

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 17 April on the following motion moved by Mrs G.J. Godfrey —

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's speech be agreed to —

To His Excellency the Honourable Mr Malcolm James McCusker, Governor of the State of Western Australia.

May it please your Excellency —

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [9.10 am]: I take great delight in participating in this Address-in-Reply debate. As I was forming my notes this morning, I wrote the heading “Success against the odds”. There is good reason for that. When Parliament rose in November last year, I immediately went into hospital for an invasive hip replacement operation. I did not realise how painful it would be. I had the operation on a Friday and as I lay in bed on the Sunday in a fair bit of pain and discomfort, my phone rang. I should have let it go, but I took the call. I was surprised to find that it was a reporter who was ringing me at 11 o'clock Sunday morning. The way in which I answered her call must have given her the clue that I was not in a good condition. She asked whether I was all right. I said no, and told her that I was recovering from a fairly severe operation. I asked her why she had phoned. She said, “Well, I just wanted your response, Ian, to the news we have just received that your party is letting you go because it doesn't think you can win Morley and that it is going to concentrate on the seat of Maylands.” Well, that same pause was my exact response. I was flabbergasted and extremely disappointed. I just sat there. I will not share with members the response I gave the reporter. After the call, I sat in my bed for the next couple of days trying to get over what she had told me. I did not bother verifying it because further on I found out that it was true. Penny came to see me in hospital. I shared with her what had happened. I had prayed for a woman with backbone, so God gave me a Texan!

A government member interjected.

Mr I.M. BRITZA: No; she left her guns at home.

I shared with her my dilemma. She said, “I will tell you a good old Texan statement, Ian, that you shouldn't forget—that is, ‘Dance with the one that brung ya.’” After she left, I began to recall who had danced with me from the beginning and who believed I could retain the seat. Before I get to my class of 2008, I will mention two members who have been particularly supportive from the beginning. The first, who is on my right, is the member for Eyre. He has always been supportive. The other member, who is on my left, is the member for Bunbury, who gave an articulate presentation about what members need to do in their seat. I think maybe I was the only member who took notes. There may have been others, but I put into practice at least 90 per cent of what he said. All through the last term he gave me constant encouragement. My class of 2008 has been particularly supportive. It is true what was said the other day in that members tend to become strongly affiliated with those with whom they entered Parliament. Although my class had certainly heard about my seat and how I was to go, it remained supportive. I will concentrate briefly on two particular members. The first, the member for Jandakot, is not in the house at the moment. I am sure that most people will think that we are an unlikely duo, but we have become pretty close. His support has been absolutely unwavering. I appreciated his insight, which was absolutely wonderful and constant, especially throughout my campaign. The other member is the member for Wanneroo, who is in the house. He would ring me and I would ring him. His words of encouragement were extremely supportive. I thought of a couple of others that I will share with members. It is important to remember who believes in you when you perceive, rightly or wrongly, that you are isolated and on your own. I was not, but that is how I felt. Senator Michaelia Cash was extremely supportive and encouraging before I was given the seat—“given” is the right word, because the former member, John D'Orazio, gave me his preferences and that is how I won the seat. I have always acknowledged that. Indeed, I am not ashamed of that; rather, I am very grateful. Senator Michaelia Cash remained extremely supportive and encouraging throughout the last term. Former Prime Minister John Howard was also very supportive. The time I spent with him, the friendship we formed and his words of encouragement were all extremely important to me. When I showed him my re-election strategy, I asked whether there was anything he would add or take away from it in an attempt to take back my seat. He looked it over and said that he would not add or take away anything; rather, he said, I needed to go ahead and fulfil my strategy. He said, “There is probably one thing you need to do, which shouldn't be too difficult for you,

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Ian”. I asked, “What is that, Sir”? He shook my hand, because I was leaving, and said, “Pastor your electorate.” I understood those words. Maybe no-one else understands, but I knew exactly what he meant. The other person was Peter Costello, with whom I formed an unusual friendship. Once again, he was extremely supportive. Given that he was removed from the situation, he could afford to be. The last person I will mention now lives in Texas and has a wife named Penny. We formed the most unusual relationship that has grown from strength to strength. I speak of Andrew Peacock, a former leader of the national Liberal Party. He has become a wonderful supporter and gave me a lot of instruction and encouragement as I formed a strategy for my campaign.

When the campaign started, I was not out on the street because I was recovering from my operation. My five-year-old son, Samuel, would ask his mother every time he saw my opponent’s corflute, “Mummy, is that the man who wants to take daddy’s job?” My wife would say “He’s trying.” While those outside my electorate had given me no chance of being successful, those close to me were always confident of an excellent result. I was battling. I have wondered whether it is wise to mention these things, but I think it is because we all have a battle in an election no matter whether we are in front, behind or in the middle. I was battling because of the comments that referred to me as, for example, a “one-termer” from those who should have known better. I found those comments—and still find them—extremely disrespectful. Even if people think that, they should never say that to a person, especially when they are a colleague. I found it very difficult coming to terms with being told those things. I was not even regarded as an incumbent in the seat of Morley, which was another arrow to bear. My own party regarded my seat as a Labor seat, which hurt. I remember going to one function and seeing my seat covered in red. I remember that that did nothing for my self-confidence. However, a few strong-minded and strong-willed people said the complete opposite to what I was having to deal with. People from outside the electorate came on board and told me that I should battle the naysayers and believe in myself because they did. I spent a great deal of time doorknocking. I met with people on the ground, face to face, and I could tell the tide was turning. We also began to practise our office slogan, “Friend raise before you fundraise”. That is not an old slogan, but it is one we felt we ought to carry out. As soon as the boundaries changed, everyone was in accord and said that that was it, that everything belonged to Labor and that everything would change because it was now 0.8 per cent in Labor’s favour. They said I did not have a chance in you know where. Suddenly I had to battle that, but I knew how to deal with it because I knew how to deal with the cultural changes. Having lived in Nollamara, I knew there had been a change and so I began to speak to, and form friendships with, the different ethnic and cultural groups that all supported me with integrity, honour and genuine hope. Long before the election I met and developed friendships with people from the African, Chinese, Greek, Vietnamese, Italian and Armenian communities, to mention just a few. The Friday night before the election I was emotionally and physically drained from my hospitalisation and the constant electoral work that had to be done at whatever cost. However, on election day I was completely at peace with whatever the outcome would be. We had an outstanding outcome that was not foreseen by anyone except our most ardent supporters. We received a 15 per cent swing towards us and now hold the seat by 5.5 per cent, which is simply marvellous.

The true character of a person can be seen in how they respond to defeat. My opponent showed by his reaction after the election why he did not deserve to be the member for Morley. He thought he had won it before the election day had even come. He was told that the seat was his. Even the media told him the seat was his, which made our win all the more sweet. He declared that even a drover’s dog could have won this seat, which was a poor reflection on the constituents of Morley and me, especially because no-one with a high public profile gave us a chance of being successful. In fact, some in the media even declared that my party had let me go and had not supported or assisted me at all in my electorate. Nothing could be further from the truth in this regard. Even though the party thought I would have difficulty retaining the seat, it gave me almost 100 per cent of everything that I presented to it, and I did that without pounding the table, using questionable language or threatening the party with a lack of parliamentary support.

Thankyous are in order. First, I thank my electorate officer, Christine Gundrey, and my two research officers, Anna Kit Littler and Helen Johnson. They are my three angels, as I call them. It is good to be protected by three strong women. I have known Christine for over 30 years. The support in the electorate office is outstanding. We have over a 90 per cent success rate with every issue that comes into our office, and I am very proud of that. There is no doubt that whenever I say I will do something, “I” means “we”, because the staff do a lot of the work. I do not know what I would do without those girls. They are very important to me. I thank my campaign team: my chairman, Mark Whitehouse; Mark Pigeon, the president of our branch; and Jim Seth. I also thank Darryl Moore, the federal candidate for the seat of Perth, for his assistance, and Cam Sinclair. I give a special thankyou to Donna Faragher, who once again continued to support me from her home. I also thank John Williams, the president of the Friends of Lightning Swamp. We never made our friendship or participation with the Friends of Lightning Swamp public because we felt strongly that we needed to show that we were genuine in wanting to help the Friends of Lightning Swamp instead of trying to make a political point. Once again, my party

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supported me to get finance to assist that group for what it needed to do, and we still need to help it. John Payne, the president of the Morley–Noranda Recreation Club, is an unusual man. He is very strong and became a wonderful personal supporter, and I thank him. I owe a lot to David Christison for our weekly meetings. A couple of our booths were set up on the Friday afternoon before the election and the people who attended them were there for most of the night, which was extraordinary. I got up at two o'clock in the morning to check out what everyone was doing and nearly every booth was attended. I thank those volunteers. I also thank the members of the Bayswater City Soccer Club, who were excellent, and the shopkeepers all over the Morley electorate who put my poster on their window to show their support. I thank the homeowners in Morley who allowed our corflute to be placed on their lawns, even when some people in the Bayswater council appeared hell-bent on thwarting our campaign strategy. I thank the several businessmen and women who tirelessly supported, encouraged and became financially involved in our campaign. I would love to share their names, but I did not seek their permission to do so. However, their personal and private support made an incalculable and immense difference to my belief in myself and what I could achieve for my electorate. In a final thankyou to the people I want to thank today, I thank the constituents who voted for me and said, in effect, "Let's give Britza a go in his own right." I thank them because they were hammered and given all sorts of reasons why they should not vote for me. Some people said one thing or another but I will keep that to myself. I believe those constituents made a wise and honourable choice in choosing a man who they believe will not take sides but will represent them honourably and fairly in this house. My humble thanks to them all. I look forward to seeing and meeting the vast majority of them and listening to what they have to say. I acknowledge my eldest son, Timothy, who came over to Western Australia from Sydney and was my driver for the complete election period while I was recovering from my operation. Thank you, son, for putting up with a very tense and focused father. I cannot go any further without extending and acknowledging my thankfulness for and genuine appreciation of my wife, Penny. When I was constantly dealing with the perceived lack of support from those I expected it from, she constantly spoke to me and simply declared, "Ian, if Morley doesn't vote for you, they have simply lost a good man." No truer word could have been spoken to me during this very stressful time and I am indebted to her for her support and encouragement and belief that I was the right man to represent Morley honourably and without prejudice.

There are a few things that still need to be done in my electorate. I will mention three things in particular. We received \$2 million in funding to renovate and repair the science rooms of Morley Senior High School. I am looking forward to seeing that done. We saw the complete renovation of the toilet block in our last term, which should have been done a long time ago. Nonetheless, Morley Senior High School has been very well looked after by this government and I am very grateful for that. The Noranda Hawks Junior Football Club extension is another issue. I am a loyal East Perth supporter. We are in the East Perth district but having to wear the Noranda Hawks shirt, which is the Hawthorn colours, takes quite a bit of strength. I wear the shirt with a great deal of confidence in my electorate. The Noranda Hawks have received funding for extensions to their club for not only the Hawks, but also the others that use the facilities. It is wonderful that the Premier himself announced that funding to them, which was excellent. I seek an extension.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr I.M. BRITZA: The Premier also visited the Morley–Noranda Recreation Club and promised \$800 000 for an extension to that club, for which the club was very grateful. It is a very deserving and outstanding club. I believe that it is one of the best bowling greens in the state. At least that is what its members say. Not being a bowling man, I take their word for it.

Law and order remains a high priority. Drug houses are common and I am working to find out how the police deal with that. It appears that the houses are ignored, but I know that the police are aware of them. The residents have to deal with that, which is very difficult for them, especially when they are elderly. They must constantly deal with the fear of people visiting those homes high and stoned at all hours of the night and day. The aggravated break and entering is of even more concern. Breaking and entering is disastrous anyway, but when an aggravated assault occurs, that makes it even more disastrous. That is occurring not just in my electorate, but across the board. Domestic violence is very discouraging to me. I was brought up in a home in which I never heard my father raise his voice to my mother. It is difficult for me to hear about people perpetrating violence on their spouses, because I have never experienced or seen it. When the police tell me it is not only on the rise, but also specifically on the rise in my electorate, that is discouraging to me and is something I want to give attention to.

The number of people coming into my office about local council issues has started to increase. I have to deal with three councils in my electorate. I am sure that the Minister for Local Government will find there are a lot of people like me. I know that at some point we need to either put the councils out of their misery or tell them what is going to happen so that they know. I know it may be a really cheap shot to have a crack at the councils, but it

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Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

is very difficult when they do not have all the facts and there are always two sides to a story. Issues from constituents about local councils are increasing and it is becoming very difficult to deal with councils.

Lastly, there are seniors' issues. I have a large number of seniors in my electorate. I spend a great deal of time with them. In fact, I have said it publicly and I say it in the house: many times I have asked particular seniors to explain to me what my government is doing! They seem to have a very good handle on it and also have good solutions. What I appreciate about seniors is that they do not criticise without giving a solution. That reminds me of constituents who have come into my office and threatened me with not giving me their vote. I have usually responded to that in one of two ways, because I do not enjoy that at all. I do not need that vote; I do not need that kind of response. As soon as they have threatened me, I have said, "You have one of two things that you can do right now. You can have me resolve your issue, but I need your word that you will not vote for me, or you can go to my staff and let them do it and I will stay right out of it altogether, but they are your two options." That happened about six times. I have a feeling that from that point the word got out not to threaten me with not voting for me. Members do not need the vote of someone who threatens them. That is a dreadful way to try to get an answer to a problem. I do not believe that is the right way to do it.

I know that there are many more issues to be placed on the record in Parliament, and in due course they will be publicly declared. But for now it is sweet to be back in Parliament and to be back in my own right, elected by an overwhelming majority of my electorate. That is a truly wonderful and exhilarating experience and one that I shall savour for just a little while yet.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [9.31 am]: Firstly, Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your elevation to the role of Speaker of this house and welcome you to it. I also congratulate the member for Kalgoorlie in her role as Deputy Speaker. It is great to once again see a woman in that role. I also congratulate the Acting Speakers and look forward to the work that they will do in this house. I also welcome the new members to this house. In particular, I am very pleased that on the Labor side of the house we have new members for Fremantle, Kimberley and Bassendean. I am confident that all three of those members will make an outstanding contribution in this house, and I certainly very much welcome them.

I also congratulate the Premier and his government on winning the election. The Premier has made the point to this house, and I expect he will continue to do so, that his government received 58 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. I congratulate the Premier on that achievement. But I also counsel the Premier, as others of my colleagues have done, not to get too carried away with his own success. Fifty-eight per cent is not 100 per cent. This is not a one-party state, let alone a parliamentary despotism. The Premier seems to believe that the size of the vote gives him a mandate to do pretty much what he likes, when he likes and how he likes, and to take his time in delivering on his promises. I think it has reinforced his naturally dictatorial instincts. I remind the Premier and other members opposite that we received 42 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. I know that is a long way from 50 per cent, but that is why we are here and government members are sitting opposite. We have taken our beating and now we are in the business of honouring those who voted for us. Our 42 per cent may not be a majority, but it is still a lot of people and they, too, deserve a voice. It is the task of the opposition to ensure that the tyranny of the majority does not prevail; that the Premier and his government are made accountable for their actions, their policies and their decisions; and that the substantial minority of Western Australians who do not support this Premier, his team or his policies also have a strong and powerful voice. It is the government's job to deliver for all of Western Australia, including my electorate. It is the government's job to deliver for all Western Australians, whether or not they voted for the government. I contemplated during the week-long count that determined the result in my electorate that maybe the possibility existed that I had missed my opportunity for a valedictory speech to this house. It certainly gave me time to reflect on my achievements and my time in this house and, if I had missed that opportunity, what I might have said. But for a handful of votes, that could well have been the case. Like the members for Forrestfield, Joondalup and Perth who were denied that opportunity, I could have found myself in that same boat because of the narrowness of the result. With those thoughts, I thought perhaps it was about time I put on record some of those achievements in Midland; and, having done that, I will also outline my plans for the future and our needs in the Midland electorate.

It is always harder, though, to deliver outcomes for the Midland electorate and the eastern region when the Liberals are in power. The Liberal heart is in the western suburbs; it is not in the east. Only Labor governments have a history of delivering to the eastern suburbs. The Liberal history in the eastern suburbs is one of lies, neglect and betrayal—a betrayal that continued under the first four years of the Barnett government. Although I will concentrate on more recent times, I note for the record that it was a Labor government that brought Landgate, under its former name of the Department of Land Administration, to Midland. It was the first move of a major government agency to an established metropolitan regional centre. I say "established" because Joondalup was certainly being developed at that stage and there were agencies and impetus happening in

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Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
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Joondalup. The Labor government gave a commitment to bring that major department to Midland. There were plenty of knockers who said that the government could not possibly move the office of land titles out of its central location in the city, but, thanks to the leadership and guidance of Labor members Gavan Troy and Kay Hallahan, it happened. A shopfront office for Landgate still exists in the city centre today, but the majority of workers are located in Midland. I note for the record that the demographics of the residential dwellings of the people who work at that agency have certainly changed, with the majority of them living to the east of our city. I think it is a model that could be followed with more agencies in Midland or, indeed, other suburban locations. It just makes sense not to pay the high city rents. In this day and age, it makes more sense than ever because with computer technology and modern-day communications, there is no need for most agencies to be in the heart of the CBD.

When I looked to the Liberal years from 1993 to 1997, I saw that there was no greater betrayal by the Liberal Party of the Midland region than its betrayal on the Midland railway workshops. At the February 1993 election, the Liberal Party went with a commitment to expand the Midland railway workshops to “a centre of engineering excellence”. That is a direct quote from a press release. It was a commitment that took the Liberal Party very close to winning the Midland-based seat of Helena at that election. Yet, just a couple of months later, it announced the closure of the Midland railway workshops and, in 1994, just a year after being elected, the Liberal government closed the Midland railway workshops and put hundreds of people out of a job. It also sold off the historic carriages as part of a job lot of rolling stock. It had no plan for the site and it had it mothballed. Over five years later, it was an eerie place to visit because everything was left just as it was when the workers walked out on the last day. It was a Liberal lie. Not only did it not expand the workshops as it had promised at that election, but also it closed them down. It was a lie, just like the lie told at the last election that the Barnett government would build a railway line to Ellenbrook. The Premier tried to wheedle out of that one. First he tried to say that it was just a commitment by a local member that did not count, and then he said that it was a second-term promise. Now he says that he will not do it at all. I somehow doubt that he will take the same attitude to breaking his promises on the Cottesloe beachfront or other promises he made to his own electorate or to the western suburbs. For some governments, it seems to be a matter of core election promises and non-core promises. For this Premier, I think it is a matter of promises made for the west and promises made for the east. Perhaps he has his fingers crossed behind his back when he makes promises for the east.

The other tactic employed by the Liberals in the eastern suburbs is to make us wait, and wait we did, for our schools. In 1997, as the newly elected member for Midland, I was shocked at the state of some of our local schools. Some members will recall that I was previously the member for Glendalough. There was simply no comparison between the state of the schools in each of those electorates. I was truly shocked at the state of the West Midland Primary School when I first visited it. I saw a lack of undercover areas, flooded areas and a lack of any cover for teachers and students walking between classrooms and a toilet block or other facilities at the school. It was old, dilapidated and run down. In fact, it was on the Liberal hit list for closure, just as it closed Leederville Primary School at the start of its term when Hon Norman Moore was the education minister. There were protests about that closure and there were also protests about the proposed closure of the then West Midland Primary School.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Would you like to mention the period 1997 to 2001?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I am getting to that. It is interesting that the Leader of the House mentioned that period. Every year during that period I was told that Midvale Primary School would be rebuilt. Every year it was just one year off in the forward estimates, yet the Liberal Party did nothing to rebuild that school. Priority was given to other schools in other electorates ahead of that. Schools that were much further down the list and in far less need were given priority. Each year Midvale Primary School’s replacement slipped back further in the forward estimates. In about 2000, prior to us coming to government, the roof of that school looked as though it was ready to cave in. I thought that surely it would need to be rebuilt. The government replaced the roof. I was appalled to see the roof replaced on such a shoddy school that needed to be completely rebuilt. When I asked questions at the time, I was advised that the roof was made of a cheaper material, such as tin or some other material, and would last only five to 10 years, not 10 or 20 years. From 1997 to 2001 I negotiated with the then education minister on Koongamia Primary School and Bellevue Primary School. Bellevue Primary School was also a disgrace. It had very small spaces, it was very dilapidated and very old and it had no proper playing space. For over a year I tried to negotiate with the now Premier, the then education minister, to get Goodchild Oval incorporated as a playing space into the school and to have a plan to rebuild Bellevue Primary School.

If I fast-track to 2001, within a couple of weeks of the Labor Party being elected, I approached the then education minister, Hon Alan Carpenter. He visited those schools in the electorate with me. He, too, was appalled. One of the staff members who came with us to visit the schools was almost physically sick after

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Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

looking at a couple of the schools in my electorate, as they were in such poor condition. Alan Carpenter put his hand against one of the walls at Midvale Primary School and the wall caved in. He actually put his hand through the wall. I do not think he took any more convincing beyond that point. In the very first Gallop government budget, money was set aside for the new Clayton View Primary School in Koongamia, the new Woodbridge Primary School in what was then West Midland and a new school at Midvale. Those three schools were built and completed within our first term of government.

Mr J.E. McGrath: In your electorate.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The only school that was built in my electorate by the Liberal government was the Moorditj Noongar Community College. Three sites were selected by the education department at that time. The Premier was the education minister and, frankly, the other electorates did not want it. Like the current Premier, I thought it was a good idea to try this model of school. I accepted it willingly into my electorate.

During the Liberal government years from 1996 to 2001, I campaigned for things such as the opening of the Helena Street railway crossing and traffic lights at the intersection of Great Eastern Highway and Farrall Road. I also campaigned to move the Midland saleyards out of the Midland town centre. The Liberal government would not budge on any of those proposals. Our Labor government installed traffic lights and opened the Helena Street crossing to link the Midland town centre with the workshop site. I remember a ceremonial crossing in an old fire truck with Geoff Gallop in 2001 when we opened that Helena Street railway crossing.

It was also our Labor government that made the decision to close the Midland saleyards and build new saleyards on a site that we selected in Muchea. There had been a campaign to do this for more than 10 years—a campaign that I was very much at the forefront of. This was not an easy decision. We discussed it for a number of years leading up to that. Numerous proposals were put forward. I enjoyed strong support from the then agriculture minister, Kim Chance, but I did not enjoy the support of state Treasury, which recommended against it to the former Liberal government and recommended against it to us, because it favoured a privatised model of saleyards. It did not favour the government funding and building government saleyards. It did not want public saleyards; it promoted private saleyards continuously to the Premier, the Treasurer and cabinet. Cabinet's decision to move the saleyards was a win-win for the eastern region. The saleyards were no longer appropriate for an area being incorporated into the Midland CBD. For those who do not know where the saleyards were, they were immediately adjacent to the Midland railway workshops. After cabinet made that decision, Hon Kim Chance, the then agriculture minister, the late Jaye Radisich and I jointly announced that decision to the Midland community. Although the saleyards were completed by the Barnett government, the decision had already been taken. Prior to us losing the election in 2008, I as Minister for Housing and Works signed off on the preliminary site works contract for work to begin in Muchea.

One of my biggest achievements in Midland was securing the redevelopment authority for Midland. I campaigned for that for some 18 months before the Court government acceded to that request. I had previously spent over two years on the board of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority. I also worked in the office of Hon Kay Hallahan when she was Minister for Planning and Minister for Local Government. Via my work there, I was also familiar with the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority and the work that had been done. I remind members that those redevelopment authorities were an initiative that followed the Hawke-Keating government's Building Better Cities program. Better Cities provided money for established towns all around Australia and provided them with redevelopment moneys.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: They were spearheaded by federal minister Brian Howe under that federal Labor initiative. It saw redevelopment authorities spring up all around the country and federal money given to those projects.

At the December 1996 election, the Liberals had promised to support a university for Midland. It was *deja vu* again this year. They also promised the refurbishment of heritage buildings. For three years of that four-year term—that is seven of the eight—they did nothing at the Midland railway workshops. That is another example of their delaying tactics in the east. The workshops remain in mothballs.

I raised the issue of a redevelopment authority because so much government land was there, and proposals were coming forward to do piecemeal developments. Eventually, after I raised grievances in this house and raised the issue in debate numerous times, the then government acceded to that, and under the then planning minister, Graham Kierath, and Premier Court, the Midland Redevelopment Authority was set up. It was set up with little money; it was just the cost of running the office and a capacity to borrow. It certainly let the government largely off the hook for its years of closure and neglect, because it was able to announce, at little cost, the redevelopment authority.

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Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

I want to get to some plans for the future, so I will just list some of the achievements in Midland during my time as the member. They include the establishment of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and major police facilities such as the police communications facility and a police forensics facility, which was previously housed at police headquarters. The police traffic branch was moved from the old Perth Girls' School site to Midland. Those police facilities alone amount to the expenditure of some hundreds of millions of dollars. There were four new primary schools and one new high school. There were significant upgrades and refurbishments at schools such as Guildford and Darlington Primary Schools. There was the massive upgrade to Middle Swan Road between West Swan Road and Great Northern Highway. There were more recent major roadworks such as the Roe Highway overpass at Great Eastern Highway, which was substantially funded by the federal Labor government. There was a new fire station on Morrison Road in Midland; a new joint State Emergency Service and bush fire brigade facility at Bishop Street in Middle Swan, something that I campaigned on for years; the new Midland hospital to replace the ageing Swan District Hospital, one of the most significant commitments to our local area; a permanent and purpose-built facility for Midland Women's Health Care Place, which provides a marvellous service for women and children in the Midland region and beyond; a million-dollar refurbishment of the old Midland Courthouse; and the list goes on.

In the future, further and more projects need to be undertaken, some of them with a degree of urgency. I think none is more urgent than the Lloyd Street underpass. That needs to be progressed virtually immediately. It is absolutely essential that the level crossing is replaced with the underpass so that those on the town centre side of Midland can get to the new hospital. That underpass should be being constructed now, so in this Address-in-Reply speech, I would certainly urge the government to make that a top priority so that we do not have the spectacle of ambulances waiting at the rail crossing to get someone in an emergency medical situation to the new Midland hospital. That surely has to be a priority; otherwise, we run the risk of lives being lost and medical outcomes being worse than they might have been had an ambulance been able to get there more expeditiously.

While I am on the topic of Lloyd Street, Lloyd Street needs to be extended. We need the extension through to Abernethy Road. This is something that has been in progress and argued for again for a long time now. The time has come. I had hoped that it would have been completed in the last four and a half years, but surely it has to be completed in the next four years. That extension is needed for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it is a logical link from Lloyd Street through to Tonkin Highway, but it is also needed because of the development that has taken place, particularly in the Hazelmere region. Members may not be aware of the incredible expansion within the Hazelmere industrial estate in recent years. Truck movements and traffic in that region have increased astronomically. We have seen big trucking companies such as Linfox open premises in that area in recent years. It is the area that contains the major site for BGC. Other transport companies are also in that area. Many of those companies service the mining industries in the north, and there have been multimillion-dollar investments there. The truck movements in that area must have increased at least tenfold. This has put enormous pressure on local roads; it is causing enormous congestion.

During the election, I met with some of the representatives of the companies in Hazelmere, particularly those that have trucks that need to get through to the major highways and exit the area. I will not have time today to detail those issues, but I signal that I will be raising them most earnestly with the Minister for Transport. At the moment powerlines need to be lifted, because when trucks go through, it is costing a lot of money and, more importantly, it is costing a lot of time. So, that needs to be done urgently. It is also having an impact on local residents. Residents in areas such as Helena Valley are finding it very difficult to negotiate the local roads with all the trucks—many of those roads do not even have proper shoulders on them. In particular, I want to highlight those who need to head towards the city from Helena Valley, down Helena Valley Road, in the direction of Bushmead Road and Stirling Crescent. The traffic there is not only congested, but also dangerous, and I am quite concerned that there is certainly the possibility of some very serious crashes, particularly between smaller vehicles and trucks.

During the election there was also a focus on a university for Midland. I notice that the Premier did not commit an amount of money that would actually deliver a university for Midland. He said that the land is there, and I think the figure he quoted was about \$23 million for Curtin University of Technology to take its medical school there. Curtin University has not made a commitment, but that is something that would certainly be welcomed. If, for whatever reason, this does not come to fruition, I do not think the Premier can use that as a cop-out or a reason not to progress, if not a university, certainly some major educational institution at the Midland railway workshops site. The Liberal Party has paid lip-service to this for decades; it always talks up a university. I note too, though, that the \$23 million does not even come close to the \$60 million that was promised to beautify the Scarborough and Cottesloe beachfront areas. My own view is that it is a bit of a con, but I will certainly make the offer that I will work most earnestly to get either the medical school or any other appropriate educational courses or institution to that site. Quite clearly, there is a big synergy with the new Midland hospital and, with

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

the availability of land at the Midland railway workshops site, it would simply make sense to provide medical-related education at a nearby location.

I also want to comment on the problems with services in the local area. Again, given the time constraints today, I will not be able to get to them all. However, bus services are a major problem in parts of my electorate. Yes, we are well served by having a train station in Midland, as we have been for 100 years, but the train station itself needs to be upgraded. It needs to be moved probably about 500 metres to the east so that it links in better with the hospital. That needs to be on the government's agenda. The Premier has wandered out to my electorate numerous times this year. His latest pronouncement was that he agreed that the Midland train station needed replacing. If the Premier agrees with that, do it! The Premier was elected to government for four years; it is his job to get on and give us that new train station. We also need many more train carriages on the Midland line, which is hugely congested. We made a significant commitment to purchase more carriages had we been elected—we were not; the Premier was. Again, that surely needs to be a priority. Areas such as Helena Valley and Jane Brook in my electorate are not within walking distance of Midland train station. They are poorly served by bus services. I again highlight the need there.

Homeswest issues have come to an all-time high. I have never had, in all my time in Parliament, more homeless people come into my office, including women who sleep in cars with their children and other families who have had to move in with parents or other relatives in homes in which 10 to 12 people are crowded into a two-bedroom house because they have nowhere else to go. There are also people who sleep in backyard tents and caravans. This is a major problem. I also highlight that the so-called three strikes policy of Homeswest under this government is in tatters. I have never, ever had more people complain about problematic tenants and had a government and a minister do nothing about it.

Finally, I raise the issue of the Guildford Hotel. It is a disgrace. I signal that as an issue I will take up very strongly with this government. Come September this year it will be five years since the hotel burnt down. I would like to see the private redevelopment, but I note that the Premier says that he is prepared to compulsorily acquire the old hotel site in Albany. If we do not get some action very shortly on the Guildford Hotel site, we will need to look at the compulsory acquisition of that, too, Mr Premier.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.02 am]: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I congratulate Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) on his elevation to that position, as indeed I congratulate the other Acting Speakers, as well as Mr Speaker himself and the Deputy Speaker, on their roles.

I take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate those members of Parliament who have joined us for the first time. Running for Parliament is emotionally and physically a difficult time, but it is a very rewarding one. It is one that comes with significant obligations. It is also one that comes with a lot of opportunity. One piece of advice I would give all new members of Parliament above all others is: the opportunity to dine in the dining room is an opportunity that should be used sparingly! I think the member for Willagee confessed that in the first six months of being in this place, he put on about 20 kilograms. He has the frame to manage that sort of elevation in mass, but might I just say that the entrée-size servings are sufficient and the dessert trolley is to be avoided at all costs! Maintaining your physical and mental health in this place is very important. Many new members have come from professional environments in which professional behaviour is expected from peers. They will not find it here. This is a difficult place to work. Members will find themselves agog at the behaviour of their colleagues, and indeed disappointed at times I dare say, but rise above it. Members have an extraordinary opportunity to advocate on behalf of their communities. I welcome one and all.

I particularly welcome three new members to our side of the house. I am particularly proud of the elevation of the members for Fremantle, Bassendean and Kimberley to this place. I commend the member for Kimberley on her speech yesterday, which I thought provided great insight and was a very timely reminder of the sorts of issues that we should hold uppermost in our minds.

I also congratulate the Minister for Health on his reappointment to that portfolio. I note his disappointment at losing the title of Leader of the House. It is one to which he aspired greatly! Even though he wanted to give up the portfolio of tourism and hold on to the title of Leader of the House, that was not to be; yet he finds himself saddled with two difficult portfolios.

Dr A.D. Buti: He took one for the team!

Mr R.H. COOK: He took one for the team. He must have disappointed the Premier at some point to have his career dealt that blow!

Dr K.D. Hames: I was waiting for you guys to say that I was sacked as Leader of the House!

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister was sacked for lack of enthusiasm, perhaps! I congratulate the member for Kalamunda for taking on that role.

I would like to thank the people in the electorate of Kwinana for the opportunity to serve them again. I have done so with not only their re-endorsement, but also an increased endorsement and swing in the seat of Kwinana. I know that swings toward were fairly rare on this side of the chamber at the last election, so I am particularly proud of the outcome we achieved. I am particularly proud of my campaign team. When I say “campaign team”, I include the members of my staff not because they are political animals but because campaigning or receiving community endorsement is a four-year project in this place. They pass judgement on the work done for the community throughout our time as members of Parliament. It requires a long time to cement the support needed to win a second term. I would particularly like to thank Barry and Jerroldine Gilbert, and Kath Gallop, life members who live in my electorate, for their ongoing guidance. I would also like to thank those people who approached me during the campaign to say, “We voted for someone else last time but we’ve seen the hard work you do in the community; we’re voting for you this time.” That is particularly gratifying. Winning the support of those who once decided on my candidacy in the negative is the most gratifying sign that I am playing a constructive role as the local member of Parliament.

I want to reflect briefly on the last four years in this place. It was a time when I undertook two half-ironman triathlons. It was a time that I graduated with my MBA. It was a time when my son turned 18 and moved to the next part of his life. It was a time during which my daughter entered high school as a music theatre student at John Curtin College of the Arts and has continued to blossom and be someone whom I am equally proud of as I am of my son, Toby. It was a time that my partner, Carly, achieved some extraordinary career highlights, including as the curator of the National Indigenous Art Triennial, an internationally renowned exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. Her task was a very difficult one as the first visiting curator to that exhibition. I thought she carried out that task with extraordinary dignity and effectiveness, and with respect. It was a particularly difficult task given the problems associated with the staging of that exhibition, and doing so from Western Australia when the exhibition is in Canberra. I am very proud of my family and I am very pleased with the support they have provided me.

As members, we have an extraordinary assembly of people behind us: partners, family, extended families and parents who provide us with guidance, much like a pit crew to a Formula One driver. We arrive home at ridiculous hours and leave at ridiculous hours, but continue to receive that support; I might add, member for Jandakot, that that support comes not only from our human family, but also from our four-legged family, because they provide, as science shows, an important release for high blood pressure! The member for Jandakot will be doing lots of patting of the pooch over the next four years to achieve that!

I want to talk about some of the issues that impact upon my electorate, in particular the difficulties that confront industry in my sector. The Kwinana industrial strip is one of the most important economic hubs of Western Australia. It is a premier heavy industry area that plays a very important role in training and employing people who live in and around my electorate; 60 per cent of the people who work on the Kwinana industrial strip come from immediately around that area.

If industry in that area sneezes, the people in my electorate catch a cold. That can be no truer than today. I am informed that over the last quarter alone, the industry—particularly those metal fabricating and engineering companies that so rely upon the health of the mining industry they serve—has suffered a 50 per cent drop-off in work. The big fabricators can control a lot of that lumpy business and cash flow, but it is the day-rate contractors—the small engineering companies that rely upon the smaller engineers—that get pulled on in times of increased activity that suffer the most in those circumstances. I am informed that the number of day-rate contractors has dropped by more than 4 000 in the last quarter alone. That has happened because we have seen a peak, I suppose, in some of the construction activity in the iron ore industry; we have certainly seen some reduction in activity in the goldmining industry. There has been the cancelling of the outer harbour by BHP in Port Hedland, and the scaling-back of a lot of the activity at FMG; all these things have an impact on the Kwinana industrial strip—these metal fabricators, engineering firms and mining services companies that rely upon a strong mining industry, and a strong local content in that mining industry, to maintain success in the area.

It is not just important for the people who are employed today. The ongoing training and capacity-building of our manufacturing and engineering area is crucial in this area. Late last year I visited the Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s group training facility in Hope Valley Road, which is a great facility that equips our young people coming out of the high schools in the Rockingham and Kwinana area with the skills they need to work in their chosen field. But if the opportunities to continue their skills and training are not there, they will leave the industry and become unskilled labour. They may fall out of employment altogether and become a drain on our

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

community rather than a contributor to it. That is why it is important to have a long-term industry policy in this state that looks at the sustainability of our engineering sector.

I heard the Premier lamenting on radio recently that there were no champions of industry in Western Australia; “Where are the champions of our industry?” he asked on radio. One of the key roles of government is to create a sustainable future for these sorts of industries so they have the opportunities to bid for jobs in the mining industry and have opportunities to provide major content for the mining projects. For instance, Roy Hill recently made an announcement about the development of its iron ore processing plant and 340 kilometres of railway line to its port facilities. What it actually stated was that it had selected South Korea’s second-largest builder for this \$5.9 billion order. That is construction, with opportunities for engineering, that has simply been lost to our state. As these mining projects continue to modularise, larger components of projects will be brought into the state rather than them being constructed in Western Australia and providing Western Australian jobs from which Western Australian employees can benefit. This stuff will not happen naturally; the government must continue to put pressure on these companies to look for ways they can provide opportunities for these companies to bid in either the design, engineering or construction phase of these projects. They do not need a leg-up; they need the opportunity, and when all these large construction contracts are focused on London and Houston, the simple fact is that our design, engineering and fabrication firms are completely out of the loop and do not have the opportunities. They can be competitive, but they need the opportunity.

I want to touch briefly on a couple of other issues that impact on my electorate of Kwinana. Of particular concern to me and my office is the number of constituents who continue to come through the door as a consequence of the housing crisis. They continue to come in because they are unable to get housing in our community. One of the things we need to develop in Kwinana is crisis accommodation capacity, so that we can at least stop the gap of young people having to live in cars because they do not have a roof over their heads. My wife and I attended the local Anglican Church’s Christmas lunch last year, and it was disturbing to see the number of young families who came through the door for a Christmas lunch not because they could not afford it, but simply because they were living in their car; there was no way they could afford Christmas lunch and they did not have a house in which to eat it. We are constantly confronted by the number of people who need to be accommodated, and our public housing crisis will get worse unless we as a community work harder to increase the amount of available housing stock. A refuge or crisis accommodation centre in Kwinana is needed, but we need a lot more housing and rental housing stock in this area if we are to address that demand.

Some of the schools in Kwinana—particularly North Parmelia Primary School, Orelia Primary School to a lesser extent and certainly Medina Primary School—are some of the early schools, which were developed in the 1950s and 1960s. These schools are now all coming to the end of their useful life. That is particularly the case for North Parmelia Primary School, which was, I guess, a victim of that 1960s and 1970s architecture and building style that has led to the buildings starting to become somewhat dilapidated. I must say that Medina Primary School, which was built in the early 1950s, was built like a double-brick dunno and could withstand a force 5 cyclone, I suspect—it is one of those older schools—but it, too, is starting to suffer, particularly with the quality of its roofing and the amount of asbestos in the buildings.

Turning to the south of my electorate, we have the burgeoning area of Baldivis, which has grown exponentially over the past four years and continues to expand at an alarming rate. We need to increase the public transport capacity in that area, particularly to build the links to Warnbro railway station so that people in Baldivis can benefit from the Perth–Mandurah railway line. I want to see a sort of circle route that continues to extend the bus services up to The Chase in Baldivis and along Fifty Road, taking in the areas of Baldivis Primary School, Baldivis North and the new Chimes development at the end of Fifty Road to allow those lifestyle parks to once again be serviced by public bus services.

One of the things that this government must address is the issue of congestion, particularly on our freeway system. Not a day goes by when people do not remark to me just how ridiculous the congestion on our streets is becoming. We must continue to invest in public transport and in road transport to ensure that we address the congestion problem. This was one of the issues we talked about at length during the election campaign. WA Labor had some good policies to address the public transport issues. The election has come and gone and WA has made its decision, but that challenge for this government remains and it is one that it cannot ignore.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: I turn briefly to some of the issues with health. I am very pleased that I have once again responsibility for carrying the health portfolio issues on this side of the house. I am also pleased that I now have the portfolio of science to add to that. In particular, I am looking forward to the opportunity that provides for us to comment on the importance of medical research in this state and the role that medical science plays in

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

continuing to provide capacity, strength and volume in our health system. As at the beginning of the last term, we are pleased to see the government continue to embrace the reforms of the Reid review. As many people have remarked, there are increasing areas of consensus in health policy between both sides of the house. Indeed, if we look at some of the national health reform agenda, particularly the functioning and operation of hospitals through the activity-based funding and the continued development of hospital infrastructure in Western Australia, we see that these things remain in line with Labor's aspirations as discussed in the Reid review. It is good to see that the government will continue that program.

The minister, of course, has the opportunity to oversee the opening of Fiona Stanley Hospital, which will bring significant challenges to him. These are challenges that the hospital system is already confronting. Opening that hospital with the staff, the resources and the services that it needs will be a particular challenge indeed. However, it is a fundamentally WA Labor initiative and it is one that we are very pleased that this minister is continuing to embrace.

Since Parliament rose, two very big issues have confronted us in the health sector. One was the unanimous findings of the upper house committee inquiry into Peel Health Campus, which led to the Stokes inquiry into Peel, and the other was the revelations of a series of sentinel events at Northam Regional Hospital, which also led to an inquiry. We had our criticisms of the Peel Health Campus inquiry. We thought the terms of reference were too narrow. We thought the legal clout that Professor Stokes was able to bring to that process was too restricted. However, we were very pleased to see that at least we now have some outcome or end point for what has been a very unhappy and troubled Peel Health Campus. As Professor Stokes says, the fact that patient services or patient safety was not necessarily compromised by what went on at Peel Health Campus is a testament to the heroic work of the staff at that hospital, many of whom were dedicated more to their patients than to the medical teams to which they were assigned. I am very pleased that their efforts were recognised by Professor Stokes. I am even more pleased that Health Solutions has sold the operating contract for that hospital to Ramsay Health Care. Ramsay, as we know, does a very good job at Joondalup Health Campus. I think it is good to put that rather sad and sorry saga behind us.

I want to speak briefly, if I may, about the issues associated with what has now become the modus operandi of the minister, which is to launch ad hoc inquiries into any health-related political problem that comes along. In particular, I want to talk about the issues around Northam Regional Hospital. I thought throwing the Chief Medical Officer into that field simply to achieve a political quick fix was a very unfortunate and potentially damaging way to proceed. I do not blame the minister for taking that course of action. He had to do something, particularly under the circumstances of the rising temperature around the political debate for Northam Regional Hospital. But I wonder whether we have to provide some better mechanism for patients to seek means of justice for what they see as being miscarriages of justice in their health outcomes. I want to see justice in our health system and a system that is driven by the needs of the consumer rather than by the desires of policy planners. I will be saying more about the Saulys family. Eddy and Leanne Saulys lost a wife and mother at Northam Regional Hospital under very difficult circumstances. I see the ongoing pain that they are experiencing. That pain is potentially being further exacerbated by the Geelhoed inquiry rather than remedied because Professor Geelhoed was forced to undertake a hurried investigation, which clearly has not provided the family with the comfort that it needs through knowing that justice has been served.

Dr K.D. Hames: Nor was it designed to. That is why the coroner is doing the inquiry.

Mr R.H. COOK: Indeed. Part of the problem is that the minister has gone in and done a political quick fix, but in some respects the minister has heightened —

Dr K.D. Hames: That is just to stop any further opportunity —

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister has heightened expectations and he has undermined —

Dr K.D. Hames: I spoke to him and explained to him personally that there would be a coroner's inquiry and —

Mr R.H. COOK: May I say that Mr Saulys acknowledges that the Minister for Health created time for him. The minister did not have time set aside, but he created time for him and he heard him out.

Dr K.D. Hames: He seriously needs to wait for the coroner's inquiry. That is the source of finding out what happened and, if people did something wrong, what they did and what action should be taken.

Mr R.H. COOK: Beware, as I said, of political quick fixes when we are dealing with difficult and complex issues, particularly those associated with the lives of patients and their loved ones who are left behind.

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

I want to spend just my final five minutes discussing the Governor's speech. People have often said to me that the moment we turn our backs, the moment we take the opportunity not to call behaviour or words for what they are, we are essentially supporting those words. I notice in the Governor's speech he made the observation —

Australia has one of the oldest democratic systems of government in the world, a system which was achieved without civil war or bloodshed, and which is the envy of many.

I do not say that those words are particularly grievous in their brevity, but they are symptomatic of an attitude that perseveres in our community that blood was not shed during the growth of this colony. Until we as a society come to grips with the fact that many people died in the assertion of the new legal rights that the British colony enforced upon the original inhabitants of this area, we will continue to repeat the injustices that were done at the time. Whether we are talking about the Pinjarra massacre—the “Battle of Pinjarra”—led by Governor Stirling, the killing times in the Kimberley or the range of other massacres that took place, such as the Rufus River massacre, the Flying Foam massacres on the Burrup Peninsula or Skull Creek, near Laverton, the moment we turn our backs and pretend that those things do not exist, we will forever be a small-minded colony that continues to be based upon denial or ignorance. It is the same ignorance that the member for Tangney, Dennis Jensen, expressed when he responded to a member of the Aboriginal community through a tweet, saying, “Just get over it. There is nothing for you to be aggrieved of anymore.” But as we continue to persevere with these racist attitudes either through ignorance or deliberate attempt to paper over what is in some respects a very dark past, we will forever be that small-minded island colony down south. I do not judge people for being part of difficult times in which blood was shed in the past, but let us not pretend it did not exist. Let us in reconciliation understand that we have had a racist past. Let us move forward together, not denying the history of what occurred to others. We have to look no further than the copy of *Prosh* from yesterday, which made some incredible racial generalisations, and, potentially, vilifications, this from a group of people who are trying to do good through raising money for charity and who will potentially be our leaders of the future. On this particular occasion I take the opportunity to remind the government of our history. On this particular occasion I take the opportunity to remind this to the people responsible for this publication, which we all read in light-hearted tones because we understand its irreverence and the fact that it raises money for charity, but which can equally do much damage through the expression of ignorance or racist attitudes. Let us not sit back for one moment and not call these things for what they are, because it is important that we as a community stand as one against that ignorance and those attitudes, and it is important that we as a community embrace our history, understand our history, make sure we move forward together and never take the opportunity to turn our backs on those sorts of comments and not call them for what they are.

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [10.33 am]: Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney), I commence by congratulating you on your appointment and also the appointment of all the other Acting Speakers, the Deputy Speaker and also our Speaker, the member for Mount Lawley, who like you and I, Mr Acting Speaker, is of the class of 2008. I am extremely honoured to have been re-elected by the people of Swan Hills as their representative to Parliament.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the many, many supporters over this six-month long election campaign for their help, including our campaign committee chaired by Lane Taylor, who was assisted by Shirley Wong, and included Janie Brown, Donna Dulemba, Trevor Hancock, Nikki Harwood, Justine Howard, Sue McDonald, Caroline Preuss, Elliot Smith, and Christopher Tan, as well as a special mention to Jocelyn Griffiths and Ben Morton's team at Menzies House. Their help resulted in a successful campaign and victory in the diverse electorate of Swan Hills. We did not lose a single booth on primary votes in any one of the 15 booths. It is quite obvious that without the daily help and support of my wife Shauna, my family and the many close friends, our campaign to retain the seat of Swan Hills for the Liberal Party may have had a different result. We did not falter for one moment and our increased margin is a testament to their support. It may well have been helped along by the great line from the Leader of the Opposition, “We all know Frank.”

Shauna was with me every step of the way from doorknocking to erecting large signs—I believe we had over 40 of them. All campaigns have highlights and memories; one that I would like to record for posterity was the erection of two large signs on the framework of the Brajkovich salvage yard signs. The Brajkovich family seeing us with signs thought it was a better idea, rather than having them on ground level, that we add them to their existing signs. Of course, we were without a ladder. We could have returned another day, but we were undeterred, and something you may understand, Mr Acting Speaker, there is always a practical solution for ex-farmers. Shauna stood on my shoulders—an act that Cirque du Soleil would have been very proud of! The signs went up, Shauna survived, and she hasn't left me—yet! I would not suggest that Labor members try this.

This term has seen the redistribution of the electorate and while I am sad to see both Ellenbrook and Lexia move to West Swan, I welcome Beechina, Chidlow, Gorrie, Malmalling, Mount Helena, Sawyers Valley and The

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

Lakes to Swan Hills. I look forward to serving my electorate's new constituents and the diversity these new boundaries bring.

The term of 6 September 2008 to 9 March 2013 was a pivotal period for this electorate, as commitments by our Liberal–National government saw many enduring projects that will impact enormously on the safety and economic benefit of this electorate. The most obvious one is the Liberal–National government commitment to the Perth–Darwin highway as a priority. Seldom is there one single project in any electorate with the potential to change a region forever and to create such opportunities and benefits for the area it traverses. This is the potential of the Perth–Darwin highway. I am particularly pleased that this highway was noted in the Governor's speech under the transport heading on the opening of the first session of the thirty-ninth Parliament of Western Australia. This highway will be the main artery to our mining wealth in the north and is essential not only for the economy of the state of Western Australia but also as an alternative access route for the many people in Swan Hills. This was particularly highlighted when fires in the Bullsbrook area closed the Great Northern Highway completely for some time, affecting many local residents. This local dream has taken some 20 years to become a reality. It is a highway that has wide-ranging benefits for the whole of the metropolitan area, but in particular for my constituents in the potential expansion of a large tract of land to the north of Ellenbrook and west of Bullsbrook. This commercial–industrial precinct is to be several times the size of Malaga and has an estimated capacity to employ up to 16 000 people. This benefit will extend beyond the employment of local residents; it will also have an additional revenue stream for the City of Swan and the ever-increasing needs for its expanding community services. This highway will remove a large volume of heavy truck traffic from Great Northern Highway and other local roads, which has had a negative impact on the Swan Valley farming and tourism precincts and the Bullsbrook township's expansion aspirations. Our busy east–west route, Gnangara Road, will have an intersection upgrade and a total road upgrade is due in this term. Work is ongoing to improve all safety aspects of this road.

We have had a number of improvements in our last term for education infrastructure, including the new Aveley and Malvern Springs Primary Schools, the expansion of years 11 and 12 at Ellenbrook Secondary College and the complete upgrade of Bullsbrook district K–12 school. Education facilities for our Swan Hills electorate will be further complemented and enhanced by the commitment of a new university planned for Midland.

We will see vast improvements in health facilities for our electorate. The Midland Public Hospital when completed in 2015 will provide 307 public beds and a comprehensive range of clinical services enabling Swan Hills constituents access to health care closer to home. The recent commitment of the Great Eastern Highway upgrade from Greenmount to Mundaring will provide improved safety and access for many Swan Hills constituents in the Mundaring shire to the Midland regional centre and to these new facilities. With these projects, our Liberal–National government has acknowledged both the importance and needs of the regional centre of Midland, which is well overdue. It is my belief that for many years now the resources and facilities of our rural hills communities such as Chidlow, Wooroloo, Mount Helena, Sawyers Valley, Glen Forrest and Mahogany Creek have not kept pace with our metropolitan suburbs. It is fitting that these small but important communities are finally supported to the equal of their suburban counterparts.

It is also my belief that sport and recreation facilities are the cornerstone of our hills communities. With the support of the Premier, we have made a start with the Liberal–National government's allocation of a \$150 000 grant for the Mount Helena Football Club to upgrade its club rooms, along with a commitment of \$3 million for the upgrade of the Mundaring sports centre, with undercover courts for basketball, hockey and netball, which are utilised by some 2 000 hills residents weekly. This will mean that these sports can be undertaken irrespective of the weather and be of a standard that will enable locals to compete in state competitions.

Schools such as the Bullsbrook district K–12 school and Gidgegannup, Upper Swan and Sawyers Valley primary schools have already seen the installation of school zone LED speed limit signs and the safety that these provide to the community. In this term more schools in Swan Hills will be receiving this signage, commencing with Chidlow Primary School. There are now advanced warning lights at Yagan Bridge for the Great Northern Highway–West Swan Road intersection while Mundaring already has flashing warning lights, new safety barriers and pedestrian crossings in the township. Directional arrows for Stoneville Road and Mundaring Weir Road are planned for completion in approximately May–June of this year.

Finally, the current term will see the completion of some outstanding projects for Swan Hills. There is always more to do. My commitment is to help sporting communities such as the Parkerville Equestrian Centre, the Mundaring Sporting Club, the Mundaring Tennis Club and similar other sports communities in Gidgegannup and Bullsbrook secure their future with appropriate upgrades to their facilities. The ongoing protection of the Swan Valley with its farming and tourism precincts will continue to be a priority for me. This term promises to

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

be an exciting one for the electorate of Swan Hills, and I look forward to being able to assist my constituents fulfil some of their priorities.

MS W.M. DUNCAN (Kalgoorlie — Deputy Speaker) [10.43 am]: May I first congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to your position and thank the house for the honour of being your Deputy Speaker. I thank the Governor for his speech on the opening of the thirty-ninth Parliament and congratulate the Premier and his team for their election to another term of Liberal–National government. I also congratulate all those new members who succeeded in winning a seat in this house and for the contribution they have already made through their inaugural speeches. It is very interesting to hear of everyone’s diverse background and the skills and experience they bring to our Parliament. I think I would be pretty safe in assuming that most, if not all, members present are not familiar with my first inaugural speech, so I will provide you with a bit of background on what brings me to this place.

It is an absolute honour to be elected the member for Kalgoorlie as that town is the place of my birth. Kalgoorlie has produced many members of Parliament over the life of our democracy and I hope I acquit myself as well as those who have gone before me. My family are now into their fourth generation in the pastoral industry in the Goldfields. There is a great story of my grandfather, who was originally from Cornwall, setting down my grandmother, the daughter of a pharmacist in central London, on Menangina Station in 1926, when she asked where the house was. She was told there was not one. The incredible struggle they had carving out a new life for themselves as they faced the Great Depression, untimely death and dispossession, only to fight back so our family could continue on, is one that fills me with awe and great pride.

My father and mother continued in the industry, and my siblings and I had the amazing upbringing that many view as typically Australian, but few experience. My early education was by correspondence and School of the Air. But the education I appreciated even more was what I received from the wonderful traditional Aboriginal people who lived there. Many times we went out with the ladies, and from them I learned some of the Wongi language, how to track, how to dig up and eat honey ants and bardi grubs, and how to tell whether a goanna egg had a developing lizard or a yolk inside just by the markings on the shell.

With no high school nearby, I went to boarding school in Perth at age 11 and finished with an offer to study medicine at the University of Western Australia. However, a gap year as a Rotary exchange student in South Africa, where I saw human rights denied and a police state in action, made me decide to pull out of medicine and study politics and make a promise to myself that I would actively defend our wonderful democracy.

My political life was not associated with any particular political party until I returned to regional WA, first to Kalgoorlie and the pastoral industry and then on to Esperance to expand into farming. As we struggled to rear our four beautiful kids, the neglect of regional services and the debilitating and demoralising effect of economic rationalist policies dreamt up in distant capital cities made me realise that we needed to take action before our regional towns and industries were left to wither and die. A defining moment was when a representative of the government of the day told an angry hall full of people in Esperance that if they did not like the price of power, they should move to Perth.

If anyone was going to stand up for regional WA, it had to be the Nationals. However, at the time the Nationals were far from capable of taking on the task with the prospect of one vote, one value legislation causing commentators to predict that the party would be reduced to one member. History now shows that, contrary to popular belief, one vote, one value did not disenfranchise regional voters, it galvanised them. The leader of this resurgence was Brendon Grylls. I would like to pay tribute to his leadership and, in particular, his determination to stare down the naysayers and show by example that it is worthwhile taking risks to achieve a higher goal. Congratulations, Brendon, on your election to the seat of Pilbara—a defining moment for the Nationals and a demonstration that the Nationals is now a party capable of representing the vast array of interests that have one common thread: being part of regional WA. And congratulations to those who took on the task of filling in behind him and knuckling down to retain the seats in our traditional heartland. It was truly a team effort involving a great deal of hard work, a fair bit of self-sacrifice and some miracle working with pretty scarce resources.

Part of the strategy was to try for the seat of Kalgoorlie, a seat the Nationals have never won before. When John Bowler and Brendon Grylls suggested I take it on, it did not take long for my husband, Ian, and I to decide that we were up for the challenge. The idea of returning to our roots was too tempting, although, I must say, I will sorely miss the wonderful people and places I have served in the Mining and Pastoral Region over the past four and a half years.

The Kalgoorlie electorate is 632 816 square kilometres and stretches from the stunning historic city of Kalgoorlie–Boulder north, to my old stamping ground of Menzies and Kookynie, to Leonora, Leinster, Laverton

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

and the incredible Ngaanyatjarra lands. Kalgoorlie–Boulder is a mature, cosmopolitan and diverse city of more than 30 000 people that is capable of doubling its size by 2050. Mining is the dominant industry in the electorate, with mining production worth more than \$8.8 billion in 2010–11. The region is also well known for its pastoral industry, tourism, Aboriginal art and culture and the beautiful and unique Great Western Woodlands and, of course, the Lake Ballard statues. In fact, it was the amazing buildings that caught the eye of Brendon Grylls when I first took him to Kalgoorlie in around 2006. He remarked that we could see there was a boom there a century ago and asked why people were living in containers in the present boom towns of Karratha and Port Hedland. This is where the seed for the royalties for regions was sown.

Since Paddy Hannan found gold in 1893, the mineral resources in the Goldfields–Esperance region have extended to include nickel, cobalt, zinc, copper, silver and, more recently, iron ore. For these mines to reach their full potential and for exploration and development to continue, we need to be mindful of the increasing costs the resource sector is facing. According to the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, the pressures are coming from many sources: project approval processes, duplication, time delays and complexity; imposed business costs, including the uncertainty of the changing taxation imposts of the minerals resource rent tax and the carbon pricing regime; productivity challenges, increasing labour costs and shortages; and increasing energy demand and costs. Over the past week we have seen a significant fall in the price of gold, which will bring many operations perilously close to their break-even point. Cost pressures have seen the cash cost of producing gold rise from under \$400 an ounce in 2002 to nearly \$1 000 an ounce in the last quarter of last year. These pressures must be taken into account in any review of the royalty regime, as it is important to maintain investor confidence in these uncertain times.

Over the past four years the seat of Kalgoorlie has seen great benefit from royalties for regions, and much of the thanks for this must go to the former member for Kalgoorlie, John Bowler. John was elected in 2001 and found himself in 2008 as an Independent in a minority government. Very early in the piece he threw his hat in the ring with Brendon Grylls and negotiations took place for the formation of government and commitment to the policy of royalties for regions. As a condition of his support, John saw the \$58 million upgrade to Kalgoorlie Hospital as one of the first projects to get off the ground under the Liberal–National government. Since that time nearly \$100 million of royalties for regions funding has been committed to the region, with notable projects being the Ray Finlayson Sporting Complex, the Kalgoorlie Indigenous Visitors’ Hostel, \$20 million towards new student accommodation at the WA School of Mines and \$5 million for the detailed planning for the proposed transport hub in Kalgoorlie and strategic links to ports to the north and south. Funds have found their way into all corners of goldfields life, refurbishing, reinvigorating and renewing not only infrastructure and public amenities but also hope, a way of life and pride. Projects ranging from the caravan park in Menzies to the sporting complex in Leonora, the office complex in Warburton, through to playgroup and childcare centres, tourism strategies, disability support services and event promotion have all played their part in redressing the neglect of decades, but there is much more to do.

The most important thing we must now remember as we go into the next phase of royalties for regions is that the policies are based on the mantra of local priorities and local decision making. This is what has given the people of regional WA hope, a sense of excitement and the courage to come out and say what is needed and where they would like their community to go. We must be very careful as a government not to tread roughshod over this new strategic capability we have encouraged and nurtured in these long-neglected communities. I draw members’ attention to work done through the remoteFOCUS initiative, facilitated by Desert Knowledge Australia. The project was under the leadership of Fred Chaney, a man for whom I have a great deal of respect and who has spent decades considering the state of our nation and the neglect of our remote and regional areas. In his report “Fixing the hole in Australia’s Heartland: How Government needs to work in remote Australia” he notes that Australia is the most urbanised continent in the world, with more than 85 per cent of our population living within 50 kilometres of the coast. The report looks at how remote Australia is governed and perceives government, and had a particular focus on the Pilbara. I quote from the report —

Royalties for Regions is a unilateral (that is, State) policy which addresses the traditional failure to provide financial resources to regions sufficient to meet their legitimate needs and aspirations. The next step is to ensure all governments and the different Pilbara communities are on the same page—declaring Loyalty to Regions—and this cannot be done unilaterally. A particular necessity is the incorporation of Aboriginal interests into this process through their established representative structures.

What concerns me is the talk of changing the focus of royalties for regions to more general infrastructure such as roads and rail—taking decision making back to central control. The hopes and visions of those we have enticed out to give their point of view and set their priorities will be dashed; their trust betrayed. Is this loyalty to

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

regions? Fred Chaney, in his personal reflection in the report, noted that when he went around regional Western Australia in 2007 seeking views on a human rights bill —

What we found was more of a demand for economic and social rights than civil and political rights. People felt short changed and attitudes to government (not political parties but government generally) were uniformly in terms of “them” not understanding “us”.

He went on to say —

I have also been a sometime participant and long time observer of honest attempts by governments to do better. The uniformity of failure to match results with good intentions makes it clear to me that failure is not a matter of partisan politics, of lack of good intentions, of just getting policy settings wrong, or of having the wrong people. There is a system failure here; the present instruments of government are not fit for use in remote Australia.

He asked —

... can Australia properly be a nation while there is this hole in our heartland? We think not.

There is much more to do. It is imperative that those who live and work in the regions they love have a strong say in how the funding is prioritised. That is why when the Nationals committed \$150 million to the Goldfields–Esperance strategic development plan, we did not specify how the funding should be spent. It is not for distant politicians to decide what is more important for the goldfields—is it more doctors or a drag strip? The Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission, Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils and Regional Development Australia have worked very closely with their communities and community organisations to identify priority projects for the expenditure of the \$150 million that will enable the region to work towards the vision and strategies to meet not only their critical needs, but also their aspirations. Some of the key priorities found in the work done so far are for a community hub based on the new golf course in Kalgoorlie–Boulder; town centre revitalisations in Menzies and Laverton; seniors’ accommodation and multipurpose office accommodation for service providers in Leonora; sealing of the Outback Highway to improve access to Ngaanyatjarra lands; and upgrades to key infrastructure, such as Laverton Hospital and the Goldfields Art Centre.

I turn to some of the priorities I see as part of my work as the new member for Kalgoorlie; things that will make a difference in the lives of the people of the goldfields and the Ngaanyatjarra lands. Of high priority is the severe general practitioner shortage in the goldfields. There is no doctor in Laverton or Kambalda and the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder, given the size of its population, should have 40 general practitioners. However, by 30 January this year, the number had dropped to 23. One of the major problems is that local general practitioners are so overstretched that they do not have the capacity to supervise international medical graduates or new young doctors. Finding and recruiting doctors who have these capabilities is virtually impossible, yet there seems to be an unwillingness to accept that the system is broken. We need to look at new ways to meet the needs of people in regional areas. The royalties for region southern inland health initiative committed more than half a billion dollars in the southern half of the state. Major progress is being made in recruiting doctors and installing telehealth equipment and employing nurse practitioners. However, we are still not breaking the back of the general practitioner shortage. When Brendon Grylls suggested a nurse practitioner for Laverton, it was ruled out by the Australian Medical Association, which has also greeted new developments in telehealth with great reservation. It worries me that the Australian Medical Association is protecting the jobs its members do not want to fill. It is time to rethink the provision of general practitioner services in the regions. The medical workforce is changing. Doctors, an increasing number of whom are female, require more family-friendly working hours. The small family medical practice is confronted with the need for expensive and hi-tech equipment, burdensome reporting arrangements and high insurance premiums. Many just want to be doctors, not small business owners. International medical graduates face a very difficult and often lonely road as they try to gain accreditation, and the burden on their supervising general practitioner is immense. We need to use nurse practitioners and telehealth. We also need facilities at which GPs can provide their services in a fully supported way whereby they receive a salary or remuneration for consultations without the burden of running a small business. Our upgraded regional hospitals must be used to train and supervise interns.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms W.M. DUNCAN: Another area in which we can make a real difference with a bit of attention is in the provision of mobile health services into Indigenous and remote communities. We have already seen the success of the Western Desert kidney health project and the Royal Flying Doctor Service on-the-road program, which have been supported by substantial royalties for regions funding and have delivered primary health care and

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

important health education and assessment through culturally appropriate mobile means. The Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre for Children's Earbus mobile children's ear clinics is another program that is making a difference. Studies show that 40 per cent of our Indigenous children acquire middle ear disease immediately after birth and that before the age of two one in three has a perforated eardrum. Research also shows that these children with hearing loss subsequently find education difficult, have a tendency to drop out or become socially disruptive and an increased likelihood of finding themselves captured by the justice system. The Earbus program is making a huge difference to these children and I would like to see it extended statewide.

Many of the inaugural speeches in the chamber this week have touched on the issue of alcohol consumption and its misuse having a detrimental effect on our community. The goldfields have particularly been under the spotlight on this issue recently with a section 64 notice being issued to licensees and the subsequent application of liquor restrictions in the town. Alcohol consumption per capita in Kalgoorlie-Boulder is consistently around twice the state average at 21.21 litres, with rates of night-time assaults and acute alcohol-related hospitalisations substantially higher than the state average. The same can be said for drug possession, with a dramatic increase in the availability of cannabis in Indigenous communities and high amphetamine use across the community. The Office of Crime Prevention shows that alcohol was a factor in 61.3 per cent of assaults in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Office of Racing and Gaming notes that 80 per cent of disorderly conduct offences are alcohol related. I acknowledge the severity of these statistics but I maintain that we must focus on the people who are unable to drink responsibly rather than apply ad hoc restrictions that impact on the majority who are able to drink safely and sociably. If we want to make our regional cities places where people want to live, work and spend their leisure time, we must be careful not to impose onerous and inequitable restrictions that make people feel like second-class citizens. I would, however, support a statewide approach to this issue. Considerable work needs to be done to deal with excessive alcohol consumption in regional areas. Much more focus must be given to education, prevention, rehabilitation and policing.

I have a particular concern about the prevalence of FASD—foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We must get the message out that the only safe level of consumption during pregnancy is zero alcohol consumption. Many people think this problem is found only in Aboriginal communities, but that is not true. It is a community-wide problem, although there certainly are tragic concentrations of children afflicted with FASD in places like Fitzroy Valley, and I praise the women of that region for the groundbreaking work they have done in researching this disorder and its prevalence. The national inquiry into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder has made several recommendations, including rolling out a national FASD diagnostic and screening tool, placing warning labels on alcoholic beverages, public awareness campaigns and support and education for pregnant women, especially those with alcohol dependency. We must also push for FASD to be recognised as a disability so that those who are affected have access to support and services.

It seems mandatory that at every election the issue of law and order is top of the list for attention and promises made by candidates and political parties. There is no doubt that we all have a right to live safely and securely in our homes free from threats of assault or loss of possessions. However, sometimes it is too easy to see incarceration as the solution. My colleague and well known Kalgoorlie-Boulder police officer, Hon Dave Grills, who is now the member for Mining and Pastoral Region, has often discussed this issue with me and pointed out that from his experience the vast majority of crimes are alcohol and drug related. That is perhaps where we should focus more of our resources rather than on providing more beds in jails. The member for North West Central touched on this issue last night, but I would like to add some weight to his arguments. I note that we have on the front bench of this government some people with strong credentials in economics, so I will quote from the cost-benefit analysis prepared by the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee, "An economic analysis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders: prison vs residential treatment". Here is a snapshot of some of the statistics captured in that analysis. In 2011, 81 per cent of Indigenous prisoners were convicted of a non-violent offence, and 70 per cent of Indigenous prisoners convicted of a violent offence had been previously convicted. Around 68 per cent of Indigenous prisoners self-reported having used illicit drugs during the preceding 12 months. Based on data from New South Wales, Indigenous prisoners are also significantly more likely to be dependent on alcohol than non-Indigenous prisoners. Indigenous men were significantly more likely to report that they were intoxicated at the time of the offence for which they were incarcerated. Reoffending rates are high and incarceration is associated with poor health outcomes for prisoners, including a relatively higher risk of mortality post-release. The estimated annual average cost per prisoner per day in 2012–13 is \$315. In relation to diversion, in 2009–10, nearly three-quarters of residential treatment and rehabilitation services providing services to Indigenous clients had a waiting list, yet the outcomes from Drug Court participants, whether or not they completed the program successfully, were better than for the comparative group. Participants were less likely to be re-convicted of an offence, including offences against the person, as well as drug offences. The total average cost per client per day, including both operating and capital costs, is

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

between \$204 and \$284. The analysis concludes that the total financial savings associated with diversion to community residential rehabilitation compared with prison are \$111 458 per offender. Community residential treatment is also associated with better outcomes compared with prison, with lower recidivism rates and better health outcomes. In monetary terms, these non-financial benefits have been estimated at an additional \$92 759 per offender.

So I am asking that more government resources be directed to the diversion of offenders and more accessible drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. In particular, I draw attention to the excellent work being done by Goldfields Rehabilitation Services, which has already expanded thanks to a contribution from royalties for regions, but which now needs to expand further to meet the needs of the community. In particular, it needs accommodation for detoxification. This service is changing lives for the better and saving the state healthcare and law and order costs that would occur without rehabilitation.

I would also particularly like to see the continuation and expansion of the excellent youth diversion work that is being carried out with support from royalties for regions, much of it under the excellent leadership of the former Minister for Corrective Services Hon Terry Redman. The youth justice program has been very successful, and the Honourable Wayne Martin, Chief Justice of Western Australia, commented that funding from the royalties for regions program has resulted in a very significant strengthening of juvenile justice programs and facilities in the Kimberley and Pilbara, including through the provision of supervised bail facilities, and similar facilities in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie have dramatically reduced the number of children from regional WA in detention in Perth.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Could members in the house please take their discussions outside the house, particularly while we have someone on their feet giving their Address-in-Reply speech.

Ms W.M. DUNCAN: I would not be here today without the incredible and humbling support of so many people and the encouragement and wise counsel of so many residents of the goldfields and, in particular, my dynamic and diverse campaign team. They came from all sides of the political spectrum and decided that Kalgoorlie needed a National in state Parliament. Without the leadership of Gary Brown and John Bowler, I would not have had that team. They did an amazing job, much of it without being asked. They are too numerous to list, but thanks must go to Don Hoddy, Beth Richardson and Terry Fleeton for their attention to detail. Graham Thomson, Paul Browning and Graeme Campbell were always there with strategic advice, and Sheryl and Greg Liddicoat, Anne Skinner, Jeff and Fay Jones, Gloria Moyle and Lisa Malicky were ever ready to put on the green Kermit team T-shirt and make an impromptu appearance if required. Bryce Greateorex looked after the dollars. Thanks also to Jemma Crook, Georgia Blazevic, Steve Kean, Alexis Johnson, Dave Grills and Tony Crook for their work, as well as Nola and Ziggy Wolski.

Family members, of course, are the ones who keep you strong, back you when you are feeling unsure and go the extra mile. In fact, it was the extra thousands of miles that my wonderful husband, Ian, went with his brother Ross—three trips to the Ngaanyatjarra lands distributing material and then collecting not only mine but also everyone else's after the election. To my amazing parents, John and Maxine Tonkin—John is in the gallery this morning—both of whom have Orders of Australia for their service to the goldfields, thank you for your love, support and example. And to my four beautiful kids—Kat, Anna, Elise and James—I am blessed to have your backing. You did not have to do it, but you made the Kermit shirts look stunning and you helped us man every polling booth in Kalgoorlie-Boulder with unpaid gorgeous young people.

I want to conclude by thanking my Mining and Pastoral electorate staff, Margie Thomas-Close, Dorothy Henderson and Frances Archer. Your work is professional, efficient and above and beyond. You are my very dear friends and I am glad you will still be on the team with the successful election of Dave Grills.

It is a great honour to be the member for Kalgoorlie, a real homecoming for me, and I look forward to the next four years working to reward the faith the people of Kalgoorlie have placed in me.

[Applause.]

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [11.12 am]: I congratulate all members of Parliament today on their victory at the last election. To the absent Speaker and the Acting Speakers, congratulations on your appointments.

On the night of 9 March, after the polls were closed, there were scenes of merriment in a small part of Collie that I have not seen before. There were people singing and dancing in the streets. They were singing to the music of "Locomotion" with the words changed to "Do the 'Jaimee Motion'". Somehow I think they were wrong. They danced in front of my supporters' houses. They went up and down the street tooting their horns. They thought they had won but they forgot that there were ballot papers to be counted. They forgot that while an old dog can

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

bark, he can still bite. He was still barking. To add insult to injury, they rang me at eight o'clock. The Liberal campaign team insulted me by ringing me and asking me to concede. My counters, who have been in the game for quite some time and were not so immature, had me 60 votes in front and the Liberals wanted me to concede! It just shows us how immature and how self-inflated the Liberal Party was. It spent \$250 000 trying to remove me. It did not work. People asked how I felt when the count was so close over the week. I said that it was not as close as the one before that. In 2001, the difference was 34 votes. When I went to bed on the Saturday night in 2001, I was 80 votes in front. On 9 March I was only 60 votes in front. I was still confident. One can always win if one has done the work. I believe that that is how I won the job—by working on the ground and not being a fairy dropping in from the sky, not a person who had been away for 10 years and claiming to be a Collie person and working for the infamous Troy Buswell. I am sure that helped the Liberal Party candidate's chances a great deal. I am sure she learnt a lot but I do not think it was all about politics. She may have learnt something she does not want to tell us about. But how insulting to be rung and asked to concede when you are in front. I have never heard of such a thing in politics in all my life. It means they did not understand the boxes. They did not know that at every booth I had a scrutineer who was ringing the figures through, and they were the correct figures—not because they had seen on the television that there was an eight per cent swing in some areas. It is about knowing your electorate—advice that I give to anyone who is in this room; anyone. If you do not know where the votes are coming from, you should not be in the game. It means that you have not been close enough to the issues.

But, again, it was the speech and the Facebook sites that had “tears of joy for winner”. I was not on Facebook, so I am not quite sure how that happened. But there was another young lady who was on Facebook and who had tears of joy on winning. Retractions did not come my way, which is a little disappointing. There was blame on other sites from the candidate—other people were blamed. That should not be the case. If you are the leader of the pack, you cop it as you give it, and that was not really the case there.

During the week there was further fun and games, when accusations were made about me going around and pulling down signs. I am that old now that I cannot even get over the fence, let alone pull the signs down! But, yes, some games were played within the town of Collie between both parties. I am not going to say that I was party to that because I was not, and I certainly make that very clear here.

However, overall, I think it was quite a fair and clean campaign on both sides, but, in the end, there can be only one winner. But when you spend as much money as the Liberal Party did in that election, it makes me sad that we are heading down the American path; that is, it is about how much money you have got and how much you can put out there, when quite possibly some of the kids around my area could have used that money to get a bed for the night. The way we are headed in the future with WA politics worries me. Money, and money alone, should not be how the game is played. When we look at it, you cannot even get a start in American politics to get a run at the presidential job unless you have around \$40 million. Let us not go down that track; let us have some caps put in so that we do not have to be out there spending the next four years worrying where we are going to get the money to have the next election, let alone worrying about what we should be doing for the electorate. That is something that I am very, very strong on.

There are some people along the way I must mention. As I said, it goes way back. In 2001 when I was elected by that small margin, it was something that I was not ready for. I was not ready to be in Parliament, and it took some time to get my feet on the ground. Coming from working in the underground mines, then working in the workshops just weeks before, and taking six weeks' holiday before the election, I certainly was not prepared to come here. I will always remember being introduced to the Parliament and coming around here. I did not realise there were two sets of steps in the building, because it was only the second time I had been here. I thought that the toilets were on the top floor and not on the bottom floor. It was very uncomfortable for me for a few days before I found my way around. But, from then on, I believe it is my staff and the people who have worked with me who have allowed me to succeed in a marginal seat that, at the best, in previous times, had a margin of 0.9 per cent. My first election was with a margin of 0.004 per cent. Then the boundaries changed again and it went to a margin of 0.2 per cent. After some other changes, it went to a margin of 0.8 per cent. Then, lo and behold, I had a huge win and I went to a margin of 9.7 per cent—a safe seat—for a fortnight. When they changed the boundaries again, I went back to a margin of 0.9 per cent. So, to people who think that it is only the political party that will get you across the line, I say no, it is not; it is about having good staff and hard workers, and also taking time out and working very hard yourself.

I must say that after the election victory there was nothing sweeter than visiting the aged-care units and seeing a former member, Mr Tom Jones, who is now 89 years of age. He spent 21 years in this Parliament. He was a great advocate for the coal industry. It was a learning process for me how he worked the ground. Tom is having a few problems with age, but his eyes still twinkled when the reporter asked him what he thought—he said,

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

“Bloody good!” That was a special moment in my political life. When we went to the mobile polling booths to vote and they handed out the tickets, Tom said, “I don’t want one of them.” That was his refusal to take a Liberal Party ticket! The spark was still there. It is a really great memory. It is something I have a great photo of, which will go on my wall.

I thank the supporters and the many booth workers. It was very interesting to hear the National Party talk about unpaid booth workers. This year I did not—and have never, ever—use paid booth workers. I have a great story to tell about a Liberal Party paid booth worker who turned up at one of my booths and said, “I’m here to work at the booth.” He is obviously not very politically savvy—we put a T-shirt on him and worked him. Two hours later he realised he was supposed to be on the other side! Thanks to that person for the couple of hours’ work for nothing; it was really great. He was a bit red-faced. I do not know whether he got his pay docked at all. Those sorts of things make it all worthwhile; also when people come back in and watch the count and talk about it.

I give special thanks to my staff members Laurel Dhu, Dee O’Brien, Tom Palmer, Amber Vidotto, Nola Green, Pam Anderson and Donna Davies, who, over the years, have worked hard to connect with the community and put up with the stresses and demands that I have put on them. It was really pleasing to see the polling results from booths in the southern part of Collie. It is a pretty tough area. A lot of people there are doing it tough, but they voted 84 per cent towards me—not, I believe, towards the Labor Party but towards the work my staff have done for them. That is just sheer testimony to what happens if you work with the community. To all those guys that worked in the office, thank you very much.

To Sally Talbot, Roy Skaife, David Skaife, Harrisan Burrows and all the Young Labor team, thank you. To Steve McCartney, John Kearney, Brett King and members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union, in particular the guys on the job at Griffin Coal and Premier Coal, thank you very much for not only your support but also your financial support. Without that we could not have gone anywhere near what was spent by the Liberal Party. To Gary Wood from the Collie Coal Miners Industrial Union of Workers, along with Greg Busson and Cheryl Sanders and the leadership group and members of the union, your support was much appreciated and certainly contributed to the win because we have seen what happened to the vote in Collie. Lee Edmondson and Dave Kelly and the United Voice leadership group, thank you very much, and thanks for your assistance in many ways. The other unions I must mention are the Maritime Union of Australia, the Civil Service Association, the Australian Workers’ Union, the Transport Workers’ Union of Australia, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Union and the WA Prison Officers’ Union. They all supported me, some in a personal sense involving standing at a booth, or by coming around to give me a pat on the back and saying, “Keep at it; keep working away”. Thank you very much for that support.

There are not that many Liberals in here now, but I can guess what they would say about me and my colleague from Albany: that we are just “union party hacks”. I believe that in our capitalist world we must have unions to look after the workers and the poorer paid people, otherwise we will have the American system where we will live on an indirect tax, called tips, as they do in that country. I do not want to see us go down that line. We have withstood the financial disasters that have affected the rest of the world, and yet people still say unions should be pushed out of the system; I say we still need them. The other thing I wanted to say is that if I am a so-called union hack, why am I standing here today representing a marginal seat? It is about working with the less fortunate people to assist them to get up off the bottom so they can function in society without getting into a lot of trouble or coming down with depression or those sorts of things. Union support is needed in many, many workplaces. If it is not needed, fine, but, by gee, a lot of people do not know where to turn and certainly do not have the money for lawyers and the like if problems arise.

To my local branch members, who, as ever, were willing to lick stamps, deliver flyers and have posters in their yards—anything it takes to win an election. Special thanks to Gary and Evelyn Benton. Gary is the branch secretary; he is a great worker and a great friend, who, during tough times in elections, has always been positive, willing to work, and willing to give me a pat on the back and say, “Let’s get out and get at ’em.” To all the voters who ticked the right boxes, thanks, with special mention to my home town of Collie. The vote for the Australian Labor Party was sensational and really showed who the true local was, with some of the booths reporting more than 80 per cent of the vote. I do not think there are too many people in a marginal seat who could brag that some booths were 80 per cent.

A special thanks to my family; over the years they have put up with much, I can tell you! Thanks to my wife, Anna, and children, Melissa, Heidi, Bree and Jerrie, along with my son-in-law John; Karl is a friend of theirs who worked very hard in the background. Any politician knows that we miss many family occasions, especially if we are in a marginal seat. I now have two two-year-old granddaughters who absolutely give me hell and already are showing me what to do with the new-type phones. They are the love of my life at the moment when I am able to be there, but I am sure that will wear out a little when they start to say, “Poppy, what have you got in

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

your pocket; is it \$1 or is it \$10?” because that is how the other kids have gone. It has been great to see them grow up, but I must apologise for missing some of their special moments. A special thanks to Raj Selvendra, who was also helpful in the background, along with Tom Pacey whose advice over the last week or two of the campaign was outstanding.

But I must also thank the Premier for intruding on people’s personal space with a recorded message in the electorate. My phone nearly rang off the hook and was jammed, such was the number of people who rang to record disgust at such an intrusion. This recorded message in the last week of the election was not taken to very kindly by the electorate, but it provided me with vital votes from unexpected sources. I can only wonder whether the recorded message came from an Indian call centre; we can only guess about that, but knowing that the Premier does things on the cheap, I assume it would have done.

Thanks must also go to the police minister, Hon Liza Harvey, for her firm stance in refusing to accept that people south of Bunbury in areas such as Capel, Dardanup and Dalyellup should have the same policing standards as those north of Bunbury in places such as Australind, Yarloop, Harvey and Waroona. Minister Harvey’s refusal to listen to the concerns of the grassroots of the electorate worked in my favour and salvaged vital votes—thank you, minister, for those vital votes!

Also, thanks to former Minister for Agriculture and Food Hon Terry Redman for his support of an abattoir in the stunning tourist area of Ferguson Valley, next door to the lovely village of Burekup. The abattoir had plans to slaughter 100 000 cattle a year, along with the processing of pigs, goats, sheep and chooks—great idea, but wrong place. So, thanks to them.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Because of boundary changes, I have represented the towns of Boddington, Waroona, Preston Beach, Yarloop, Myalup, Harvey, Binningup, Brunswick, Collie, Burekup, Eaton, Millbridge, Dardanup, Boyanup, Dalyellup, Capel, Donnybrook twice, Boyup Brook, Tonebridge, Balingup and many more smaller settlements. Members can see that I have had north and south boundary changes over time, and I have made many friends and many enemies along the way, but I have always listened to people; whether I agreed with them is another issue.

I heard what the member for Kalgoorlie said about royalties for regions, and it is the shortest-kept election promise of all times. Despite all the political advertising saying royalties for regions would be kept, it took only hours for the Premier to say he was changing the format to include general budget items such as roads, hospitals, schools and the like. That is just a betrayal of country people, but what betrayed me more was the absolute silence from the National Party. Self-interest—that is what it was about. National Party members did not want to lose their cars and their healthy pay packets, so they shut up and allowed the Premier to do it. There was not one word until the member for Kalgoorlie’s maiden speech in this place today, and I congratulate her on that. That was really good.

In the last week, we have heard about the Premier not being able to nail down major jobs such as Browse and Oakajee, but another one has dropped off—that is, the Perdaman urea plant in Collie. The Premier has just gone quiet on that and let it go. It is a vital structure that we need in the south west to give people construction jobs. Small businesses in the south west are really struggling. People have moved out because the construction work is in the north. We need a major job such as the Perdaman plant down there to allow people to stay in their homes, not move away from their families, and work in the region. I have not seen a great deal of support come from the Premier along those lines and we will take him to task at another time. It is easy to make election promises but it is just as easy to break them. In the previous four and a half years of this Liberal–National government, it reneged on \$100 million worth of work in the south west. I have let the side down a little by not keeping the government to task on that. Believe me, in this four-year term my greatest job is to make sure government members honour all the promises that their side has put. That will be something that I really, really will make sure happens. In fact, if the Premier is not careful and does not do those jobs, he might convince me to stand again! I am sure that I would probably break Billy McNee’s record as being one of the oldest in the house.

Moving to another subject, very quickly, in March 12 months ago, I was fortunate enough to take a trip to London with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to go to a seminar that involves all the commonwealth countries that wish to be there. It is a tremendous occasion. I would now like to use this place to suggest very strongly that all new members get the opportunity in their first year to go to London into the heart of democracy. Standing in the Great Hall where people were still petitioning, as people did 1 000 years ago, was something special to me. It was something special for a kid who grew up in the bush, a mechanic by trade, to stand there and understand the history that was put through. I walked through the tunnels underneath and looked up through a crack and saw the Tower with Big Ben at the top. The history there really, really affected the way I

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Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

thought. To go into the House of Commons and the House of Lords, have a look around and watch how the House of Commons worked was special. But of course, there is always an upside; drinks at 10 Downing Street, with a thumb in the air and a finger up—like I am doing—and thinking, “Wow! This is pretty flash.” But seriously, I think we should send our new members of Parliament there to get, smell and breathe what it was like and how it has evolved from those days. It is really, really good.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Whips should go there!

Mr R.F. Johnson: I’ll be at the delegation, if you like!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: There are plenty of offers to lead people around, I am sure! Anyway, I thought that was a good idea and I put that in my report. In the 12 years I have been in this place, it was a sensational time to go there, see that work and have it explained to me. We even sat and watched the Speaker of the time. They said, “Look, he’s just moved his eyebrow; he’s told someone up the back to shut up or whatever.” Certainly, the way question time was conducted was quite different from what we do here. A huge amount of supplementary questions were asked after that. That is one of my special requests of Parliament.

Again, I must thank the many people who have helped me over time. It has been a sensational ride, I can say, at least. I must admit on the Tuesday after the election, my wife and I sat out the back and discussed finances and where I was going and I went down to the Centrelink office to get some forms because I thought I would go on the dole the next week. All those things we had to do on the Tuesday, but at the back of my mind I knew that there was something wrong with the count. I asked my helpers to find out whether there was a box missing. There was something not right in the pre-poll votes. This is about knowing my electorate. Of course, a box of pre-poll votes was not in the main count; it had been forgotten about. The votes were posted and brought me from 120-odd behind to about 80 in front, and I managed to stay and hang on to 56 votes. Never take anything for granted in this place. Emotions go up and down. I certainly understand my opposition candidates’ emotions because before my first term I thought, “I will never win this bloody thing”. Now I am here after all the jobs have been given out and Parliament has just started; it took that long to count it. It is a special moment. I am very privileged to be in this place. When we look back, we realise that sometimes we get blasé about things. Nothing was brought more sharply into focus for me than when I transgressed on a couple of occasions and had a drink too many—officially two too many—and people pointed out to me that this is where we make the laws and do not go breaking the laws! It was a learning process. My wife gave me some very stern advice and said, “One more and there’s one thing for sure—you’re retired!” In saying that, in the two days that we discussed our retirement she reckoned that was quite good and maybe we should have also done that.

The support that has come from home and the Collie people especially has been exceptional. We hear that in Collie we all have four bums and two heads and these sorts of things, but it is a close community. It is a community that does not have class warfare. It is a community that looks after its own. I can name numerous people who have had problems and the community comes in behind and supports them. Just recently the community supported the family of a young boy when a television fell on him. The community moved in there and picked up the tab and worked very hard for those people. The seat of Collie is not only Collie; it also includes Dalyellup and Eaton, which are the emerging areas down the bottom. That will change the make-up of the seat in the future. It has just been special that the Collie people have supported me so much. I would now like to move an amendment.

Amendment to Motion

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I move —

That the following words be added to the motion —

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Barnett government has mismanaged infrastructure, in particular in the water portfolio

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [11.38 am]: I rise to speak to the amendment moved by the member for Collie–Preston to the Address-in-Reply. Naturally, this amendment relates to the core infrastructure that it is the requirement of government to provide to the people of Western Australia, and in particular it relates to the efficient and effective provision of water. The issue we want to particularly concentrate on is what has been happening around Perth over the past fortnight in relation to burst water mains causing immense disruption to commuters and residents in the inner city area. Those commuters are, of course, from all over the state and the Perth metropolitan area. They have suffered because of the failure to properly maintain core infrastructure in Perth, which has been apparent in the last fortnight. Over the last two weeks, on three separate occasions—9 April, 15 April and, indeed, yesterday, 17 April—a water main in West Perth has burst, which has caused immense dislocation to commuters around the city and immense problems for people

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

who want to go to or get home from work in our city area. These are the things that happen when governments underfund the basic, core infrastructure that provides basic services for people in the metropolitan area. This has been disruptive for people in our city. What is more, it is expensive to repair. This morning I went out and had a look at it. I walked up to West Perth and had a look at it, which is something I advise the minister to do. Maybe he should go out and actually have a look at the problem there. What one sees is a hole in the road where water has erupted out of the burst water main. What one also notices is the massive amount of reworking that has gone on with that road to cater for this problem, now on three separate occasions in the last fortnight. This is the most resurfaced road in Western Australia. It has had to be resurfaced on three separate occasions in the last fortnight at a lot of cost to the taxpayers of this state to ensure that this piece of road remains functional. Yet again there is a hole in the road because of a burst main that this minister has not ensured has been properly and appropriately repaired in the time that he has had this portfolio. It is the core responsibility of state government to ensure that core infrastructure is repaired and made good for the people of the state so that they do not suffer the sort of disruption that has gone on here.

I want to put this in a bit of context. We have also learnt that burst water mains are happening elsewhere around the city. Indeed, it has been an issue in High Wycombe. People have been complaining about a burst water main on the corner of Kalamunda Road and Abernethy Road that has been leaking so much since November 2012 that it has created a lake alongside the road. A wetland has been created alongside the road because of a leaking water main that has not been repaired, going back to November last year! What we have also learnt as a consequence of this is that, according to the Water Corporation, over the last year 21.6 billion litres of water has been lost through burst water mains and leakages. To put that in context, the Kwinana desalination plant produces 45 billion litres of water a year. Virtually half of the production of the Kwinana desalination plant is being lost through burst water mains and leakages, according to the Water Corporation's own figures. The year before last the figure was 18 billion litres, so it is increasing on a yearly basis. We are seeing those sorts of losses. When the minister stands up and says that WA is the nation's best, as I heard him say this morning, what we actually find is that in terms of the amount of water being lost, WA is the second worst in the country. Western Australia, which as we all know is the wealthiest state in the commonwealth, should be the best at everything. What we are seeing are lakes being created out in High Wycombe, people's lives being disrupted in West Perth and massive amounts of water being lost as a consequence of government failures in this state, yet the minister will not even go and have a look at the problem himself in West Perth. It is just around the corner. You can walk there. The minister can even get his government driver to take him there. It is only two blocks away. It is not that hard.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: He can float there.

Mr M. McGOWAN: You can virtually float there, as the member for Victoria Park, as is his wont, pithily said.

We have found that in the past four years this government has taken more than \$1.5 billion in dividends from the Water Corporation. In 2011–12 the dividend it took out of the Water Corporation was \$396 million. In the same period—the past four years that this government has been in office—it increased the total water charges on the average family by 53.8 per cent; 53.8 per cent and a huge dividend take at the same time ripped out of the Water Corporation. In 2008–09, the last year of the Labor government, the average family was paying \$401 a year; now it is paying \$617 a year. That is way above the inflation rate, which is around three per cent. It is a massive increase in the fees paid by ordinary families around the state in that period, a massive increase in the dividends ripped out and a massive increase in the water lost because of government failures to keep its core infrastructure in the condition in which it should be kept. We therefore see incidents like those that have occurred in West Perth on three occasions in the past fortnight. We see incidents like that occurring in High Wycombe, where artificial lakes have been created over recent months because of the loss of that sort of amount of water. We also see half of the production of the Kwinana desalination plant lost by these leakages and water mains bursts on this government's watch.

It is also shocking to see the figures that were brought to light by the member for Cockburn who asked a question on notice on 7 August last year of the then Minister for Water. He asked how much was being spent on maintenance and repairs of those pipes that we rely upon to deliver water around our metropolitan area. This is the answer provided by the government —

In the years 2009/2011, the Water Corporation's expenditure on replacement or refurbishment of water mains and pipes that were in poor condition is in the order of:

2009 —

Wait for it —

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

\$16.5 million

2010 \$17.5 million

2011 \$17.5 million

This is the statewide figure. On an annual basis the government is putting up the cost of water to families around this state by whopping amounts. At the same time it is taking out \$400 million plus or thereabouts in some years in dividends and putting in \$17 million a year for the refurbishment of water mains and pipes that are in poor condition. Is it any wonder that we see events like we have seen in West Perth when those sorts of things are taking place—a massive draw on consumers, massive dividends ripped out of the Water Corporation and a pittance put back into expenditure on water mains and pipes that are in poor condition? They are the facts that have occurred, and the people who are suffering are those commuters and residents of our city who have to endure those sorts of disruptions.

It is incumbent on the government to come clean as well about what exactly has gone on with water infrastructure in West Perth. When was it put in place? Was it put in place in the 1940s? The government needs to be honest about exactly when that infrastructure was put in place. It has said certain things about it being 50 years old. Is it significantly older than that? What sort of maintenance was put in place? What sorts of surveys were done to ensure it was in good condition so that these events would not occur? What did the government do when it found out on the first occasion that water had erupted from the road in Wellington Street, West Perth a fortnight ago? What did the government do to ensure it did not happen again? What did the government do to ensure it did not happen again when it happened on the second occasion? And now on the third occasion what has the government done? Has it actually had a look at the problem? Has the government talked to the workers down there? Or is it always up to the opposition to do those basic things that should be done by people in this place, as I did this morning when I went down there and spoke to those people and had a look at the problem?

This is a failure of the core business of government by this minister and this government. They brush it off and treat it lightly, but bear this in mind—I talked to the Premier yesterday about his hubris—the more these core problems that afflict people in the community are ignored, the more the community will get angry with the government and hold it to account. Water is one of those things that is a state government responsibility. It is the government's responsibility to ensure it is provided efficiently and effectively, and to ensure that we do not have these incidents as have occurred in High Wycombe and West Perth occurring in the future.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [11.51 am]: People could just brush this incident off and say it is just a burst water main and that these things happen. This is actually an important issue. This government hurt people with a 53 per cent increase in water charges during its first term. People have suffered in Western Australia because of that increase. Some of the people I spoke about yesterday in my first speech, the low income earners in Western Australia, have felt real financial pain because of those water charge increases along with increases in the gas and electricity charges. Having put the water charges up so significantly during its last term, this government needs to at least ensure that in return people get decent service from their Water Corporation and what has happened in West Perth and High Wycombe in recent weeks is certainly not decent service. When that water main went in West Perth the first time, we said nothing and that maybe it is the case that these things just happen. When it went a second time we said, “Well, you’d better make sure that you’ve had a good look at this pipe and make sure that the disruption that has been caused does not happen again.” Now it has happened a third time. The government cannot just say that it is a burst pipe and these things happen. The Water Corporation has had two looks at this pipe and it should have made a proper evaluation and determined what needed to happen to ensure it does not happen again. The minister might say that it is the Water Corp’s fault. It is not the Water Corp’s fault; the Water Corp works under the financial constraints of this government. We would have thought that with the 53 per cent increase in water charges the Water Corp would be in good shape in this regard. Instead, the government has taken \$1.5 billion out in dividends over the last four years and we hear from the people who actually do the work that that work is being done under more pressure than ever. This work used to be done by staff directly employed by the Water Corp; it was the Liberal Party that privatised this maintenance work. A new company took over in February last year and it has now assumed responsibility for this maintenance. We hear from the people actually doing the work that that work is being undertaken under more and more pressure. This work, like anything else, benefits from having long-term, experienced staff doing the work. When someone comes across an incident, if they have been working there for a while, they know how it is done, they have seen it before and they can get the job done quickly. We hear that the current company has lost a lot of its experienced staff to the point that it now relies on external contractors to come in and do the work. So they are not Water Corp staff; they are not staff employed by the company that won the contract; they are again one step removed. They are contractors who come in and fill in and we hear that quite often that work is not done to the correct

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

standard and so the permanent staff then often have to go back and redo what has already been redone. We cannot blame the pipe. It is only 50 years old; it should have had much more life in it. We cannot say that it is the workers' fault for the maintenance that has been done. We have to look at what system has been put in place by this government to ensure that this work is done properly, and that is where we say this government is failing. Up go the charges, out come the dividends and clearly the quality of the work looks as though it is going down. So the poor person who was sent out today, last week and, I think, a bit before that, has given an unreserved apology on behalf of the Water Corporation for the disruption. Is it not time the minister in this house gave an unreserved apology to the people of Western Australia for the mismanagement caused by this government?

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood — Minister for Water) [11.54 am]: Thank you for the chance to respond to an issue raised by the opposition, which is clearly a current issue. As it is the first time the member for Bassendean, having made his inaugural speech, has taken up a point, I welcome him to this house and look forward to the, no doubt, ensuing debates we will have on the issues of water.

A range of issues have been raised here. I will give the house an appreciation of what has happened on Wellington Street. Over two weeks there were three breaks of a pipe that is about 150 millimetres in diameter. It is a cast-iron pipe that has been in the ground for 50 years, which, against all benchmarks, is about half what should be the life of those pipelines. The lifetime should be about 100 years. It has been in the ground for 50 years. It has been buried and, given the nature of pipes of that diameter, they are not dug up and regularly assessed. When breaks occur, rightly so, the Water Corporation has processes in place to assess the nature of the breaks and to see whether there is evidence of anything more systemic. The Water Corp has done that and samples are being tested, and the soil around the pipe is still being tested; a formal response has not come back on them.

Once the second break occurred, however, a process indicated that something was a bit untoward and the Water Corp needed to make decisions around it. Once that second break occurred, the visual evidence of the pipe showed premature ageing. A decision was taken by the Water Corp on the morning before the third break occurred to replace that stretch of pipeline along Wellington Street, and rightly so. There was evidence of premature ageing and it was an issue that caused significant concern to the commuting public, as well as the people who are serviced by that pipeline. That decision was made and it is in place now. I am told that the first works will commence as early as next Monday to replace that pipe.

Circumstances around that pipe breakage still have not been resolved. One is: why did we reach this situation with a pipe that was in the ground when members opposite were in government; in fact, right back to when I was born? That could occur for a number of reasons. The Water Corp people are even taking soil samples. I think the Leader of the Opposition asked: why have they not come to a conclusion about what has happened? Some of the chemistry around that soil may be affecting that pipe. It takes time to get the results back. Quite rightly, the decision has been made to replace that pipeline. I am sure that decision will give the public some confidence that there is not a systemic issue.

I am very surprised that the member for Bassendean in almost the first public statement he has made in the media on this issue raised the old chestnut of privatisation. The alliance maintenance arrangements have been in place since 1995. That means that right through the eight years members opposite were in government they accepted and signed off on that maintenance.

Several members interjected.

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

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. Throughout the eight years members opposite were in government, they signed off on and supported the alliance arrangements that were in place. Those arrangements have been very effective in managing the maintenance of the pipes and pumps in the Perth water supply system for a long, long time. Indeed, in the past 12 months the Water Corporation's Perth water pipe system has had a measure of about 12 leaks and bursts over 100 kilometres. Against any other state's benchmark, that is outstanding service. I am surprised that the first issue the opposition raised was one of privatisation rather than what I was looking forward to—a level of calculated, measured, intellectual debate about the use of government in managing these services.

The other point raised by the Leader of the Opposition is that the government is seemingly sucking cash out of the Water Corporation and using it as a cash cow to support government coffers, which is affecting maintenance issues. I make one point patently clear: the pipe in Wellington Street has been in the ground for 50 years and there was no reason to check it unless a leak occurred. When that leak occurred, we assessed it, and now we are making a decision to replace it. It has nothing to do with a maintenance arrangement, privatisation or whatever

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

other issues the opposition raised. The key figure in the relationship between the Water Corporation and government coffers, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, is the net accruals to government figure, which basically balances out all the ins and outs, including the community service obligations that are paid by government into Water Corp for the non-profitable services it delivers, plus taking off the dividends it pays in taxes and the like. The opposition is claiming that this government is sucking money out of the Water Corporation, but, in 2011–12, the net accrual to government was \$169 million. In 2007–08 —

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Was the member for Cockburn the water minister in 2007–08?

Mr F.M. Logan: No, I was not.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: That is right! Is the member saying, “Don’t blame me?” I will find someone to blame in a second.

In 2007–08 —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Minister, I remind you that if you invite an exchange, things are likely to get a bit hectic. Members, I will call you to order for interjections. Please be quiet and let the minister finish.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: In 2011–12, the net accruals to government were \$169 million. In 2007–08, during the Labor Party’s time in government, the net accruals were \$217 million. To claim that this government is using the Water Corporation as a cash cow is patently wrong. The numbers do not match up. The opposition knows better than that. I expect a hell of a lot more from the member for Bassendean when he takes up these arguments.

The Leader of the Opposition also referred to leakage figures. National benchmarks are reported on and used as a guide to benchmark our performance against other states. It is very important to know that, in doing this measuring, apples must be measured against apples. The opposition should check its information. It has got things wrong. We do not support the amendment. I do support what the Water Corporation has done in the situation of Wellington Street. I did apologise to the public outside this house at 10.30 am. I apologised, as the minister, for the inconvenience that has been caused to the commuting public—and rightly I should have done so. It was really important that I give the public confidence that this government is putting processes in place to ensure that the problem does not happen again. The Water Corporation is replacing the pipeline—it is starting as early as next Monday—and I have asked it to be expeditious.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [12.03 pm]: I appreciate the answer just given by the water minister, which he said with such confidence. Indeed, he spoke with absolute confidence that everything that had just come out of his mouth is correct and is actually happening. Let us go back to the answers that the former water minister gave in this house in only August last year about maintenance on pipelines. I will go to the question I put to the then minister, because it goes directly to the pipeline failure in Wellington Street. Members should remember what the minister has just told this house. On 7 August last year, I asked —

- (b) does the Water Corporation have a predictive maintenance program or regime in place for its mains and pipes which calculates those most likely to fail ...

The answer was yes; and, despite what we just heard from the minister, it had nothing to do with soil sampling. The answer states —

The prediction of which water mains and pipes are most likely to fail is undertaken using a risk model. The information gathered through the inspection program is used to fine-tune the risk model and develop estimates of future replacement funding requirements.

The wording at the end is —

The program in its current format has been in place since 2009.

Unlike what the minister just told the house, a model of inspection and risk assessment of those pipes most likely to fail is in place. It has nothing to do with soil sampling; it is an inspection program and a predictive risk modelling program.

Mr D.T. Redman: You’re confused about the engineering.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, I am not. Not at all. I know a little bit more about engineering and predictive maintenance than the minister. What he just told the house, in a very confident and untrue manner, is that there is

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

no inspection and they are not regularly assessed. His words were, “They are not regularly assessed”. That is not what the Liberal–National government told this house about water mains and pipes in only August last year. It is the complete opposite. Those pipes that are most likely to fail are obviously the oldest. What did the minister just tell the house? He told us that the pipe is 50 years old, is one of the oldest pipes in the system and that they are not regularly assessed, according to the minister, but they are according to Water Corp, the company the minister runs. What is true? Is the minister right or are the answers given by his government —

Mr D.T. Redman: Can you allow me an interjection to respond?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know that the minister does not like this because he has been caught out, but he just has to sit there and cop it.

I would like to know whether the minister has just misled the house about his description of the failure of this pipeline, because we are not talking about years ago, we are talking about only last August when his government said something completely different from what he just told the house. That requires the minister to either immediately correct the record or we will move a motion against him for misleading the house.

I put it to the house there are three possible reasons for the failure of the pipeline. Firstly, the pipe clearly has not been properly assessed, otherwise its failures would have been picked up; secondly, that the predictive maintenance model that has been in place and was put in place under the term of this government does not work; and, thirdly, the failure of this pipeline is the result of the extension of the privatisation of maintenance, which again occurred under this government. The contract for maintenance has just been replaced and given to Transfield–Degrémont, and that contract is significantly different from the contracts that were in place before the Transfield–Degrémont contract was signed off. The difference between the two systems of contract is that under the current model of contracting more people who used to work for Water Corp now work for and are directed by Transfield–Degrémont. The very people who are involved in the predictive maintenance—the part to which I refer—are the ones who have gone over to Transfield–Degrémont, and that is where the problem might lie. That is not something the minister has addressed in this house. The minister has form on privatisation; he has form on failure. He is responsible for the privatisation of the Rangeview Remand Centre and the chaos that has been caused as a result. Children have been locked in an adult prison. Why? It is because this minister privatised Rangeview. He has form on privatisation.

Mr D.T. Redman: That old chestnut!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is not a chestnut; it happened only last year. By privatising Rangeview, the minister has gone from causing absolute chaos in the corrective services area, which the new minister is trying to sort out, and not very well, to flooding half of Perth! He has form. Unbelievable!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, thank you; I am having trouble hearing the member on his feet.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I think the points I have made are quite clear. The minister has misled the house and he needs to address the points he made earlier to the house. There are three reasons why that pipeline failed, and I have outlined those reasons. The minister needs to address those reasons. Finally, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Are we supposed to believe that you read Oscar Wilde?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The member for Cockburn is on his feet. He is the only member I wish to hear from at the moment.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to have one burst water main is a misfortune, to have a second is carelessness, and to have a third is outright incompetence!

Division

Amendment put and a division called for.

Bells rung and the house divided.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, while the tellers are counting, I request that, given the numbers in the house, nobody stand in the central aisles during a division. If members are voting on one side, they need to be out of the central corridor.

Division Resumed

The division, with the Deputy Speaker casting her vote with the noes, resulted as follows —

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 18 April 2013]
p148b-179a

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

Ayes (17)

Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J.M. Freeman
Mr W.J. Johnston

Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Mr M.P. Murray
Mr P. Papalia

Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr P.B. Watson

Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.A. Templeman (*Teller*)

Noes (33)

Mr P. Abetz
Mr F.A. Alban
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr T.R. Buswell
Mr G.M. Castrilli
Mr V.A. Catania
Mr M.J. Cowper
Mr J.H.D. Day

Ms W.M. Duncan
Ms E. Evangel
Mr J.M. Francis
Mrs G.J. Godfrey
Mr B.J. Grylls
Dr K.D. Hames
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Mr C.D. Hatton
Mr A.P. Jacob

Dr G.G. Jacobs
Mr R.F. Johnson
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love
Mr J.E. McGrath
Mr P.T. Miles
Ms A.R. Mitchell
Mr N.W. Morton
Dr M.D. Nahan

Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr J. Norberger
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr A. Krsticevic (*Teller*)

Pairs

Ms S.F. McGurk
Ms R. Saffioti
Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J. Farrer

Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr W.R. Marmion
Ms M.J. Davies
Mr T.K. Waldron

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion Resumed

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [12.18 pm]: I would like to begin my response to the Address-in-Reply by acknowledging and congratulating all the new members—I was able to carefully listen to the contributions from the members for Fremantle, Kimberley and Bassendean—and welcoming them to this place. Having gone through an election, as all members have done, many things stick in one's mind. One of the most important things is the contribution of those who support us and who want to help us on our campaign journey. I was incredibly fortunate to have a wonderful campaign team around me. I want to acknowledge the roles that they played. The people who were most precious to me, giving me their assistance throughout the campaign, even during times when things were getting tough, and who made remarkable contributions include people such as Peter Whitelaw, who did such a great job helping me right throughout with letterboxing and being a booth captain.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, there are too many conversations happening around the chamber; thank you. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Gosnells.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I thank Salim Youssef and his wife, Amal Youssef; Tanasija Marjanovic and his wife, Lubica; Michael Ayling; Eve Omacini; Nuala Piper; Pierre Yang; Vibi Ahnstrom; Di Meakins; and, indeed, the rest of the Gosnells—Thornlie branch of the WA Labor Party. And I neglected to mention Marcia Maher as well. They made fabulous contributions—contributions that came from their hearts because they believed in the Labor cause; they believed in what we were standing for. They understood the quality of our policy commitments. They could see that they were the policies that would really lead to improvements in the lives of the people in the Gosnells electorate.

Some of the things that we were calling for were increases in the number of police in our area, improvements to police numbers, and investment in schools. We had a commitment to a \$30 million upgrade of Thornlie Senior High School. We were committed to ensuring that there was a rapid rollout of the electronic school zone signs to all schools in the electorate. We have been committed to an improvement plan in the centre of Gosnells for an area known as Lissiman Street, and making sure that that improvement takes place. We were committed to ensuring that the Nicholson Road–Yale Road–Garden Street roundabout was improved to a standard that had slip-roads around it and also some traffic control lights to smooth the flow of traffic around a roundabout that becomes incredibly congested. We committed also to the construction of an extension of the Thornlie train line through to the Mandurah line. We committed to that and it is something that people really became enthusiastic and excited about. I have no doubt that people voting in the Gosnells electorate knew very well that this was

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

going to be a major boost to our area, a major improvement to our quality of life, because it would give us an alternative to using the car to get around and to sitting in traffic jams. The Metronet plan and the stations that it was going to deliver to our area were heartily endorsed by the people of Gosnells. People were very excited about the idea of a station at Nicholson Road and at Ranford Road. I believe that those things really captured people's imagination and helped contribute to my re-election to this place.

I note that our opponent, the Liberal Party, made certain commitments to the electorate as well. I am very keen to ensure that over the next four years the Liberal Party is held to account on the delivery of those commitments that it made to the people of the Gosnells electorate. It is absolutely essential that it delivers on these things, and I am going to list a few of them. The Liberal Party committed to improving lighting at the Gosnells train station and to closed-circuit television for the Gosnells and Thornlie train stations; that is additional to the CCTV that is already there. The Liberal Party committed to improving that so it extends out to the bus stands. It committed to a uniformed police youth engagement officer to be permanently on site at the Gosnells Police and Community Youth Centre. It is absolutely essential that we have that presence there. That is the sort of mentoring presence that the youth who are at the PCYC really appreciate. It is the thing that helps break down that sense of us and them between young people and police. It gives them the confidence to trust in one of our most important institutions in this state: our police service. That is a commitment that the Liberal Party made.

Another commitment was community consultation on this area known as Lissiman Street, where we know that we have an antisocial behaviour problem. We also have a high level of criminality that emanates from this area. People have been crying out for this area to be improved, for it to be developed, so we have got to the point of an improvement plan. But the next phase in the development of an improvement plan is a whole lot of community consultation, and the commitment made was for that consultation to start midyear, so I look forward to seeing that. Further, there is the permanent retention of the Gosnells Police Station. I look forward to seeing that absolutely set in stone, and improved upon, in fact, because commitments were made around improving that police station and providing additional capacity. I will come to that point in a moment.

The Liberal Party also committed to the rollout of electronic school zone signs. A program is also being talked about called kids culture, which would provide up to \$200 a year to enable children in Gosnells and Thornlie to be involved in cultural activities similar to the program that assists children's involvement in sporting activities. It is a very important initiative and one that I want to see delivered.

Up to \$3 million was committed to a child and parent centre at Gosnells Primary School. That is to be built between 2014 and 2016. Southern River College and Thornlie Senior High School, and possibly other schools, will be assisted with their independent public school bids by experienced principals. These are commitments that were made which I will be keen to see implemented.

A very important environmental asset to the electorate of Gosnells is the Canning River foreshore. A commitment was made to a \$5.36 million program for the improvement of water quality and nutrient control. There are serious problems along the river with water quality and nutrient control. There are also problems with weed infestation. For that, the Liberal Party made a commitment to build a \$3 million wetland on the Southern River that would control the flow of nutrients into the river. I am also keen to ensure that that is implemented.

I mentioned policing and the Gosnells Police Station. There was a \$3.7 million commitment to deploy mobile policing facilities in Gosnells plus an extra \$4 million for targeted patrols in Gosnells over four years. I am very keen to see that that is also delivered. These commitments were made by the Liberal Party. I have got copies of them here; I made sure I downloaded them. I will be able to present those to the media and ensure that there is continual discussion and demand for these things, and that they are not forgotten about now that the election is out of the way. We will make sure people remember these things and continue to ask for them. There is talk about an additional detective and police officers as well as a share of a \$12.5 million capacity upgrade for the Gosnells and Canning Vale Police Stations. There will be 50 police officer regional operations groups south of the river. The venue for that is yet to be confirmed, but \$34 million was committed over four years targeting high-volume trouble spots—we assume in the Gosnells area because we have trouble spots there. They are some of the things that have been committed to and that I am very keen to see implemented.

Another issue that was raised with me when talking to constituents during the course of the election campaign was a sense of neglect. People felt that we were being forgotten about, that the south eastern corridor was not receiving the attention that we really deserve. I explained to people that yes, we have had four years of a Barnett Liberal government and that we were not receiving the treatment that I believe we deserve. People had this sense that we were not being seen as equals with other Western Australians and that we are being left behind. I tried to explain why it is that we are not seen as equals worthy of the same sort of service provision and infrastructure investment as other Western Australians. I can only ponder why it is that some in the Liberal Party see people in

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

Gosnells as not being the same, even though we have a general view in this place that we should all be treated as equals. I was struck by the fact, when listening to the oaths that members make when we are sworn into this place, that 21 members opposite swore their highest oath of allegiance not to the people of Western Australia but to a monarch who resides in another country. I think that shows a view amongst those opposite—at least 21 of them—that we are not all equal; that there are some people who have, by birthright, an access or entitlement to other things. I do not want to get into a whole debate about the virtues of a republic versus a constitutional monarchy —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That is a long bow to draw.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: — but it does, Minister for Police, give us an indication of how people view the rights of some versus the rights of others. If you sit on that side of the chamber and swear an oath of allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II and her heirs and successors and you do that ahead of swearing your allegiance to the people of Western Australia, I think it indicates that you believe that that person and her heirs and successors are somehow above those Western Australians.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: That is a reality that you need to come to terms with, and 21 of you made that choice.

Mr A.P. Jacob: So did a number of yours.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Only one person on our side—well spotted!—and I have actually tackled that person; I believe it was an administrative error on the form that was sent in. Twenty-one of your side were adamant that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her heirs and successors were the people to whom you should be swearing your ultimate oath of allegiance.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: You'd think you would get it right if it was an administrative error.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I will move on, because I want to say a number of other things and turn to matters relating to my new portfolio responsibilities and express how honoured I am to be the opposition's shadow Minister for Environment and spokesperson for climate change and lands. It is a very exciting portfolio area, and I will go into it in some detail.

Before doing that, I would like to pay tribute to the work of Keiran McNamara, the former director general of the Department of Environment and Conservation, and acknowledge his passing. I first met Keiran I think back in 1999, when he was the director of nature conservation in the then Department of Conservation and Land Management. I well recall that he was looking at some of the work I had been involved in via the annual report of the Department of Environmental Protection and said, "Look at those land clearing figures; how come they don't quite tally up with what we have over here?" At his director level he was looking at that level of detail. I remember being very proud that in that financial year—I think it must have been the financial year ended 1999—Keiran was able to spot that we had managed to constrain land clearing in Western Australia, approved through a notice of intent to clear process that was done under the Soil and Land Conservation Act, to 179 hectares. Keiran's question was: "How come I am seeing a lot more land clearing than 179 hectares?" But the discrepancy was due to clearing associated with other approvals processes. So, in his diligent way, he was able to spot that. I will return to this issue of legislation that seeks to protect native vegetation in this state. But that is an indication of the level of diligence that Keiran McNamara always practised in his work. He went on, of course, to become director general of the department, and I think with Hon Dr Judy Edwards' encouragement he became a great believer in community engagement in the operation of his agency. He was able to see that by working with the many community groups that exist in the environment sphere, some very good results can be obtained with the support of the community. Keiran came to understand that.

I also want to pay tribute to my predecessor, Hon Sally Talbot, and the excellent work she did in this portfolio area. I acknowledge the intellect she brought to so many aspects, particularly around the development of container deposit legislation. I am sure the minister is aware of the bill that we presented in this place a couple of years ago—it was presented by Hon Eric Ripper—and the detail in that. If the minister needs a blueprint on how to implement a Western Australian container deposit scheme, he has it there. It really is very carefully thought out. I believe that in June the minister will get some sort of sense whether it is realistic to seek a national container deposit scheme. We have been waiting for that for a very long time. My sense is that there will always be a reason for a national scheme to not go ahead, but the blueprint for a state-based scheme, with the financial modelling and legislative framework that goes with it, is all there. That will be a very exciting development. Depending on the detail of the legislation in that area of container deposits that the minister eventually provides to us, the minister can look to our support, but obviously we will need to see the detail.

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

I want to turn to a broader issue.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: One thing I think that Western Australians really do look to these days is a preservation of environmental safeguards. People do not want to see any weakening of the environmental standards that we currently have. I am aware that the government will come under pressure from certain groups to streamline assessment processes. Yes, in part and at times there is scope for that streamlining to be a reality and for those changes to be made, but be careful, minister, that that does not lead to a weakening of those environmental safeguards. I am particularly concerned by some comments that the Premier made to ABC Rural reporter Belinda Varischetti on 8 April. He was talking about the very topical issue of what we can do to help support farmers in the eastern wheatbelt. If I have time, I would like to talk more about the issues and challenges that they face and how we can assist them. That is a complex issue. But it was worrying—this did not get into the headlines, but I saw it in the transcript—that the Premier, according to my notes, made the comment —

Clearing: that can be quite controversial but again I think we need to trust farmers to manage their properties and manage them well.

Different interpretations could be put on that, but to me it suggests that the Premier's thinking is that we could actually give farmers some exemption from the need to apply for a clearing permit. I think that would be very damaging. It would be an erosion of those environmental safeguards that I was speaking of, and that would be most unfortunate. I do need to stress here that the vast, vast majority of landholders and farmers in this state thoroughly understand the importance of protecting native vegetation and manage their land in an intelligent way, making sure that we preserve environmental values, so that we do not have situations in which someone clears land high up in a catchment that then leads to the erosion of soil on, or the salinisation of, a property lower down in a catchment. Unfortunately, that is our history. I would love to know what the latest figures on this are. It was only 10 years ago, when Hon Hendy Cowan had brought into effect the State Salinity Council, when we had projections of one-third of the wheatbelt going to salinity. That frightening figure was the work of the State Salinity Council that then became the Natural Resource Management Council. I would like an update on those projections. I would love to think that the rate of salinisation has been halted, partly through those farmers being involved in good land management. I think the reality as well, though, is that the rate of salinisation has reduced because of a decline in rainfall. The amount of rainwater coming into catchments has dramatically reduced, causing its own set of problems, which has meant that the water that rises lower down in the catchments is not the same volume that we had before, so there have been changes there. But I return to this point: we need to make sure that we preserve those environmental safeguards.

The Premier is a landholder. I am not sure whereabouts in the Toodyay catchment area his property is, but I would love to think that he is able to make observations from that property to see the importance of looking at land management on a catchment scale. If people at the top of a catchment are just looking for their own personal self-interest to clear land and they are not considering the impacts further down, we are missing the point. That is why we need these safeguards and this thorough system. We need these checks in the system so that if there are no environmental or land degradation consequences and someone is not going to send their neighbour's paddock saline, we may be able to clear things. If people think that their present financial woes—for example, cases out in the eastern wheatbelt—will go away if they clear an extra 50 or 100 hectares and that will turn around the financial viability of their property, they should be seeing a farm business manager or adviser. On that point, we have been talking a lot about these eastern wheatbelt farmers. I know that for many years the Department of Agriculture and Food has charged the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation unit with the task of enabling people to transition out. It was an adjustment process. I hope that there is sufficient funding in the forthcoming budget to ensure that that process can carry on.

I turn to another slightly different issue. The night before last I was able to attend the Western Australian Naturalists' Club's annual Serventy memorial lecture, which was given this year by Professor Steve Hopper, foundation professor of the School of Plant Biology at the University of Western Australia, who was formerly the head of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, London. I really urge the minister to get briefings from people such as Steve Hopper and the many experts the minister has in his agencies.

Mr A.P. Jacob: I read one of his essays last week—very good.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: There is some wonderful research that he has undertaken. One of the points of the memorial lecture that he gave the other night was that we know the importance of habitat preservation. Indeed, when the WA Naturalists' Club was founded in 1924 one of the things that Dom Serventy said was that we have to protect habitat areas. We must not let it get bowled down without properly understanding what is going on there. It is one thing to protect habitat and another to fully understand the processes that are going on in those

Mr Ian Britza; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Wendy Duncan; Acting Speaker;
Mr Mick Murray; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Fran Logan; Deputy Speaker; Mr
Chris Tallentire; Mr Ian Blayney

habitat areas. The topic of Professor Hopper's speech was pollination processes in habitats and how fascinating it is to see that in the south west of this state a remarkably high percentage of our flora is bird-pollinated, whereas in other parts of the world we do not have that at all. This has all sorts of implications for the size of habitats that we need to preserve and their proximity to other areas. It has implications for our horticulture industry. If we do not fully understand the pollination processes, we could be missing out on opportunities in horticulture and likewise the conservation and regeneration of areas. That was a fascinating presentation and an indication of the quality of research that we have and how that research and that science is done in conjunction with the broader community in Western Australia.

I turn to the new administrative boundaries and arrangements for the Department of Environment and Conservation and the intention by the Barnett government to split the DEC into the department of parks and wildlife. From the outset I am concerned with that title, recognising that parks in this state occupy about only eight to nine per cent of the total surface area of the state. The selection of those park areas has often been haphazard. It has not been a particularly scientific selection process. It has been a case of, "There is some land there that is not suitable for agricultural or pastoral purposes, so we will put that into the conservation estate." A fair bit of that has gone on. Nevertheless, it is precious land and, as the minister has indicated, there is scope there for some exciting tourism opportunities. But at least 90 per cent of the surface area of the state is not included in the reserve system. How we manage biodiversity values on that whole other area of the state is the key thing. The minister might respond by saying that the wildlife unit is going to deal with those other off-reserve conservation issues, but I am just worried about an imbalance there. A lot is going to depend on whom the minister appoints as the director general of that new agency, but the weighting could be so strongly towards the parks management side that I wonder where things like the old Department of Conservation and Land Management science area, where this fantastic work has been going on that is so valuable to our growing body of knowledge and that helps us to understand the conservation estate, will fit in. I know there is talk about making sure that it is there, and that is why the term is "parks and wildlife", but it does sound a bit like the old Wildlife Conservation Act from the 1950s. I do worry about the tone of things from the outset. I worry about things like the land for wildlife unit within DEC and where that is going to sit. There are a number of things that I am concerned about.

I just wanted to very quickly touch on a proposal that has already been referred to the Environmental Protection Authority. This, though, might require the minister's intervention. I know that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, will have an interest in this as well. It is a proposal to extend the dog fence to ensure that wild dogs are kept out of the southern pastoral areas. I think we need to check the value for money we will get out of this extension. We need to check what the ecological impacts of this fence might be. In Western Australia we have mass migrations of emus from time to time. When they hit those fences and congregate and cannot get past, there can be mass suffocations of emus. What is their role in the spread of seed stock into new areas? I can think of one species, *Persoonia longifolia*, that depends on that transit via an emu's gut into new areas. If we do not have that, we do not have that species being transported. That is just one example. The issue here is what to do with this proposal for a huge fence extension. It is huge. Depending on the option that is chosen, it is an extension of 500 to 730 kilometres. A report by GHD does give us a lot of background information, but clearly we need some sort of environmental assessment. I know it has been referred to the EPA. I think, though, that it would be highly appropriate for the minister to use his powers under section 16 of the Environmental Protection Act to ensure that there is a formal assessment of the environmental impacts of that proposal. At the same time, we could check that there really is the need for this. I have heard that there is a serious problem in the Yilgarn area with wild dogs, but I have been hearing that doggers in other areas are having trouble finding dogs.

As I conclude, I know that we will be discussing things like rangeland reform. That is certainly an exciting area to make sure that our rangelands are managed correctly and there are opportunities from an economic, social and environmental perspective. That will be absolutely at the core of the work that I will be pursuing over the course of the next four years. I look forward to helping Western Australia be a truly prosperous state; a state that enhances and protects its environmental values and ensures that people's personal wellbeing and finances are as strong as ever.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [12.48 pm]: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would first like to congratulate you on attaining your position, and I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his election to his position. I would also like to congratulate my fellow Acting Speakers on their appointment. I would like to congratulate all members on their election to represent their people, and in particular those who have come to this place for the first time. I also congratulate all ministers, and in particular new ministers, on their appointment. I would like to thank the electors of Geraldton for the confidence they have shown by re-electing me as their representative. In particular, I would like to thank Len Carroll for his help and support during my campaign and the many other people who

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helped. I am proud to be part of a re-elected government that has done a good job and has a practical vision for Western Australia. I think we have an unbelievably bright future.

Geraldton has developed steadily during the time of the Barnett government. Investments by our government in Geraldton and the midwest to serve Geraldton have totalled \$1.05 billion. This includes the \$339 million put aside for the Oakajee port project, which I am totally confident we will build. As the Premier has said, the recent opening of the Karara magnetite project, WA's first producing magnetite project, is the first piece in place for the Oakajee puzzle. Karara's first stage will produce eight million tonnes per annum, and the project is expected to grow by eight million-tonne increments to 32 million tonnes per annum. The case for stage 2 to take it to 16 million tonnes per annum is being worked on now. Beyond stage 2 the project will need Oakajee port. The railway line from Karara to Geraldton port has recently been rebuilt to carry the extra tonnages; an investment approaching \$500 million. Karara has told me that it intends to build up and source locally that proportion of its workforce. I acknowledge and appreciate this. It is also making investments via its community farm and contributions to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and to Parkerville family support network. I also look forward, hopefully, to Karara being joined by Asia Iron and its Extension Hill mine. Another company that is working towards a start is Top Iron, and I also wish it well.

Other developments in mining in the midwest include Western Australia's first uranium mine by Toro Energy near Wiluna, which has been given the go-ahead; Mutiny Gold's various deposits that are moving towards development; and Ferrowest's Yalgoo deposits and associated pig iron plant. There are many more projects. The midwest is quite prospective and relatively unexplored. All of these projects have a large economic impact on Geraldton, and the city, the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry and I are keen to get as much as possible economic spin-off from them.

I want to pay credit to Hon Norman Moore, who will retire at the end of this term. He has had a long involvement with the north and the midwest. In the last term he was Minister for Fisheries and saw through a lot of changes for which I think he will be well judged. Likewise, he was a popular Minister for Mines and Petroleum and was very well regarded by the industry. I want to thank him for coming to Geraldton and launching my campaign earlier this year.

An issue that has also raised its head recently is fracking. I understand how this process is intended for Western Australia in contrast with the process in other states and nations. Here, for example, the wells will be much deeper. However, it is clear that there is widescale community concern about the practice, and I think it is clear that the industry and the government will have to work to address these concerns.

During the last Parliament I made two grievances on behalf of the pastoral industry of Western Australia. The main concerns were the huge increases in pastoral rents and the impact of wild dogs. I state again that neither of these issues has gone away. If anything, the pastoral industry's position is even worse now than it was when I made the grievances. I again urge the government to address these issues.

Staying with rural matters, as a fairly recently retired farmer I naturally follow farming issues. Like most members, I have been concerned about the problems of the eastern wheatbelt in particular. Both state and federal governments have spent large amounts of money in the past pursuing rural adjustment. I refer members with an interest in this area to a publication by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation evaluating the schemes. Looking back at the schemes of the 1980s and 1990s, it is now clear that they addressed the problem with concessional credit, short-term carry-on finance, household support and re-establishment, and funds were also available for exceptional circumstances, mostly drought. However, at the time these schemes were criticised in Western Australia for being too hard for us to access. Governments went away from these programs and the focus turned towards improving management to make farms and farmers more resilient, but it is interesting to note that the Queensland government stayed in this space with the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. The issue here is how various lenders evaluate farmers. They use a number of formulas to decide on a farmer's borrowing capacity and to analyse them. Hence they prefer equity to be above 80 per cent if possible; total machinery value not to exceed gross income; drawings not to be above 10 per cent of gross income; repayments of loans not to exceed 15 per cent of gross income; direct cash costs not to exceed 60 per cent of gross income; and generally a preference for some livestock income.

A couple of points are worth making. Personally, I can say that a couple of droughts can have a huge impact on all business planning. Drought in 2006 reduced my farm income by over 90 per cent and in 2007 another drought reduced it by over 80 per cent. This trashed all of my planning and put me back at least 10 years. It took nearly all of my off-farm funds to restore the position. I decided to exit the industry, mostly because of fear of future droughts. Drought impacts on land values, which fall, pushing down everybody's equity level. What is most feared is a snowball effect from ever-decreasing land values pushing more people into a riskier profile. This has

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to be avoided at all costs. Another issue that has had some impact is a change in the sources of rural finance. Traditionally, farmers who did not fit into the banks' formulas anymore could be passed to stock firms, mostly Elders or Landmark—formerly Wesfarmers. They had different policies and, while charging higher rates, had slightly easier criteria. They were probably closer to the farmer and kept a closer eye on them. I understand they are no longer as active in the market. They were probably also better at encouraging farmers to leave the industry since they offered the services of selling properties and conducting clearance sales.

We face a very real problem here. It is literally five minutes to midnight. Farmers in my area traditionally mark Anzac Day as the latest day by which they should be ready to go—with everything ready for seeding, all supplies in place, staff organised, fuel, fertiliser, seed and chemicals on hand, and machinery serviced. I commend the WA Farmers Federation for the seasonal finance assistance scheme paper and proposal that it has put together. The proposal revolves around an assumption of about 500 growers needing \$200 000 each, totalling \$100 million. The main problem, as I see it, is that it is, as I said, five minutes to midnight. I cannot see how the scheme could be put in place in time. It could probably be in place by next seeding. I really think that this year we will just have to work with each farmer's individual lenders to see whether most can be got over the line. In the back of our minds, we must ask whether this is another roll of the dice and whether there will be another drought, as much as I hate to say it. Longer term I would like to look at the Queensland model and see whether we think it is still relevant for Western Australia. Longer term there are large areas of Western Australia that can and should be farmed. Wheat is in the pipeline from the CSIRO that copes much better with moisture stress, as is genetically modified wheat with a gene from an Antarctic plant that could be resistant to frost. This project is apparently looking quite promising, as is the use of all available new technology to make farms more efficient and resilient in a challenging climate environment. I spent three and a half years evaluating research projects for the Grain Research and Development Corporation and came away confident that agriculture has a good future in this country, but one that will always be challenging. I encourage all members to get hold of the Robson report into metropolitan local government and to read it. In the time I have been in this place I would say it is the best written report I have read and I would like to congratulate the authors for that. People who know of my background of having a difficult relationship with the merged City of Greater Geraldton might find this a bit of a surprise. I think the case for mergers in the city may be far clearer than in the country. Frequently, by merging a number of large sparsely populated rural councils we just end up with larger less economic and less efficient councils. However, there is a lot in the report that I liked. I question the mission creep of local government and I think roles should be clearer. The roles of CEOs and mayors need to be clearer and I endorse the recommendation that the Public Service Commissioner have a role in appointing council CEOs.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 190.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm