City of Albany is poisonous. Nobody has any confidence. All the good staff are leaving. This is the fourth CEO the city has had in probably five years. We had an interim CEO, John Bonker, who was brought in to look at things, but all he wanted to do was to keep a steady ship. I am very confident about Faileen James. She has come from the health department in Queensland. She is a very bright lady and one who listens. It is a shame that the Minister for Local Government and the Premier did not listen earlier.

I congratulate Grange Resources Ltd. I had the opportunity to look at its facility—a magnetite mine—in Tasmania. The company pipes everything in slush. It also has a mine at Wellstead, which I have also looked at. The Grange Resources mine near Albany will only be a bonus for our region. There are some issues with the dredging of the port that still need to be looked at. There is an issue with taking the water a bit further out, because some of the local fishermen and people who have been in the area for a long time have said that there could be a problem with it coming back to the beach. I am sure that is something we can work out. This development will create more than 600 jobs in Albany. This is another thing that relates to the decision on Skywest. None of this was taken into account. When the mine first starts, it will employ fly-in workers, because specialists will come from over east and overseas, but once that stage finishes there will be 600 jobs for local people. One issue is that there is not enough housing in Albany. I will be talking to the Minister for Housing about this to make sure that we have plenty of housing.

There has been plenty of development but there have been huge issues with the City of Albany. I am sure that those issues will be sorted out under the new CEO. Albany is trying to go ahead but it has been held back by the City of Albany and some of its practices. We have a very good chamber of commerce and the Great Southern Development Commission is very good. Royalties for regions has been good, but it should be spread a bit further than just over National Party areas. The concept of royalties for regions is very good. I am sure that when we go to the next election, we will have a policy that includes all people in the regions. That is very important.

I turn now to the Esplanade Hotel site. Albany has the most expensive sandpit in Australia. I am sure that if we went to a tourist area in Singapore and knocked down a hotel and left it like that for three years, we would be put in jail. Under the laws in Australia, a company can come in and knock down a building like this. The company that owns the site is now trying to sell it. I went to a meeting with The Middleton Beach Group the other night. The guy who is selling the site, John Garland, was there. At the moment, the site is supposed to be developed at 70 per cent tourism uses and 30 per cent residential. Now, the company wants it to be 30 per cent tourism and 70 per cent other development. This is what I think the company has been waiting for the whole time. A company does not come in and buy something for \$12 million and then just leave it as a sandpit. I am very disappointed. As I said, if we went to Singapore or Malaysia and did the same thing, we would have ankle straps put on us.

The upgrade of Centennial Oval was promised during the last election campaign. The Minister for Sport and Recreation has been working very hard on that, but I do not think the City of Albany has helped him too much.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** We transferred the money to do the new multipurpose courts. We used some of that money at the city's request.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I must congratulate the minister, as it was good to see a tall person such as him opening the basketball courts. It was great that he could come down. All reports I have got are that it is tremendous. I was at the opening with the minister. I am like him—I think that sport and recreation is great in our community. People talk about childhood obesity and things like that. We need to get kids out playing sport. We have a tremendous facility in Albany. I thank the minister for coming down and opening it.

Mental health is a huge issue. It is affecting our young Nyoongah boys. We have had problems with young Nyoongah boys committing assaults and things like that. I had a meeting with the parents and some of the elders. They are concerned because there are about nine or 10 young Nyoongah boys in Albany who have mental health problems from sniffing glue and using drugs and alcohol. It is a real problem because they are not being diagnosed. We have the Great Southern Aboriginal Health Service, but I do not think it is doing its job. I have been speaking to the minister about that. It is a huge issue. These young kids have no jobs. John Watson, an 80-year-old guy, was out the front of his house one day unloading his pot plants when this guy just put the boots into him. Everyone said that this guy is really bad. He is now in a mental health institution in Perth. Do we say

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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that this person is a really bad person or do we say that the government has let him down because he has got to the stage at which he cannot control himself? Mental health is a huge issue but especially so in regional areas, because people in regional areas do not have the facilities that people have in Perth.

I also congratulate the Great Southern Regional Football Development Squad, which is run by Darrell Panizza, the football operations manager. Everyone will know that Darrell was a great footballer in his time. We also have a Great Southern Youth Girls Squad coached by the Minister for Sport and Recreation's daughter. The minister is not here so I cannot get her first name. They went to Perth and played in the WA Youth Girls talent carnival and won D grade in their first year of competing. It is great to see young girls playing sport. I am the patron of the Sharks Football Club, which will play its first senior game this year. Alan Smallwood and all his group are doing a tremendous job in getting this team up. They were hoping to have a team in A grade last year but it got a little late; they could not get a coach until the last minute.

All in all, Albany is still fighting on. Things are still very tough in Albany. This is not helped by the increases in water rates and land rates. Land rates have gone up 9.5 per cent over the past three years and there has been nothing to show for it. I am disappointed with the government. It is a cold and heartless government. It takes money away from the people who really need it but does not take it away from the big mining companies and big businesses. The government should make it a lot easier for the normal person in the street.

**MS A.S. CARLES (Fremantle)** [12.20 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate and to respond to the Premier's Statement. On Tuesday, when the Premier made his statement, the Premier spoke a lot about our economy. Although it is easy to be seduced by the political allure of billion-dollar resource deals, there is a price to pay, socially and environmentally, in the pursuit of an ever-expanding economy. It can be immensely difficult to govern in an ecologically sustainable manner when our economic growth is beholden to industries that have a high degree of environmental impact, such as mining.

The Premier spoke about the benefits of the proposed onshore gas processing precinct at James Price Point. I believe that the environmental and social impacts of this proposal warrant significantly greater attention in this place. Although much is said about the golden economic opportunity that this gas hub will provide, scant attention has been paid to the dark side of this proposal. I wonder whether members are aware that the gas hub, if completed, will be the single highest point source of toxic air pollution in the entire country—not just the Kimberley, not just Western Australia, but throughout Australia. That is quite a legacy that we will be leaving for generations to come. When the projected emissions of benzene, which is a class A carcinogen, and volatile organic compounds, are compared with all the other compounds listed in the national pollution inventory of the federal government, it is clear that the gas hub will outstrip any other emitter of air toxics in this country. To put this in perspective, the amount of cancer-causing benzene emitted will be up to 40 times the amount released from the entire Kwinana industrial strip. The total amount of toluene, xylene and ethyl benzene—all dangerous pollutants—released will be up to five times the amount released from the entire Kwinana industrial strip. These estimates are based on calculations from environmental consultant David Munut, a scientist who has worked as a senior chemist in Western Australia.

But the environmental problems do not stop there. According to the Conservation Council of Western Australia, this project will increase Western Australia's total annual greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent, with the release of up to 39 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions into our atmosphere once in full production. The Conservation Council of Western Australia also cites the 2 700 shipping tanker movements a year and the impact this will have on humpback whales with young calves. We also need to consider the dredging works that will be needed to create this huge facility. Coral reefs will be blasted, and seagrass will be lost, destroying dugong habitat. We also need to consider the water needed for this plant, and what the impact will be on the groundwater of the aquifers of the Dampier Peninsula.

I visited Broome several months ago so that I could hear first hand, from the people who live there, how they feel about the gas hub. The Shire of Broome told me that it generally supports the gas hub; it can appreciate the economic benefits. However, many residents of Broome do not support it. They fear the environmental and social consequences for their town. They do not want Broome to be turned into another Port Hedland. They fear the cycle of boom and bust.

Last year, the government started the process of compulsory acquisition to remove any native title interests that may exist at James Price Point. This was an extraordinary tactic for the government to use to get its way. After all, Aboriginal people have waited for nearly 200 years after European settlement, after the 10-year Eddie Mabo case, to have their native title rights recognised by our legal system. These hard-won native title rights recognise the unique spiritual traditional link that Aboriginal people have to their country. This government's cavalier attempt to remove those rights shows a lack of respect for Aboriginal people. I support the call of the Kimberley Land Council for this draconian process to be abandoned immediately, as it is an insult to Aboriginal people. I

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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spoke to members of the KLC when I was in Broome, and they took me to tour the James Price Point site. I support, of course, their right to negotiate as traditional owners. Some of the traditional owners told me that it was with very heavy hearts that they have agreed to negotiate. They do so because they want the financial benefits for their people. It is very sad that they feel compelled to give up their country in return for a promise of prosperity that non-Indigenous people take for granted. I certainly understand their dilemma and support their call for an equal seat at the negotiating table, without the threat of compulsory acquisition hanging over them.

However, in this debate we need to be mindful that there are other Aboriginal people in the Kimberley who do not support the KLC line, and their views are valid, too. Some are scared to speak out for fear of retribution. There is no one-size-fits all to this. I am concerned that the gas proposal is tearing Aboriginal families apart. The tight deadlines, and the winner-takes-all mentality, is creating divisions and perceptions of winners and losers.

Joseph Roe, the Goolarabooloo law boss, has been referred to by the Premier this week as a “spoiler” element for not supporting the gas hub. The “spoiler” tag shows a lack of understanding about the Aboriginal meaning of “country”. I know it is hard for us to understand that for some Indigenous people, property is not for sale. That is because we live in a consumer culture in which everything is for sale if the price is right. For Mr Roe, the Kimberley has no price tag. His country has no price.

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Ms A.S. CARLES:** Despite the urban myths that are spread about Mr Roe—I have heard many of them, Premier—he is not a one-man band, and he has hundreds of people supporting him in the Kimberley. I met with Mr Roe, and during my extensive conversation with him he told me about his traditional link to the land. He told me about how he was the youngest male to have gone through the traditional law, and he was the only male to have gone through the traditional law twice—through the law of both the northern and the southern divisions. This marks him as a special law boss in the Kimberley. We should remember that Mr Roe made the original Goolarabooloo native title application in 1994, and that the Jabirr Jabirr people joined his claim in 1995 through the Kimberley Land Council. Back then, the two groups agreed to work cooperatively to have all native title right recognised. Of course the relationship has now since soured, with a difference of opinion over the gas hub.

The latest federal court decision handed down this week found that the claim group meeting of 3 August 2010, which removed Mr Roe as applicant, was held lawfully. It is important to note that the court did not make a determination on native title. It did not remove Mr Roe’s native title rights. The judge spoke about Mr Roe and said that he remains a member of the native title claim group and as such has a voice in its affairs. Mr Roe said to me when I went to Broome, when he was talking about his stand for his country, “It’s a big responsibility, a very, very big responsibility. I’m not doing it because I hate development. I’m doing it because I want to save my culture, my law; that’s the only thing we’ve got that belongs to us. That’s the thing I want to keep.” This morning I spoke to Mr Roe on the phone about the federal court decision, and this is what he said to me, “They can beat me on a piece of paper, but they will never stop me fighting for my country, my law and my culture.”

Another Aboriginal man I spoke to when I was in Broome is Neil McKenzie. He is a Jabirr Jabirr traditional owner who has split from the KLC over the gas hub proposal. The gas hub has split his family, with his father staying with the KLC. It is a very sad story. Neil McKenzie told me that the gas hub is too painful for them to talk about. They do not talk gas in their family. Like Joseph Roe, Neil McKenzie spoke of his connection to country, saying it was not for sale.

I share these stories today without passing judgement and without taking sides, but in the hope that members of Parliament will get an understanding of what is at stake here for Aboriginal people. Compulsory acquisition rubs salt in the wound. What is required is respectful negotiation and discussion, and it cannot be rushed.

Another aspect of the Western Australian environment that requires urgent attention is our native forests. We continue to plunder this precious asset by allowing unsustainable logging, to prop up an industry that is clearly failing. The state government has failed to recognise the value of our forests in the face of climate change, and their ability to sequester carbon. To the forestry minister, and, indeed, to all members, I recommend they read the 2008 Australian National University report “Green Carbon: The Role of Natural Forests in Carbon Storage” to understand the unique role that our native forests play in storing carbon. Until we understand this link, we will continue to undervalue our precious forests.

I turn now to my electorate of Fremantle. I have raised the issue of the export of lead carbonate through the port of Fremantle in this place before, and I will continue to do so until the government bans these shipments through Fremantle permanently. Magellan Metals is a company that has betrayed the trust of Western Australians. It is well known that it contaminated the town of Esperance with toxic lead carbonate due to its poor management and control of this poisonous product. We know that more than 9 000 birds fell from the sky, soil and water was contaminated, and children now have to live with the legacy of elevated lead levels. Banned from operating from

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
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Esperance, Magellan amazingly managed to convince the government to allow it to export lead through Fremantle. The tired old rhetoric of world's best practice has now been demonstrated to have failed in Fremantle. No amount of spin can salvage the fact that Magellan's powdered lead carbonate cannot be contained under the current shipping arrangements. This has been confirmed by the Department of Environment and Conservation in its technical report of 18 January 2011. Members may recall that the former Minister for Environment, Hon Donna Faragher, assured the people of Fremantle that the shipments of lead carbonate would be contained in double-lined bulka bags, which would be locked in shipping containers to prevent any release. Indeed, on 13 August 2009, she said that all transport of lead concentrate would cease should Magellan's lead be detected.

On 15 December 2010, this supposedly strict regime began to unravel when a representative of Magellan Metals walked into the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority and presented a page of monitoring data. At face value, the data indicated that Magellan's monitoring of the air inside the shipping containers revealed a number of breaches of the allowable lead levels that may have occurred for many months since the shipments commenced in September 2009. On 11 January 2011, Magellan Metals held a media conference and claimed that it had all been a big mistake and that the National Association of Testing Authorities accredited laboratory had made numerous errors in its air sampling analysis. Magellan also stated emphatically that the Department of Environment and Conservation testing revealed that no lead carbonate had been detected outside its shipping containers at Fremantle port. On the very same day, the Minister for Environment, Hon Bill Marmion, released a statement confirming that lead carbonate from Magellan had indeed been detected on the exterior surface of the shipping containers at Fremantle port, and this was confirmed by isotopic analysis. Whatever credibility Magellan may have had in the eyes of the government should have evaporated at that point. It misled the media, the residents of Fremantle and the citizens of Western Australia, and it should stand condemned.

For those members of this place who have not read the DEC report, I will briefly summarise the findings. The DEC tested the internal and external surfaces of the shipping containers, including the wooden floor and the surface of the bulka bags. Lead carbonate from Magellan was detected on all surfaces tested. The air vents of some of the containers were also tested for lead carbonate, and isotopic testing confirmed that Magellan's lead was detected in the vents, an obvious escape route for contamination. This raises the obvious question that has not been answered: if lead carbonate could still be detected on the exterior of containers in Fremantle after a 1 000 kilometre journey from Wiluna, how much lead carbonate blew off the containers along the way through the 22 suburbs of Perth? The DEC report also revealed that lead carbonate from Magellan Metals was confirmed as having been detected at Fremantle port on the hardstand surfaces, in soil near the containers and even in the puddles of rainwater on the ground.

Many other breaches have come to light since the exports through Fremantle commenced in September 2009. These include the failure to ensure that the air monitors inside the containers actually work; the failure to report breaches of airborne lead limits in the containers for up to 18 months; deliberately trying to disguise from inspectors overloaded bulka bags, which sharply increased the risk of bag rupture; contaminating bulka bags by storing them in the pure lead carbonate stockpile at Wiluna; failing to prevent bags with visible lead dust on their surfaces from leaving the mine site; failing to report the container air testing results to the government for a period of more than 15 months; the failure to implement a container wash-down facility at the mine site that could remove lead from container surfaces; and, finally, failing to prevent lead carbonate from contaminating the Fremantle port storage site.

After all this, we are now at the crossroads, and it is time for this government to decide what to do. The lead shipments have been halted temporarily, and I congratulate the Minister for Environment for taking that strong line. But I know that the government is under immense pressure from Magellan and mining lobbyists to lift the ban and resume exports. I call on this government to stand its ground, take a hard line on this and not cave in to the vested interests of Magellan. My constituents do not want to be part of this lead carbonate experiment any longer. We want a permanent ban on the export of powdered lead carbonate through Fremantle, and we want this put in place now. There are of course alternatives. The lead can be safely exported in lead blocks, as was in the original approval given in 2004, thereby value-adding to the product.

I look forward to working with the government this year on getting a wind farm at the port in Fremantle. The Fremantle port could become the first Australian port to be powered solely by renewable energy, thereby becoming a green port. Preliminary discussions have been held with all the stakeholders and there is overwhelming support for this. We need to invest in renewable energy now; there is plenty of it and that is where public funds should be directed. As community leaders, it is our role and responsibility to make this happen and to face our responsibilities as the threat of climate change looms large.

The time is ripe for a renaissance for Fremantle. Later this year, only one week after the Council of Australian Governments meeting, Fremantle will host the ISAF World Sailing Championships, which we understand will be bigger than the America's Cup. More than 1 400 sailors from 80 nations, as well as thousands of spectators,

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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are expected to visit Western Australia, and Fremantle in particular, for this two-week regatta. This is Fremantle's opportunity to showcase itself to the world, but Fremantle needs a boost. Cuts to the arts community have led to the loss of the Fremantle History Museum, the Fremantle Light and Sound Discovery Centre and the World of Energy museum. Port cities such as Liverpool have paved their way to success and revitalisation through a heavy emphasis on the arts and culture and, in particular, on museums. Our local Fremantle theatre companies struggle to find a secure base to rehearse, and performance space is tight—I have raised this issue in the house previously—despite the ever-increasing potential audiences from domestic and overseas tourists. I call on the state government to address this inequity and to restore funding for the arts sector in Fremantle.

I fear that our health services in Fremantle are also deteriorating. The Hospital General Practice Fremantle, which is one of the only bulk-billing practices left in the state, is under threat of closure.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms A.S. CARLES:** I have sought an injection of funds from the Minister for Health to keep this much-used practice open. Allowing it to close does not make sense, as patients from the emergency department are referred there; hence reducing pressure on the emergency department at Fremantle Hospital. I fear that when Fiona Stanley Hospital opens in 2014, my constituents will be placed at risk if we lose the emergency department at Fremantle Hospital, as is currently planned. This decision would mean that if someone had a heart attack in Fremantle, they may die because of the time taken to get to Fiona Stanley Hospital. I urge the government to rethink its policy on the Fremantle emergency department.

Traffic congestion and pollution in Fremantle are increasing, as more trucks laden with containers from the port fill our roads. I call on the state government to move quickly to get the High Street upgrade underway. The Fremantle traffic bridge is unsafe and needs urgent repair or replacement very soon before an accident takes place. Fremantle would be an ideal urban location to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of a pilot light rail network, with a willing community and supportive local government. I have developed a light rail plan for Fremantle, and I look forward to working with the state government on this.

Fremantle could be an ecologically sustainable city powered by renewable energy and a hub for cultural activity, acting as a magnet for tourism and history lovers and providing a showcase for urban renewal. I ask members to share my vision for a renaissance for Fremantle.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [12.38 pm]:** In my contribution to the Premier's Statement, I will follow on from the condolence motion about the natural disasters that have happened around Australia. I will focus particularly on Carnarvon, which also has been declared a natural disaster area. Although the government was very quick to promise money and say that it will assist those people, that assistance has been slow in the making. It took four weeks for these people to have their properties surveyed to see how much sand and topsoil need to be replaced in the area. There have been many arguments about the costings of that process. Along the way, there have been some individual personality problems. This is happening because the Minister for Agriculture and Food made one brief visit. He was up there very quickly; it was before the water went down. Since then, it has been left to the departments, which are making their own rules about the direction that this should take. Less than an hour ago, I received phone calls from Carnarvon to say that the topsoil program, although it is moving, is not satisfactory. Some of the topsoil that growers are getting costs \$5 a cubic metre delivered to their properties, when the real cost they have to pay is \$8. Where is the help that has been promised by the government on this issue? It is not appearing. If it is a natural disaster, or a national disaster, why is the minister not up there on a more frequent basis? It is disgraceful that these people have been left on their own, and some public servants are making their own decisions based on personalities.

I give an example that I was briefed on the other day. A manager from the department of ag, a Mr Mark Lewis, actually offered to take one of the growers outside because he did not agree with what he was saying. The grower told me that, yes, he did raise his voice, but he did not think he should have been offered to go outside. When the grower said, "I will go with you, and by the time I'm finished with you will know where you've been", he then made the threat of a restraining order. That is not how to do business with people who are under stress. Maybe we need some other people up there to give these people help and direction about the paperwork and the direction they should take. It should not be coming down to this sort of very low level, individual personality-type problem. I understand that Mr Mark Lewis see himself as a Liberal candidate—a Liberal-in-waiting—to go into Parliament. That makes it very difficult for other people who go up there in dealing with him without making a political point. It seems that is the way he is trying to do it. The word up there is that he is trying to make it work so that he looks good. That is not what it is about.

I tell members what should be happening here: the minister should be up there right now. They have had more storms and the cyclone that is coming down is heading for Carnarvon again. The latest flood level out the back of Carnarvon in the catchment area is 6.2 metres. The flood that we have just had was 7.1 metres. We could have

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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the same problem again. Hopefully, we will not, as these people are just starting to get on their feet, but another storm is coming.

We need the minister to go up there. The Premier was up there very quickly, and he should go up again and listen to the concerns people have at the moment. People are still living away from their homesteads because the money has not come through or the assessments have not been done. I ask the Premier to go up there, because we could be having the same disaster again this week. We need to follow on from what the Premier promised when he was up there because the minister is not capable of doing it. He has wiped his hands of it. I tried to speak with him personally, and he turned his back on me in this house and said, "It's a personality problem." It is bigger than that. I talked to the groups this morning. The chair of the independent group, who was very fair to both sides, said, "We need some help. We are thinking about coming to Perth. Do you think you can organise a meeting for us?" That should not be the case. It is a trip of only a couple of hours on a plane to get up there. Have a look and really get the grassroots back on the ground and get these people up and running again.

Think about what happened in the last couple of weeks. The first shoots of the growers' plants came up again, but then the locusts moved in. What help on the locust plague did growers get from the department? They got brochures! I am not quite sure whether the farmers were supposed to feed the brochures to the locusts or they were supposed to read them. But what a help that is! I heard a radio interview and I felt sorry for the departmental person who was on. This lady kept saying, "I can't answer that; I can't answer that." It was on the *Country Hour* radio program. It was terrible to hear a person put in that position saying, "No, the only thing we can do is to tell you how to bang them on the head or spray them and what sprays to use without poisoning the rest of the world." That is where the problem is at in Carnarvon.

I am really requesting that the Premier or the minister—I do not care who—go up there and get something going, because the current situation is starting to pit grower against grower, and grower against the department. We need a think tank up there to get it smoothed out. It is good to see the Premier in the chamber. It is a shame the Minister for Agriculture and Food is not here as well. That is one of the first things I ask, because it is a national disaster area; it needs to be addressed.

I move on and give the minister another spray about genetically modified crop contamination. What a disaster that has been! It has been an absolute state disaster. It is now going across the borders. As a result of drought, some sheep have been transported across the state borders, and there are concerns in South Australia that some sheep have stubble and seed in their wool and will drop GM seed in South Australia, which has declared itself GM-free and has the market at its mercy. That is another problem arising in those places because protocols have not been followed, enforced and put in place properly. To hear the minister say, "It's not really my problem now", he suggests that it is up to individuals to talk to each other. He would rather that people do not go through the court system with these disputes, but what is left when there is nowhere to go? I went out and had a look at Steve Marsh's organic farm down south and talked about the problem that happened there. There was no intent as such from his neighbour, but the contamination is happening and it is ruining Steve Marsh's style of life. The Minister for Agriculture and Food has always said that each farmer should be allowed to grow what they wish. That is fine, but the argument is: keep it on your side of the fence. We have had hours of debate in this place on this matter. We have had disallowance motions in the upper house as well as the lower house, and we did not get it right because the minister would not listen. Many areas need attention. Due to time, I will move on, but we will certainly be raising that GM issue further down the road.

It always disappoints me to read such stories in the press and to be rung up and asked: What is going on with country hospitals? Why did an 84-year-old lady have to wait eight and a half hours at Bunbury to be treated? The daughter and son-in-law of this lady rang me in Collie and asked, "How can we do this?" To be quite honest, it would have been quicker if they had driven from Bunbury to Collie and went to the outpatient service there. This is happening on an ongoing basis. What happened to the two-hour rule? What happened to the three-hour rule? We know what happened: they were unachievable because the minister is not doing his job. As a government, it has let us down. It came in full of promises in this area, but it has not happened—and it has got to happen! We have to work harder and put more money in that area. That poor lady, at 84 years of age, getting towards the end of her time on this earth, had to go through hell before she was given treatment. The letter of apology she received was not really a letter of apology. The message was along the lines of: "You have to understand that from time to time you will have to wait." I do not think that that is good enough for people of that age group.

Another issue in my electorate has to be addressed in this Parliament. I refer to people who put in a subdivision and sell the blocks with an ongoing commitment that when people build houses on the blocks, they will get their fences and landscaping done afterwards. In two cases in the south west region, concerning around 120 houses, that has not materialised. People have gone through the process and built houses. People have asked for it. Ironbridge Holdings is one company that gave numerous promises to people—and then it stopped. The latest

Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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issue has been that the fencing will be done when the contractor comes back from holidays. I rang the contractor, and no such commitment has been given because the company has not paid the first bill from the contractor. Some people have had fences put in, but because the company has not paid the contractor, the contractors are saying that they will not do any more. It is the lowest of the low. It is my strong belief that on any sale of this type with the promise that something will be done upon completion, it should be bonded. There should be no excuses. A bonding system should be put in place so that when the blocks are sold, X amount goes into the bonding system. When the house has been built, people claim against the bond. People like this just cannot be believed. They have made their money—they send their company broke and move on. The poor people who have bought the houses do not get it. It is not only happening there. Due to time constraints, I will only read part of an email from Kristy Matthews from the Recreation Estate in Eaton —

The residents ... are also facing the same problems with our fencing and landscaping. Our developer, Recreation Drive Pty Ltd, has not followed through the fencing and landscaping which were part of our sales contract when we purchased our blocks.

We have attended a listing conference at the Bunbury Court House. Recreation Drive Pty Ltd did not attend and a judgement was made in our favour, with a court order issued for the funds to be paid to us. We have a Property (seizure & sale) Order on Recreation Drive Pty Ltd's one remaining block in our estate.

There is not enough money to go around for everyone's fences and landscaping to be done. A block still has to be sold before moneys are fluid. There may be 30 other people waiting who are in the same situation. It comes down to who gets in first. To the Premier and the ministers concerned, we have to look at how we allow these shysters—that is what they are, out-and-out shysters—to take the money and run. I wrote to Simon O'Brien, in the upper house, but have had no reply. That is my standard experience of writing letters to Simon. There have been instances involving invitations he said he did not get and then finds out he has got. It is no wonder he was moved from one area to another. But can we move him a bit further? I would say that the back bench is about where he should be! I wrote the letter in December; his action has been nil. I am now aiming at the Premier, who is the leader of the pack. Please put some pressure on so that those sorts of things will happen. There needs to be a bond applied to make it compulsory before the sale of the block can go through. X amount of money could go into a bonding system so that when the house is built, so are the fences and landscaping. I am sure we all understand its impact on young families; we have all been there. A young family trying to find \$3 000 or \$4 000 because they have not come good with the fencing, or trying to keep kids in because you cannot afford the fencing, creates a very dangerous situation.

Lake Kepwari is another issue. The Minister for Regional Development—"Bintang" Brendon, as I believe he is now known!—who is probably back, would not understand. He has been out there and made promise after promise but not delivered. Lake Kepwari was supposed to open in December. It is a waterski area. I have raised it many times. It is an ex-coalmine. It has been battened down. It is a brilliant place. It is two kilometres long and a kilometre wide.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Is it in Collie?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Yes. It is a great ski area. When we have problems with Bunbury —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It would be a bit chilly if you fell in!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** There are a few other things in there as well!

It is a great area for skiing and a great tourist boost for the town. Waterskiing has been knocked off at Logue Brook Dam and out the back of Lake Towerinning, and also down at Bunbury. People would come to Collie and spend tourist dollars. It backs onto the motorsports complex; it would enhance tourism prospects in Collie. I have received many phone calls. It is probably fortunate there is a back road in. Some people are using it for skiing, which takes pressure off.

I attended a forum in Manjimup Tuesday week ago. It was a disappointment that not one conservative politician turned up to discuss the future of Manjimup. Although invited, the local member never turned up. The Minister for Regional Development was also invited but he did not turn up. It is not in my electorate, but I want to see justice done to those people who have lost their jobs through the government's withdrawal from the plantation system. Seventy-five jobs have been lost; 50 to 60 from Gunns. I saw it as my duty as a politician in the South West to go there to listen to what was being said. Having been through that, I could give some advice about maybe where they should go into the future to develop an economic base. Not one conservative member attended—it just shows the arrogance of this government and how cocky it is at this moment. But just remember



Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Murray Cowper;  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Mick Murray

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that weeks out from the last election, the Liberal Party was not going to be elected. If that is the attitude this government keeps up, it could reverse itself. It might be on a ride now but it will not always be the same.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Who ran the forum?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It was run by the Community and Public Sector Union–Civil Service Association of WA. Honestly, they are not affiliated. They gave me hell at the last election over school issues; so I had no alliance with them to be there. I felt it was my duty. About 50 or 60 people turned up. How did the forum start off? It has to start from the community. If there had been some positive feedback from the Liberal–National government, it could have been taken forward. It was not a bashing exercise by any means; it was about a process of where do we start from and how do we build up?

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It leads to the issue of super towns. How the hell can we create a super town if there is no economic base, or no interest in building an economic base? I think a cartoon in *The West Australian* did much justice to that; it depicted tour guides in these towns to show people what they have built and where no-one lives. It does not matter where we are, we need an economic base. On the outskirts of big cities in Vietnam and China there are overgrown villages. What happened here? Villages were built, people were brought there, but there were no jobs and they have gone back to the city. That is what will happen if we are not careful about this idea of super towns. The Minister for Regional Development insulted the people of Collie by saying, "You wouldn't want to live in Collie because you can't get a coffee in the morning!" What an insult to Collie people. It is far bigger than that, and there are many more reasons to live there. The minister does not understand the ground because he could have gone to McDonald's to get a coffee! So, it is available. To use that as a plank to say that people will not live in country towns because they cannot get a coffee in the morning is an absolute insult to the people who live in country towns.

I will move onto a couple of positives. I attended another forum recently, in Harvey, on geosequestration. I was the only Labor Party person there; there was not even a Liberal person to talk to. The forum, held by the department, was very well attended and very well put. It probably should be put around a lot more so that people can understand what geosequestration is. The people who participated found it very good. Not all agreed with it, I am not saying that at all, but it was positive and on the right track. A small reminder: it started out of the Coal Futures Group but when the Liberal–National government came in, it took funding away. It is something I see as a way of the future. Testing and small modelling is being done in Otway, Victoria. If that is a way we can mitigate carbon going into the atmosphere, so be it. It is another way to look at it. We cannot sit back with big industries, particularly the coal industry, and say that it does not concern us, because it does. We must be on the front foot. Companies such as Alcoa and Worsley Alumina have contributed to it. I thank them for their contribution in those areas.

It is with great pride that I inform members that Laurel Dhu, an officer in my electorate office, was nominated for Collie's citizen of the year. Although she did not win, she certainly was a very well supported nominee. Laurel has done much work after hours helping Aboriginal people. She has also helped people find medals from their parents' days, those sorts of things—real grassroots stuff. Laurel's sister-in-law Linda Bebbington won Collie's Australia Day person of the year. It was quite a family victory, I suppose, in many ways. Linda also very much deserved her accolades for the work she does with the Riding for the Disabled Association. She has a severely disabled son herself but she did not stop at that—she helps others. Disabled riding started in the backyard and now they use a very big arena, which opened last year. I think it is 60 metres by 20 metres and is under cover.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 683.]

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*