

Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr John Quigley; Acting Speaker; Mr Jim McGinty;
Dr Kim Hames; Ms Janine Freeman; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr John McGrath; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Murray
Cowper

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara) [2.45 pm]: Members would be well advised in reflection upon question time not to absorb all of the advice of the Leader of the Opposition word for word—sorry, the Premier!

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Always absorb the advice of the Leader of the Opposition!

Dr K.D. Hames: Always?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The current Leader of the Opposition.

I have been in this place for a while and I remember petitions being tabled that got people into a lot of strife. I would advise my new colleagues to reconsider the advice to always table petitions that are delivered to them by anybody, in light of —

Mr C.J. Barnett: If someone called Brian Easton turns up!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Yes, the Brian Easton petition and the experience of people in the upper house in reference to the presentation of petitions.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: A minister might like to ask some questions about a petition, the petitioner and maybe even the code of ethics that the government has adopted before presenting petitions to the house. However, I have been distracted by question time from the speech I was going to deliver in the Address-in-Reply.

I was saying in the Address-in-Reply that I have been around for a while and have had the opportunity to listen to members deliver their inaugural speeches. I have certainly enjoyed this batch of inaugural speeches. I have been —

The SPEAKER: Order, members! If members have other business in the house that they want to do and they do not want to hear the member —

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I am all right.

The SPEAKER: I would like to hear the member and I think some other members in this place would also like to hear him. I am struggling on occasions to hear the member for Pilbara and I know that he has a great voice —

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I think yours is all right, too.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

If members have other business that can be conducted outside the house, I think most members would appreciate they do so, so the member for Pilbara can continue in relative silence.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Mr Speaker, I have also always enjoyed your poetic voice and the poetry that you have recited from time to time. I hope that admiration I have for the Speaker might protect me from time to time if I get called to order.

The advantage of being around long enough in this place is that one gets to hear some great presentations from members about their stories; what led them into politics and what shaped and formed them. I will talk quickly about my own experience of the inaugural speech that I delivered in the other place some 26 years ago. The only bloke who was there is the current Leader of the House in the other place. It does not look like he will be there for much longer; it looks like he might be on his way to London or somewhere else very quickly to relieve the current government of its combined embarrassment. However, he was there at the time. I was delivering my inaugural speech when the place broke into uproar. The then National Party member Hon Norman Baxter was chucked out during my inaugural speech for interjecting. He was the oldest member of the chamber; I think he was about 65 or approaching 70 something —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: He'd been there 26 years!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: He had been there a lot longer than that, I think!

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However, Hon Norman Baxter was chuckled out during my inaugural speech for interjecting and challenging the presidential rulings at the time. In the end, the whole place was in absolute uproar because there had been a lack of enthusiasm to hear the story that I wanted to share with the house; namely, my story.

My story involved, I suppose, an unusual arrival in the Parliament. I decided to run for Parliament while I was an inmate of the prison in Wyndham. I was under arrest and locked up in the Wyndham prison in the days of Sir Charles Court's government. I remember that I used to come to this place to watch Sir Charles and his colleagues. However, in that time I had the task of organising an election campaign for my colleague Ernie Bridge who was elected to Parliament in 1980 against the wishes of the Court government of the time. It had embarked upon strategies aimed at preventing Aboriginal people voting for the Parliament. Several attempts were made to change the Electoral Act, some of which were defeated on the floor of the house. One of them was defeated by the then Liberal Speaker, Ian Thompson. He secured the defeat of some of the legislation that was being advanced at the time that was aimed at making it difficult for Aboriginal people to participate in the democratic process. Nonetheless, the government eventually passed legislation that made it an offence to persuade or induce people to apply for a postal vote. We took some advice from a good QC on what that meant. The QC—a bloke called Paul Seaman—said, "Look, just make sure that when you're offering people postal votes, never let your own will overcome the will of the voter." He also said, "I've also got a piece of straight political advice: no matter what you do, you are going to be charged and arrested at the end because the election you're going into is so politically contentious." We were trying to help the first Aboriginal candidate stand against the Liberal Party member for Kimberley. We took that advice on board; we knew that we were going to have to be careful, but that no matter what we did, we would have to face the political machine that swarmed up to the Kimberley immediately after the election and was known as the fraud squad. They inadvertently arrested a Liberal Party member by mistake, a bloke called Jim Wilson. He subsequently stood against me as a parliamentary candidate. Four Labor Party members were arrested, including Steve Hawke, the former Prime Minister's son—Bob Hawke was not yet Prime Minister at that stage. We were all shoved off into our various police cells; in my case it was Wyndham Regional Prison.

Mr J.A. McGinty: Who let you out?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Thank God the member for Fremantle was not Attorney General at the time! I eventually got out, but it was a formative experience. It was an experience that brought me into Parliament with some strong passions that have shaped me and my attitudes towards my political opponents, as opposed to my enemies. Over the years I have watched politics in Western Australia change for the better. I have watched the way in which members have expressed their interest in, commitment to and support for Indigenous involvement in politics. During the opening of this Parliament I witnessed the celebration and participation of Aboriginal people in the ceremony out the front. Great changes have occurred over the years. Many people have participated in ensuring and securing those changes.

The journey began for me when I was a lad in a little town called Parkes in the wheatbelt area of New South Wales. My home was in a backstreet leading to the west, a street called Dalton Street. I actually entered my old address on Google Maps a while ago. I have not been there since I was nine years of age. I saw the street where I lived and the house opposite. Memories came flooding back about regular visits from the Gypsies who used to come in from the west. I have amazing memories of the Gypsies who used to come into my father's store, wanting to bless his money. He could never afford to have his money blessed; it normally meant that some money would be taken from the till by the Gypsies! To the south of Parkes, towards Forbes, there was an old lady called Millie Dokis who loomed large in my life. She lived in a house made from hessian bags and tin. She was of eastern European extraction; the kids used to say, "If you do such-and-such, old Millie Dokis will get you!" She was clearly a woman who had a profound story, which still puzzles me to this day. On the other side of Parkes, on the road to Peak Hill, there were shanties in which the Aboriginal people lived. We would drive out and see the Aboriginal people living in shanties in the shadows of the trees. My childhood memory from that period of my life is of seeing something that was not quite right and wondering how ways could be found to link up with people who were so much in the shadows of the wheatbelt region in which I grew up. I guess the rest of my life has involved bringing Aboriginal people out of the shadows and into public and community life. During my theological studies in Sydney, I was caught up in the life of the Redfern community and in friendships with the people of that community. This accidentally led me into the Kimberley and the experience of working with Aboriginal people up there, and taking up the challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal people, firstly through the struggle for the protection of sites at Noonkanbah and Argyle, and then through land issues and the formation of the Kimberley Land Council, which is something that I worked pretty hard at back in 1978, bringing together massive meetings of Aboriginal people to form that land council. That brought me to Parliament, although it led firstly to Ernie Bridge's ambition to enter Parliament. An opportunity emerged when

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an upper house Liberal Party member, Bill Withers, resigned, leading to a by-election. We were left with the task of having to quickly preselect somebody, and that somebody was me.

Along the journey of trying to engage Aboriginal people into the mainstream of the Australian community, at this point of my parliamentary career—I sometimes joke and say that I am now at midpoint —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You've been here 25 years!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: That is right; at midpoint! I am just starting the second part of my career!

Looking back over those years, I can see that the issues today are the same as they have always been, and that the answers are also the same as they have always been. It is simply a matter of community work, individual by individual, family by family, street by street, neighbourhood by neighbourhood. It is a matter of solid work on the part of the entire community, governments and industry in making sure that the Aboriginal communities of remote and regional Australia and urban Australia have the opportunities to take their place, out of the shadows, in the wider world that is ours here in this great nation and this great state. I have been most fortunate to have been re-elected to the electorate of Pilbara in the most recent election. I was elected against the backdrop of an amazingly successful campaign on the part of the National Party. It was clear that the National Party was absolutely everywhere around the backblocks of the Pilbara, and participated in every local community event. It was an extraordinary display of politics and community connection and presence. It was very interesting to see the National Party candidate end up as runner-up in that contest. It was an extraordinary testimony to a skilful campaign, skilful leadership, a skilful team and a skilful candidate. In the face of the challenge of trying to hold onto this seat, I have spent a long time in politics representing communities that still have so many unmet ambitions and pleas that have not been responded to by governments, industry and the wider community, and securing partnerships with Aboriginal people. One of the communities I visited is the Youngaleena community, which is down the road from the Auski roadhouse between Port Hedland and Newman. I copped an absolute mouthful as I arrived not long before the election because of the fact that I had not been there before. It is connected to the Parker family; it is one of those classic outstations. It is a small community that falls outside the support frameworks of governments, both national and state. Having travelled down a little bitumen road, it was fascinating to arrive at a complete and utter display of orderly management.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I saw there, right in the middle of the resource belt of the Pilbara, a community that individual Indigenous family members were driving into and out of, off to resource projects around the Pilbara. They were taking up training and employment and good income opportunities from what is effectively the outstation of the Barker families on country right in the middle of the land of the Bunjima people. The community is absolutely connected to the economy of the Pilbara through the cohesion that has come from this outstation. The community survives through the income streams of the family members who are benefiting from training and employment opportunities. If only it were the case that more communities like that were connected to the resource sector.

One of the great challenges of engagement in the economic life of the Pilbara is to secure housing from which people can emerge rested, well fed and well presented to take up the training and employment opportunities. They cannot do that from circumstances in which too many people in the Pilbara are positioned. I therefore listened with great interest to the Governor's address on behalf of the incoming government, which expressed a commitment to a housing package for the Pilbara and the north west, as it was described. I am looking to see exactly how significant that contribution will be.

Over the past eight years, we in government did some enormously fantastic things in the regions of the north west and in my own region. We have many, many runs on the board for the good things we have done. Members who get the chance to travel there will see a lot of infrastructure emerging around the hospitals of the north west. Every town has improved hospital facilities, either completed or under construction. Community police stations in many remote locations have added enormous stability to the lives of the communities by providing for a sensible response to the many challenges that Aboriginal communities face. By themselves those responses have not proved adequate to meet the huge needs in that region.

I see as the biggest challenge of the region how to secure the economic prosperity of the large Aboriginal community in the Pilbara. Only with their prosperity will come a normalisation of life in those towns, which are experiencing something that verges on the white-flight syndrome of Africa. People are not prepared to bolt down in communities where there is dysfunction in the lives of so many Aboriginal families. They are not adequately connected to economic prosperity, and they have not found their way into pathways to schools and training, and on from training into employment. That cannot be done without a massive injection of effort. The now Leader of

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the Opposition, who was then Minister for State Development, commenced some quality work with the Pilbara Industry Consultative Council, such as the housing study and the recommendation that there be a significant injection of funds for housing. However, it is simply impossible to deliver on a covenant, for instance, that commits to 50 000 new jobs for Aboriginal people in a region like the Pilbara without rolling out housing simultaneously. If railway lines and port facilities can be rolled out at enormous expense, to cut back on housing programs for local people will simply cut out the prospects of those people, including Indigenous people, benefiting from the connection with the employment and the training that they need. With a multimillion-dollar project, whether it be one of the old projects of BHP Billiton or Rio Tinto or a new project of Fortescue Metals Group, people simply cannot be connected to the opportunities that need to be theirs if a commitment to housing is not maintained.

The Department of Housing and Works has allocated land through the New Living program in South Hedland, with blocks upon which some housing has been commenced by Fortescue. Now it would appear that Fortescue has announced that it will mothball that whole housing program and just simply seal off the housing construction because of the lack of cash flow. It is absolutely imperative that that not be the case. I notice also that entities associated with the same development have the prospect of developing land at Pretty Pool. I am delighted to have received an email from a senior player associated with Fortescue, indicating that the Pretty Pool land development will proceed. I am pleased with that assurance, but it is imperative that companies, as well as government, continue to roll out housing for all the people of the Pilbara, so that people can be connected to the training and employment opportunities that come from the resource developments in the north west.

I am lucky to have had a team that has worked with me to deliver a successful election campaign against a huge challenge, particularly from the National Party. I cannot complete my remarks to the house without paying tribute to the specific work of the new member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, Hon Shelley Eaton. She was effectively my campaign manager and has been the backstop in my life for 11 years or more when I have undertaken a variety of roles, whether it be Leader of the Opposition in the upper house, caucus secretary or minister. She has worked with me and is now a colleague in the upper house, although only briefly. During that campaign period she displayed enormous skill in bringing together the teams from Pannawonica, Tom Price and Paraburdoo through to Newman and up into Hedland, Marble Bar and Nullagine and throughout all those remote communities, some of which were very keen to see us re-elected and others of which had been disappointed in the failures to deliver on all their ambitions. They were, therefore, more challenging communities with which to work, yet we were able to get a result, albeit, in my case, a narrower win than one with which I would be comfortable.

I want to pay tribute to one family in my Address-in-Reply contribution, and that is the Coates family—Councillor Steve Coates, Mary Jane Coates, and Tom Coates and family. They have been involved in the union life, the civic life and the community life of Hedland. They have secured enormous benefits for the Hedland community. They have assisted me in my successful engagement with that community, turning around some of the challenges of the Hedland community. Mary Jane Coates works as my electorate assistant in Hedland and runs the Hedland office. Another great player from the union movement is Patricia Habit, who has spent four years working with me in that office. I pay tribute to her for her work during the campaign and for her bringing together a team from the union movement and the wider community in securing the re-election of a Labor member for the Pilbara. I want to place on record my thanks for their enormous efforts. When one picks out a couple of people, one runs the risk of missing out others. Clearly, in my life there have been occasions when local authorities have been challenging beasts to work with. Over that time, particularly when I was Minister for Local Government, the Town of Port Hedland was a terribly difficult organisation with which to work. However, I have watched and worked with the community in reforming and reshaping the way the Town of Port Hedland operates and is led by people like Councillor Stan Martin, Councillor Arnold Carter and the whole team of councillors there. They have formed partnerships over the past four years with the state government and with their local member. This was of enormous benefit to the local Port Hedland community in advancing various projects. I appreciate their cooperation and what they have been able to deliver.

Local councils in that area are in desperate need of a different way of doing business. I commend the idea of looking at some of the strategies that have been deployed by government in the metropolitan area under the label of redevelopment authorities, such as has occurred in Subiaco, Armadale, Midland and East Perth. The Pilbara desperately needs a development authority that rolls up the spheres of government, the development commissions and the agencies of the national government into one structure that is well resourced with a good flow of funds and is not dependent upon decisions made in cabinet rooms here. There should be the opportunity to deliver back into a regional government structure that avoids the economics of the past and moves into new phases of carrying out regional development in areas such as the Pilbara and the Kimberley to give them a fighting chance.

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I congratulate the Deputy Premier, Minister for Health and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, who today announced that former Governor John Sanderson has been appointed to work with the Director General of the Department of Indigenous Affairs to form an implementation committee. While the Deputy Premier was in opposition, he helped shape a policy that has now been rolled out in government. It was, in part, developed by the work done by the Education and Health Standing Committee. I congratulate the Deputy Premier for the announcement that John Sanderson will be part of this implementation board that is yet to take shape. I hope that it will be part of a regional governance structure for regions such as the Kimberley and the Pilbara especially but that it has application in other areas. I hope that it will try to harness the resources that are now flowing to regional Western Australia and that its policy design and program delivery is shaped by the voices of local people, especially the Indigenous voices of those regions. They should be given a megaphone so that their voices can be heard effectively and that they are not sidelined into silos of disasters through organisations such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and, to some extent, the Department of Indigenous Affairs, which have had limited funds and have been left with the full kit and caboodle. We should mainstream the damn thing, get it out there and ensure it is informed and has the necessary resources. I recommend to the house and to government that they respond to the enormous challenges and opportunities that are on offer through these new structures.

Amendment to Motion

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I move —

That the following words be added to the motion —

but regret to inform His Excellency that the Barnett government has failed the people of Western Australia in delaying expansion of the state's hospital system, especially Joondalup hospital

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.13 pm]: I stand today feeling somewhat greedy in the sense that I only delivered my inaugural speech yesterday. I feel compelled to speak to this amendment because it is very important, especially to the people and electors of Joondalup. I commend the member for Pilbara for his long career in politics. During my time working in the Aboriginal movement, I have found that there is a very genuine and warm fondness and affection for the member for Pilbara and the work he has done over many years.

I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery this afternoon the activists from the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, with their maroon lanyards, who have been working to protect the rights and interests of contract cleaners and school cleaners. I acknowledge them and wish them well in their ongoing campaign.

The issue of capacity in our state hospital system is absolutely crucial. Labor and Liberal governments have struggled with this issue but it still needs to be addressed earnestly and with a sense of urgency. I heard a caller on talkback radio today say that to be the Minister for Health is to be the holder of the poisoned chalice. Nevertheless, it is a position that someone must hold. As the shadow Minister for Health, I intend to hold the government accountable for its performance in this area and ensure that the people of Western Australia get the health services that they deserve and expect.

One of the key risks to the quality of health services in our community is the capacity of the health service to meet the demands from the public who come to hospitals in need of assistance for minor ailments, small injuries, acute trauma resulting from vehicle and other accidents and chronic disease. As the member for Kwinana, it is very disappointing that there are no trauma services in the southern suburbs. Being new to this place, I find it quite perplexing to see a health system in which two major trauma centres are located within five kilometres of each other, both in the northern suburbs.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Members, if you want to have a meeting or a little talk, outside is the place to do it.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is therefore quite perplexing that we have had a lukewarm reception from the new government to the development of Fiona Stanley Hospital. Just today the Australian Medical Association (WA) issued a press release referring to the consequences of a hospital system operating at capacity. The AMA is a very strong advocate of the interests of its membership. We know that it will be involved in every debate, making sure that the interests of its members are put forward. One of the key pressures that its members witness is capacity. The issue that it identifies as being most urgent is that of beds. The association president, Professor Gary Geelhoed, stated —

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We need an extra 400 beds to stop around 200 deaths a year resulting from overcrowding in our public hospitals.

He is talking about the issue of capacity and hospitals being able to accommodate and move people quickly through the emergency departments and ensuring that they can deliver hospital services.

The other element of capacity in our hospital systems comes down to the human element; that is, how this impacts upon not only the people who receive services from the hospital but also those who work within the hospital—the doctors and nurses, and particularly those on the front line in the emergency departments.

The Department of Health recently released the “WA Sentinel Event Report 2007-08”. It states —

Sentinel events are rare adverse events leading to serious harm or death that are specifically caused by healthcare rather than the patient’s underlying condition or illness.

Sentinel events are those incidents or adverse medical outcomes resulting from accidents that might happen whilst care is being provided to patients. The report goes on to identify the contributing factors that can lead to these adverse medical outcomes. The biggest contributing factor to adverse medical outcomes is communication. Communication problems occur within the system between carers and medical professionals in the handover of a patient. Communication problems often occur simply because people are under pressure and cannot take the usual care that they would normally take in that situation. It is interesting to note that the greatest contributing factor to problems associated with the handover of patients is communication, although there was a slight decrease between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Earlier today in this house the Minister for Health mentioned the changing demographics that influence the demand pattern on hospital services. It comes into particularly sharp focus when we consider a campus such as the Joondalup Health Campus. The Joondalup area has experienced an explosion of residential development and that has put particular pressure on the hospital service needs of that region.

Again, as member for Kwinana, I am struck by the level of development that has occurred in the electorate of Kwinana and the Mandurah and Rockingham areas. That development resulted in the creation of another seat in that area simply to accommodate the growth in population. It is very important that when our health services are reconfigured the design is undertaken in the context of the needs and also the anticipated changing patterns of those needs.

A response to the capacity pressures has been forthcoming. I repeat that the AMA has already detailed its response to these issues—that is, to increase the number of beds to create the opportunity for people to move quickly through the emergency departments. The previous government’s response to this issue was to not only concentrate on the infrastructure needs of hospitals, but also focus on the human capacity. The number of beds at the Rockingham-Kwinana District Hospital, which is in my electorate, is expected, through the strong building program that the Carpenter government implemented, to increase from about 71 to 203 by mid-2009. The Gallop-Carpenter governments increased the number of full-time nurses by 2 600 and doctors by over 1 000 in the system to make sure that as the community and the economy grew at such a rapid rate they could endeavour to keep pace with the demand on the hospital system.

The circumstances in which the Joondalup Health Campus finds itself are dire, because the campus is overwhelmed by the level of demand driven by the communities in that area. That level of demand can be demonstrated by the fact that the emergency department was originally designed to accommodate about 25 000 presentations each year. I am informed that the presentations to that department in 2006-07 reached 52 000 and that this year the hospital estimates that the figure will reach 65 000. What we have is a hospital under siege by the demands put on its services. It is therefore disappointing that the government does not regard this as a high priority. What the government regards as a high priority is looking at the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. We have seen a wholesale lack of interest by the government in the hospital services in the northern suburbs.

I had cause to look at the then opposition’s policy statements at the time of the last election. I was startled to see that in the Liberal Party’s policy document for better health services, the redevelopment of the Joondalup Health Campus was not mentioned. A great part of the document refers to the faults of the previous government, but no solutions were forthcoming. It was an opportunity for this government to go forward with its Royal Perth Hospital plan.

Ambulance bypasses are at chronic levels at the Joondalup campus. Recently the Department of Health was reported as stating that the Joondalup Health Campus represents about 90 per cent of all ambulance bypasses, or diversions, in Western Australia. Obviously, this is of concern. In addition to these diversions undermining the services that should be delivered to the people who want to obtain services from that facility, they mean that those ambulances are not available at that time to meet other demands. Ambulance response times for emergency

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calls responded to within 15 minutes fell from 89 per cent in 2005-06 to 88.4 per cent in 2007-08, and response times for non-urgent calls—calls to be responded to within 60 minutes—fell from 87.4 per cent to 83.2 per cent in the same period.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Joondalup Health Campus to look at the facilities available there. I looked firsthand at the services available in the emergency department. I saw a team of staff incredibly dedicated to their work. I saw a team of staff who only that day had dealt with a very difficult emergency presentation that involved a person having a psychotic episode. The emergency department was straining to deal with the demand on its services. I also had the fortunate experience of attending the campus's tenth anniversary celebration. Apart from being extremely dedicated, the staff at that hospital are highly professional and proud of what they have achieved at the Joondalup Health Campus. As I moved around at that function—it was a great function attended by the minister and several of my colleagues, including the members for Joondalup and Ocean Reef —

Dr K.D. Hames: And the former minister.

Mr R.H. COOK: The former minister, the member for Fremantle, was also there. It is worth noting that the current minister had some very kind words to say about the member for Fremantle's time as minister.

The people at that function told me that they wanted to get on with the redevelopment. They said that negotiations had reached a good level and they wanted to know why the redevelopment was not proceeding. The problems confronting the Joondalup Health Campus are difficult, but they are not insurmountable. The minister will have a hard job dealing with the difficulties confronting the Western Australian health system, but they are not insurmountable. If this government considers the redevelopment of the Joondalup Health Campus to be a priority and if it considers the AMA's advice and moves as quickly as possible to try to increase bed capacity, it would be putting its shoulder to the wheel and making it its priority to complete the negotiations for the redevelopment of the campus and make sure that it moved forward.

What has been the government's response to date? Quite simply, very little. We have not seen any announcements by the government on how it will move to ensure that these negotiations, which I understand are almost complete, are completed, or how it will make the money available and allow the hospital to increase its services to meet the needs of the people of Joondalup to give them the health services they require and deserve. Indeed, the only response from the minister to date has been to announce that he will go overseas and look at some clinical practices in the United Kingdom—clinical practices, I might add, that are known to the health practitioners. I do not begrudge the government sending a team of clinicians and hospital administrators overseas to see how other countries deal with these issues, but I do not understand the reason that the minister feels the need to go overseas now, when the needs of the Joondalup people and the WA health system are urgent. It is completely beyond me. I commend the amendment to the house.

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [3.30 pm]: I rise to support the amendment and, as this is the first time I have spoken since Parliament resumed, I congratulate all new members on both sides of the house on their election to office. I also congratulate the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Acting Speakers on attaining their positions.

I am very familiar with the Joondalup Health Campus. I was living in Joondalup in 1996 when the Minister for Health in the Court government, Hon Kevin Prince, undertook the negotiations to privatise the hospital. I ran the campaign against privatisation, because it was a public hospital and I have a philosophical view that we should not privatise public hospitals. Since being elected to office in 2001, I have worked very closely with the health campus, and I am now happy to say that the staff at the campus, particularly the chief executive officer, Mr Kempton Cowan, have turned the fortunes of the hospital around. From having a very bad reputation in the late 1990s, the hospital now has an excellent reputation. Hardly a week goes by in which I do not pick up the local newspaper and read a letter from a patient commending the hospital staff and the care received, while also recognising the incredibly difficult conditions under which the staff work.

As a local in that area—I can see the hospital from my house, which shows how close I live to it—I have used the hospital's services very many times. I must particularly commend the emergency department staff. As the member for Kwinana pointed out, the emergency department was originally built to cater for 25 000 presentations a year. Currently, the expectation is that the number of presentations each year will rise to 65 000. This number is increasing exponentially every year, at rates that we struggle to understand. More and more people are becoming confident in the hospital and are comfortable to use its facilities. The increasing number of presentations is also placing more pressure on the hospital. The health campus has reached the stage at which we cannot redevelop the emergency department, because to do so with 65 000 presentations a year would cause the service to go into freefall. The proposal of the Carpenter Labor government was to build a completely new emergency department, leaving the old one operating while construction was underway. I support that plan; it is

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the way we should go. Under the previous government, the cost of reconstructing the hospital was \$231 million, and the money had been allocated for the purpose. All the present government needs to do is to sign on the dotted line to get the project underway.

There have been a number of problems over the years. There have been three private owners of the hospital, and each time its ownership changed we had to go back into negotiations. That is what I would term a bad outcome. Responsibility for that outcome goes back to the Court Liberal government, when Hon Kevin Prince rushed the privatisation through. I raised a number of matters with him at Dumas House on numerous occasions, and in his patronising way, he patted me on the head and said, "Go away little boy and don't worry your little head about it." But I did worry my head about it because I was living there and I knew what the needs were, and the needs are even greater now. Because that minister did not negotiate the original privatisation contract properly, we had all sorts of problems trying to bring it to the stage at which it is now.

We need to have the hospital redeveloped from the current 280 beds to 451—absolutely nothing less. We need the expanded chemotherapy unit and an increase in the number of oncology beds. As members have heard already, the emergency department needs to be expanded from 29 beds to 56 to cater for the 65 000 presentations per year. The emergency department also needs a new mental health assessment facility. Last time I went to the hospital was October 2006. I was rushed in on a Sunday afternoon to have my appendix out. There was a person there with a mental health problem who needed two security guards to restrain her. I would have termed her a reasonably small-framed woman, but with her mental health issues and the drugs she was apparently using, she could push two security guards around fairly easily. That was happening in the emergency department. There needs to be a separate facility within that department where mental health patients can be isolated. We need a significant increase in the surgical capacity of the hospital. Currently, the hospital has six operating theatres, and the previous government's proposal was to increase that number to 11, and the single endoscopy room needs to be augmented with another one.

We need additional neonatal, rehabilitation and palliative care beds. Around Joondalup there are a number of high-care facilities for seniors. Those seniors are regularly taken down to the hospital, where they occupy beds, making it more difficult to get the flow through from the emergency department. We need palliative care beds in Joondalup. For people nearing the end of their lives whose families live locally, it is a great help if those family members do not have to battle peak-hour traffic to visit their loved ones. An increase in renal dialysis facilities is absolutely necessary. I went and spoke to renal patients during the election campaign, because word had been put around that the government was closing the renal unit. In fact, the opposite is true—it is to be increased in size. I hope the current government will continue with that project. I am pretty sure the minister is committed to it. Expansion of the mental health unit from 25 to 40 beds is currently underway, and I hope to be attending the opening of it in the next couple of months. The previous government provided the latest medical technology and equipment over a number of years, and a number of improvements have been made to the hospital. Yesterday, we saw a magnetic resonance imaging facility being located in Joondalup. All those facilities will be available there, but this government needs to get on and make sure that the hospital is redeveloped sooner rather than later. There is a great demand in Joondalup for private hospital beds. The people of Joondalup are very proud, and most of them carry their own health care. A private hospital facility is much needed in that area.

As the member for Kwinana mentioned, the tenth birthday of the health campus was held last Friday night, and most of us were there. It concerns me that the Minister for Health did not appear until about 8.30 pm, and then he told us he had to attend a golf day, albeit for a foundation for another hospital. That is where Joondalup comes in the pecking order—further down than a golf day. The minister should have been there at seven o'clock when all the people were there to hear his speech, so that they could hear that the government is downgrading Joondalup from being the third tertiary hospital to being perhaps the fourth tertiary hospital in the metropolitan area. That is what the minister said in his speech. Royal Perth Hospital should not be retained, so that Joondalup would move to become the third tertiary hospital. Where will the government get the staff and the specialists? The minister said earlier that he supported the recommendations of the Reid report, but if the government is retaining Royal Perth Hospital, it is not supporting all the recommendations of the Reid report. I commend the amendment to the house.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Mindarie) [3.40 pm]: I wish to congratulate and applaud the member for Joondalup on the very informative speech that he made to the chamber this afternoon, which detailed the number of beds at Joondalup Health Campus and what needs to be done to improve services at that hospital. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition noted that of the hospitals in Perth, Joondalup Health Campus has the largest number of ambulance bypasses. I make it clear at the outset that I have great affection for that hospital and its staff. My father passed away not long before the election. Unfortunately, in the last months of his life he was a regular patient at Joondalup Health Campus. I have nothing but admiration for the quality of care that he was afforded

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by the staff at that hospital. My father, who died aged 93, was a resident at the wonderful Aegis aged-care facility in Mindarie. As a result of his deteriorating health, on a number of occasions he was taken late at night by emergency evacuation from his residence in Mindarie to Joondalup Health Campus. Given the pressure on Joondalup Health Campus, the ambulance was put on bypass on several of those occasions and had to present at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition clearly informed the house that when inaugurated, the hospital was designed to take 20 000 emergency presentations a year. That figure has more than doubled to 52 000 in the current year, with projections for the coming year being 65 000.

I, for one, do not have an ideological difficulty with private capital being used in health care. However, the difficulty arises when that capital is used in a tertiary hospital because it is inevitable that every corporation or company that comes in as the capital base for a hospital will want to review and revisit the hospital's funding requirements, thereby delaying the redevelopment of that hospital. Of course, that has been the history of Joondalup Health Campus. It was bedevilled in its early days by private management problems. We know through a number of coroner inquests that in the early days after it was privatised there were real care and medical tragedies at that campus. Fortunately for my constituents and the population of the north, those problems have been long resolved. The kind and very astute care that my late father received at Joondalup Health Campus on more than one occasion certainly bears testament that a lot of the early clinical teething problems—those who suffered would call them full-on tragedies—have been resolved.

Nonetheless, it is as easy as signing the contracts to rebuild the hospital. When the Minister for Health gets to his feet to respond to the amendment, he will probably refer to the eight years that Labor was in power. I have been described by the media as the maverick Labor member for Mindarie because at times I have spoken out against my own party due to its performance in the northern suburbs. I will speak out against the incumbent government, not on party-political lines, but because of the lack of services that exist in the north. I see the member for Ocean Reef in the chamber. I welcome him to Parliament. He has a call to make too, because as a current City of Joondalup councillor he is acutely aware of the challenges that face that hospital and the population that he represents in the seat of Ocean Reef. I do not know whether he wants to walk down the same maverick path that I have walked down to take on his government. If he does, it will not be easy. The problem that exists in the north is a problem that the member for Ocean Reef and I will share. For some reason, Western Australian cabinets have historically been underrepresented by northern seat members, which has been a detriment to members and the population of the north. Some issues in the north have been neglected; that is beyond dispute. The former member for Wanneroo paid the price for that neglect. I welcome the new member for Wanneroo to the chamber. The population does not care which political jumper we wear; rather, it cares about the services that are delivered to their families. When those services are not delivered, with what voice and with what strength will my learned friends speak out against their own government? I chose to speak out in the past and, in doing so, I walked down a slightly awkward path. However, the fact is that for whatever reason the north has undisputedly been the poor cousin of the metropolitan area. The recent decision to delay the extension of the northern railway line to Butler, which will cost the government, is typical. With stations throughout the populous areas of the south and the east, the big land bank for the Western Australian government can be found in the north; that is, from Butler through to the Alkimos area. That is where LandCorp can unlock much land and contribute to the wealth of Western Australia.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, member! I ask the member for Mindarie to speak to the amendment.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is just another example of capital infrastructure in the north being struck down and neglected.

There has been great debate about whether to retain Royal Perth Hospital. The government will press ahead with its legislative plan to retain Royal Perth Hospital. However, make no mistake: members of my community are under no illusion as the government's decision to remove its focus from providing decent health services on the north coastal strip, which is the fastest growing area in metropolitan Perth, and to focus on reviving Royal Perth Hospital will cost the patients and the families of the north metropolitan area dearly. I realise that the issue had some electoral grip and that it was, to a certain extent, a popular measure in inner-metropolitan Perth, despite the fact that another tertiary hospital is within five kilometres of Royal Perth Hospital.

I have recently been travelling to the new children's hospital at Westmead in Sydney because, as members know, my daughter Ruby suffers from a very rare genetic and incurable complaint whereby protein is poisoning her system. She is the first child at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children to have been diagnosed with the condition. Professor Bridget Wilcken works at the new children's hospital in Westmead. She is an angel and is, unfortunately for the children of Australia, on the cusp of retirement. The suburb of Westmead is adjacent to Parramatta. My family travels there with young Ruby to get care for her. I read at the hospital some of its

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history. The children's hospital used to be located in the central business district. The decision to close the children's hospital in the CBD in Sydney and to relocate it to Parramatta has certain parallels with the closure of Royal Perth Hospital and the building of the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Murdoch. I read that when the children's hospital in Sydney was to be closed because of its ageing infrastructure, the inadequacy of its building and because it was not close to the greater population of Sydney, there was a huge amount of controversy. Sydney's population was growing in the western suburbs; obviously it could not grow eastwards because of the ocean. The government of the day was accused of being negligent because it wanted to destroy that wonderful institution and move it to Parramatta. A few times a year, my wife and I take Ruby to Sydney and we stay at a cheap hotel in the CBD that we find on the wotif.com website. From there we catch the train to Parramatta, which is quite a distance, but that is where the young population lives. The government has built a marvellous hospital with wonderful research facilities. Arguably, it is the best children's hospital in Australia. The government of the day did not pander to the electorate, which did not want to lose something with which it was familiar and comfortable. I feel that this government is falling into exactly the same trap in its desire to hang on to what has been a much-loved Perth institution—Royal Perth Hospital. Everything has its time.

Western Australians get fixated on public assets and argue that there is never a time we can say goodbye to them, whether it is the Subiaco football oval or whether it is a hospital. I cannot understand it. It is the service that is required that is important. What we know, and what the members for Ocean Reef and Wanneroo know—I hope they join me in a loud voice—is that the northern suburbs are not getting their fair cut of public health services; not by a long measure. I notice that the member for Wanneroo is nodding in agreement and I congratulate him. I notice also that the member for Ocean Reef is keeping his cards close to his chest. He will learn because his constituents will want him to stand up and deliver for the people of Kinross and Currabine, who will be bumped down the freeway in an ambulance. The member for Ocean Reef does not want the train line to be extended; he wants the freeway to be crowded. The patients will be dead by the time they get to Osborne Park Hospital! A patient who has had a heart attack will look out of the ambulance window and realise that he has another 15 clicks to travel to get to the hospital, having already travelled for three hours!

Setting aside the levity, the situation out there is grave. We have wonderful staff. I am not just doing a sugary job on them. I have witnessed it firsthand with my immediate family. They are wonderful staff who work in hopelessly overcrowded conditions. We used to have a saying in my electorate office as we drove around the electorate of Mindarie, although we do not have it now because development has slowed down. The saying was “a street a day”. That is what was happening out there. The member for Wanneroo would bear witness to that because he lives in Yanchep where the Capricorn joint venture is literally building a street a day. Those streets are not full of residents who will all be carrying private health insurance for private hospitals. I am talking about suburbs that are being built 30 or 40 kilometres from Perth on allotments of 300 or 350 square metres. Seventeen per cent of the dwellings are public housing stock. The demand for increased public health services out there is not only huge, but also immediate; it is yesterday's demand. The Minister for Health can go on about what has happened in the past eight years. I will join him if I am given a second go, but my constituents are not concerned about whether the Labor Party or the Liberal Party is in government; they are concerned that when a family member is struck by sudden and severe illness, there is not a good prospect, but at least a reasonable prospect that he or she will get a hospital bed. At the moment there is not even a reasonable chance of that.

Dr K.D. Hames: Not under the former government.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The Minister for Health wants to go back to the blame game. I am not interested in that. I stand here not as a member of the frontbench or as a member of a committee, but as “Maverick Johnny”.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: What will this government do? Will it extend it to 12 years or 16 years as the government concentrates the money on the CBD and overlooks the northern suburbs again? There are large retirement villages in the northern suburbs at Merriwa, Ridgewood and other villages, as the minister knows. Forward-thinking organisations bought large tracts of land there 15 years ago to establish these aged-care facilities and retirement villages when the land was cheap. What they have brought is a large concentration of prospective patients for the Joondalup Health Campus. I do not say that disrespectfully; we all know that as we get older we will rely more on health care services. I say to those elderly people, may God speed be with them as they move down the freeway looking for a bed because their ambulance is unlikely to be able to offload them at the Joondalup Health Campus because it is hopelessly overloaded. We cannot stop the government. It is in love with the Royal Perth Hospital asset. I was in love with the institution. I am a fourth generation Western Australian and members of my family have been in the health care system. I love the institution but it is time to move into a new beginning. The Minister for Health referred to the Reid report and said that if I wanted to talk about the Joondalup hospital, the government will follow the Reid report. However, I looked at the Reid report and it had a

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different outcome for the Royal Perth Hospital from that which the government is proposing. The Reid report says that the money should be spread out where the population is. Where is the fastest growing metropolitan population in Western Australia? It is in my electorate of Mindarie, on the doorstep of this overcrowded hospital. What is happening to the Joondalup Health Campus is not right, whether it is done by this government or any other government, and it must be corrected now. This development must be signed off on before another dollar is spent on Royal Perth Hospital.

MR J.A. McGINTY (Fremantle) [3.59 pm]: I am pleased that this amendment has been moved to the Address-in-Reply motion, as I am particularly delighted to join my northern suburbs colleagues in stressing to the Minister for Health—it is a pity the Treasurer is not present—that this is the most immediate and pressing commitment requirement in health care for the government.

Dr K.D. Hames: Absolutely!

Mr J.A. McGINTY: It is not Royal Perth Hospital; that is something that will happen in five years, if it does happen.

Dr K.D. Hames: I agree with you.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: As I said, I am disappointed that the Treasurer is not present to engage in this debate, as I suspect that he is the problem rather than the Minister for Health. It is true that the Minister for Health has said that the new government supports every element of the great Labor health reform plan, with the exception of the Royal Perth Hospital issue. Joondalup Health Campus is the most pressing, urgent issue for this reason: the busiest emergency department in the state is at Joondalup hospital. We have already heard that this year Joondalup hospital is expected to attend to approximately 65 000 people presenting to the emergency department. Joondalup hospital is also under such pressure that in Western Australia 90 per cent of ambulance diversions—in other words, when the emergency department is too busy ambulances are sent to other hospitals—occur at Joondalup Health Campus. Those two statistics—65 000 attendances and 90 per cent of ambulance diversions—ought to inject into the government a great sense of urgency to get this particular development underway. It is also important to note the very point raised by the member for Mindarie that one of the pillars of the health reform program is to build hospitals close to where people live so that people need not travel into the central business district for their health care, but can go to their local general, or perhaps even tertiary, hospital.

In recent times Joondalup has seen the completion of the dental clinic to service the dental health needs of the people in the region. Last time I visited Joondalup Health Campus the mental health facility was substantially complete. I am not sure what its current state is, but the facility will increase from 25 to 40 beds to meet the needs of the acutely mentally unwell in the northern suburbs. As part of this development, the plan for Joondalup Health Campus, as has been adequately described by the member for Joondalup, is to take it from the current 280 beds to 451 beds—almost doubling the number of public beds at Joondalup Health Campus. In addition, the agreement with Ramsay Health Care, the private operator of this hospital, is to build a new 85-bed private hospital to cater for the private health needs of the people in the region.

A new emergency department is critical for this hospital, not only for the 65 000 people who will attend this year—the number is growing at an astronomical rate—but also to increase the number of bays in the emergency department, currently 29, to 56, therefore providing a greater capacity to meet the needs of the people in the area. The emergency department, which I have been to many times and which was built for 25 000 people and is currently attending to 65 000 people, is ample evidence of the great need there. Again as part of the plan, we wanted to increase the operating theatres for elective surgery from six to 11 and the endoscopy suite from one to two. These are all very important elements of health care delivery in the northern suburbs. It is a matter of looking after not only the needs of people in the northern suburbs, but also the totality of the health reform plan as it will be implemented. The flagship is Fiona Stanley Hospital, and I suspect we will hear more on that very issue at least from the member for Alfred Cove, if not others.

Dr K.D. Hames: Nothing has changed, I can tell you.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: We will be watching very closely to see whether there is any change in the nature of the services proposed to be provided at Fiona Stanley Hospital; however, that is another issue. Earthworks have already begun on site. The earthworks that have occurred on that site are a tremendous scar on the landscape. Construction of the major buildings will commence during the course of next year. It is an investment in health care services of \$1.8 billion and will provide a state-of-the-art hospital to service the needs of the people in the southern suburbs.

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There is a budget in excess of half a billion dollars to upgrade its services to provide new ambulatory care services, new mental health services and a range of other services at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital site to ensure that it is capable of meeting the tertiary hospital needs of people in the central to northern suburbs. Of course, the plan was that Joondalup Health Campus would assume tertiary status as befits a hospital of that size as services are expanded to meet the needs in the northern suburbs. On another occasion I will be interested to hear the Minister for Health's time frame for the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital developments. There are numerous staged developments there now, which are to be added to by the \$880 million children's hospital to be built on the site immediately to the south of the current G block or the emergency department there. I will certainly be very interested in finding out the detail of the time frame and the capital commitment for the new children's hospital, for which there is a commitment to build by 2013. That means construction of the children's hospital proper will need to start in 2011.

Dr K.D. Hames: It was 2014.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Was it 2014?

Dr K.D. Hames: Yes; 2015 by you and 2014 by us for completion.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Right. I will be very interested to hear how everything is going to happen on the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital campus to accommodate that. However, I certainly agree with the need to build the children's hospital there. Both sides of politics proposed that that be the case, and I think there was a one-year time difference in the completion date. Nonetheless, there is a commitment for doing it. If the government can do it within that time frame, well and good.

The critical thing is that we had planned the tertiary hospitals, of which Joondalup was proposed to become the third tertiary hospital in Western Australia. That was somewhat thrown out by the announcement by the new government about Royal Perth Hospital. I will not go into that in any detail now. The important issue was to transfer resources from tertiary beds into community or general hospital beds where people live in the suburbs at the four points of the metropolitan area. The major part of stage 1 of Peel and Rockingham-Kwinana Health Service was opened by the Minister for Health a few weeks ago. Having that hospital go from a 70 or 80-bed hospital to a 240-bed hospital is a big boost for people in the south western suburbs. There have been improvements at Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. The new emergency department will be a tremendous boost as that, again, becomes significantly upgraded to meet the needs of patients from the south eastern suburbs who do not require tertiary care. A new hospital in Midland is absolutely critical to the overall scheme of things. Rather than retain the inaccessible and dilapidated Swan District Hospital in the Swan Valley, we need to build a new hospital in Midland near the railway line, which will improve accessibility. Of course, the other element, in the north western part of the metropolitan area, is the development at Joondalup, which is absolutely critical. We can accept some part of the blame for the fact that construction will not begin in the immediate future. We called an early election and there has been a change of government. I hope that the change of government does not delay this essential infrastructure. We want to see action, we want to see contracts signed and we want to see the dollars allocated. The reason I was disappointed that the Treasurer did not remain in the chamber for this debate is that he is where the issue has now settled. The allocation of \$220 million, of which \$119 million is already allocated in the forward estimates, must be provided to enable Ramsay Health Care to get on with this very important development. That is the configuration of hospitals in the metropolitan area. The transfer from tertiary hospitals to general hospitals will be a big boost to those general hospitals at the four points of the metropolitan area.

Of course, a debate on health care would not be complete without a reference to our country cousins. The six major regional resource centres of Broome, Port Hedland, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Albany are going to see new, or substantially rebuilt, hospitals. There will be new hospitals in Albany, Geraldton and Port Hedland, a very substantially new or rebuilt hospital at Broome, and a very big upgrade at Kalgoorlie, all of which will then feed into it. It is a plan that—putting the Royal Perth Hospital to one side—is unique because it has achieved bipartisan support. What we now need is action to get on with it, particularly the most pressing element of it, which is the Joondalup hospital redevelopment. As I have indicated, the cost to the state is \$220 million. One of the reasons this becomes critical is that it is costing the state \$2 million a month for every month this project is delayed. That is the building cost escalation, and therefore there is a need to commit early. The redevelopment of this hospital was due to get underway this summer. I doubt whether that will now occur, and that is a great pity. The Minister for Health needs to identify this redevelopment as being the number one priority by securing the funding, signing the contract and getting it all agreed—a bit of action, getting it done, rather than the delays we are seeing at the moment.

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I specifically ask the Minister for Health if he can tell us when the contract will be signed, what the causes of the delays are and whether he is committed to the full \$220 million development as agreed between Ramsay Health Care and the former state government many months ago. If he cannot do that, I believe that he is not doing his job properly.

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health) [4.11 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker (Mrs L.M. Harvey), welcome to the chair. Thanks for the opportunity to talk to this amendment, although I have been waiting for members opposite to actually talk to it. I did not call a point of order about nobody speaking to the amendment—a couple of members opposite, in the whole 20 minutes of their speeches, made a passing reference to it in one or two words. The amendment states that the Barnett government has failed the people of Western Australia in delaying the expansion of the hospital system, especially Joondalup hospital. Where is the evidence of our delay? Where was there more than one sentence saying we delayed this? Where is the opposition's proof, anywhere, that this government has delayed the expansion?

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The one thing I will give the new Deputy Leader of the Opposition is that he has gall, coming into this place and having a go at us, after 50 days in government, about a delay, when his mob had been debating this issue, it having been on the books for two years waiting for this contract to be signed. We have been in government for 50 days and he reckons I am delaying it. He has a lot of gall.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Why didn't you do it?

Dr K.D. HAMES: The funny thing is that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made that speech and I made that very speech two months ago! That same speech that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made was mine! I reckon he checked *Hansard*. He forgot to check a couple of things in *Hansard*. The first is that—as the former Minister for Health has confirmed—we have said over and over again that we support the redevelopment of the Joondalup hospital as outlined in the Reid review. The reason a specific reference to Joondalup cannot be found in the document is that the specific references are to hospitals that we thought needed to have extra facilities. We were comfortable with what the former state government was doing for Joondalup, and so I did not need to mention it because it says it in the Reid review. This government supports the recommendations of the Reid review, other than the closure of Royal Perth Hospital. That is where it was in our document. It is not only there in our document; all the opposition has to do is flick through *Hansard*. In fact, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can see it on his computer. If he searches my speeches and puts in "Joondalup hospital", he will see that I support the former government's redevelopment of that hospital —

Mr J.A. McGinty: What's the cause of the delay?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I will get to that.

Mr R.H. Cook: I googled "Liberal Party policy" and "Joondalup" and came up with nothing!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The member did; he got a copy of it!

Mr R.F. Johnson: Exactly! Do not mislead the house!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Australian Medical Association wanting 200 extra beds, and we have to listen to that—I was saying that! The former Minister for Health was denying that and saying that we do not need extra beds.

Mr J.A. McGinty: We were building them; that's why!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The gall of the opposition! Opposition members cannot come into this place and forget that just a few months ago they were in government. I know the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has not been in this place; I know it is not his fault.

Mr R.H. Cook: What's the delay?

Dr K.D. HAMES: For eight years the state Australian Labor Party was in government, and it cannot come into this place, after we have been in government for 50 days, and start blaming us for things that did not go right. The ALP must start taking responsibility for its members of Parliament and its former ministers who did not deliver.

Mr R.H. Cook: So what's happening now?

Mr R.F. Johnson: We're getting on with the job; that's what's happening now.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The opposition has not worked it out yet, has it?

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Mr J.A. McGinty: It's bogged down and going nowhere; that's the problem!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Opposition members have not worked out yet why they are on that side of the house. Why are they over there —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Because he chose you; that's why! He chose you—not because of any other reason!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The opposition failed as a government and stuffed it up!

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Because he chose you—Premier Brendon Grylls!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The opposition failed as a government, which is why the public voted it out.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, the Minister for Health has the floor.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The opposition failed as a government, which is why it is over there. The member for Joondalup —

Mr J.A. McGinty: You're now there, so how about getting on with it?

Dr K.D. HAMES: The member for Joondalup gave a very good speech, and I agreed with 95 per cent of it. He detailed all the things that hospital needs, and I agree with every single one of them. They are desperately needed. To give credit to the former Minister for Health, that is exactly what is in the document, and that is exactly why we are here today, ready to go with the hospital redevelopment in exactly the same form as the former minister had it all prepared and ready to go. That is what we are ready to do. I will explain to members why it has not been signed off on in our first 50 days in government, which is a short time. When the member for Joondalup said that those things are needed, he was exactly right. The former member for Mindarie was exactly right, too, when he said —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: The former member for Mindarie?

Mr R.H. Cook: He is still the member for Mindarie.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I mean the former speaker, the member for Mindarie. I do not mean “speaker” as in “the Speaker”. The person who spoke previously, who is currently the member for Mindarie, was exactly right also when he said that when a person does not agree with what the government is doing, whether it be Liberal or Labor, he has to stand up and say so, and he did that. That means that he told the truth when he told the story about the delays with Joondalup hospital and said that two years is too long for negotiations to carry on and that it should have been sorted out. That is why we have all these new members of Parliament. That is why there are four new northern suburbs members. We are in government because of the delays that occurred in delivering exactly what the member for Joondalup said needed to be done. There is a desperate need for the expansion of the Joondalup hospital. Members have talked about the huge increase in demand on the emergency department, which was designed to treat less than half the number of patients it is currently treating. I forget the exact figures, but I think it was designed to treat about 35 000 —

Mr J.A. McGinty: It was designed for 25 000, and it is currently seeing 65 000.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Now it is seeing 60 000. It is seeing nearly the same number as Royal Perth, and in fact was quoted the other day as being more than Royal Perth Hospital is seeing. It is treating far in excess of the number of patients it was designed to treat. That is why the people of the northern suburbs voted against Labor; they wanted to have a government that would get in, get things done and achieve things. Having said that—I will defend the former Minister for Health now—and as I said at the meeting the other day, when I was in opposition, I was blaming the former Minister for Health and the former government for those delays. When I met the Department of Health people, they told me that it was not actually the government's fault. There were huge issues with changing scope and increasing demand that needed to be sorted out. I must say that the process that must be gone through is totally inadequate for all our hospitals, and that is why we have had such huge delays and huge cost blowouts on every single health project. That process is why it has taken so long to get to where we needed to be to get that contract signed.

Both the member for Mindarie and the member for Joondalup are telling it as it was. At some stage the opposition has to do an analysis of why it lost, as it has said it will. I can tell the opposition why it lost. Part of it was the early calling of the election. When we were out there doorknocking, we were told that that was a major reason. I will tell members why. The former Premier had a reputation of being above politics. When former government ministers got into strife and were sacked or moved aside, or whatever happened in this house, he

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dumped them. He was ruthless in dumping those members, including the former member for Ballajura. In dumping those members, Premier Carpenter created the impression that he was above politics—that all members of Parliament were “b...” politicians, but he was not one of those; he was above politics because he sacked people on his own side who did not toe the line. When he called an early election for political purposes only we should remember that he was someone who said four years was a term that every government should serve; that he would support legislation for a four-year term; and that governments should serve their full term, and then for political purposes he called an early election. He was seen also to not give the new Leader of the Opposition, the current Premier, a fair go. We know that Western Australians like everyone to get a fair go. The first day the member for Cottesloe became the new Leader of the Opposition, Premier Carpenter called a new election.

Mr M. McGowan: What’s the relevance?

Dr K.D. HAMES: My remarks are just as relevant as the remarks of members opposite when I did not call a point of order.

Mr M. McGowan: What’s the relevance?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I thought the member might be interested in some assistance on the analysis. I will finish this argument with one sentence. When Premier Carpenter called that early election, he lost his credibility as someone who was above politics. He was seen as just one of the rest of us—just another “b...” politician—so his credibility declined, as we found out when we were doorknocking.

The other reason I think members opposite lost the election was on the inadequate delivery of services. As the member for Mindarie made clear, the delay in the expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus was seen to be a great failure, even though the former Minister for Health has given a lot of good reasons for it. Nevertheless, the people of the northern suburbs saw the lack of service delivery as a great failure of the Carpenter government. The former health minister and I had a private conversation following the election to talk about a couple of issues and he said it was okay for me to say this. One of the first things that came out of that meeting was that there had been a significant escalation in the cost of expanding the Joondalup hospital. As the former Minister for Health said in his speech—the figure is not exactly right according to what I have but it is pretty close—\$131.4 million was approved in November 2007 due to the cost escalation. He said \$130 million or \$120 million; I forget what it was. The figure of \$131.4 million is the figure I have been advised was approved. That escalation was a result of exactly what the member for Fremantle said; that is, our huge population explosion, which has caused a huge increase in demand for services. In addition, the number of general practitioners decreasing, particularly around the north of Kingsley, is forcing people to go to emergency departments. That demand is therefore increasing enormously. Quite rightly, the former minister had to change the scope of works and come up with an expanded model. At the same time, he was debating with the owners of Joondalup hospital what the public-private mix should be. It was a complex, difficult procedure.

I will talk about the 10-year anniversary later. The reality is that that hospital has been an enormous success. The coalition government built it as a public-private partnership, something former Labor Party members opposed strenuously. However, the end result has been extremely successful, as members opposite admit when they say they get excellent service when they go there. The same applies to the Peel Health Campus. That has been an excellent result for our region. The public-private mix has shown itself to work. Hence the support of the continuation of that model by the former Minister for Health. The model developed by Labor did not indicate that it would scrub that public-private mix to go public, but that it would stick with that mix to further develop the opportunities for that region. What the minister told me in our meeting was, “Sorry, \$131 million was approved in 2007; I’ve just been given figures to say that the cost will go up by about another \$100 million to \$226.4 million.” The day I took over the portfolio, I found the cost escalation for Joondalup was \$100 million and \$100 million for Midland. The Liberal Party strongly supports the development of the new Midland hospital. As the former minister will recall, when I wrote our Liberal policy—not the final version, but an earlier version—and the government proposed that Swan District Hospital would be redeveloped on the existing site, I said in our policy document, which Hon Helen Morton assisted me with, that it needed to be a new hospital on a new site in the heart of Midland. I gave the minister a copy of that document. I do not know whether that influenced his decision. He will whisper in my ear whether that was the case.

Mr J.A. McGinty: I’m always happy to take your better ideas.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Nevertheless, about two months later the new former government policy came out, which included building a new hospital at Midland. It is the right idea. It means the number of beds will be increased, but our government requires another \$100 million that is not in the previous government’s budget. The former Treasurer went on about how things were not funded when the Labor Party took office. In the first few days of

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taking office, we are not only \$200 million short but also the whole health system is in the order of \$70 million over budget so far.

Mr J.A. McGinty: You have done that already!

Dr K.D. HAMES: The day I took over the portfolio it was \$74 million over budget.

Mr R.H. Cook: Twenty-four hours.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I work fast, do I not?

This government is facing huge cost problems. When the department briefed me on the progression of the expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus, my comment was, "We support Joondalup 100 per cent; we need to get on and build that hospital and I support the new proposal." The extra \$100 million is due only partly to the delays—not so much the delays during that two years, but the time between the approval in November 2007 of \$131.4 million and October 2008. In that time there has been a cost escalation. Every month that hospital work is delayed it is costing about \$1.7 million extra, partly because of the huge increase in infrastructure costs. Hopefully, that will stabilise in future. The rest of the cost is due to the changes in scope, which were not initiated by me but by the former minister because of the changing needs of that hospital. Further negotiation took place under his watch on the expanding needs of the hospital, part of which includes a new stand-alone emergency department, which everyone realises is needed.

In my first 50 days, apart from the other issues I have had to deal with, particularly our first 100-day promises—I have been working extremely hard to make sure we meet them—I have had to deal with this issue of an extra \$100 million on top of what Treasury had already approved. The former minister did an excellent job—it is a pity the Treasurer is not here—squeezing all that money out of government for those hospital expansions that were recommended in the Reid report. The former minister obtained billions of dollars for those things. We can understand why Treasurers get a bit annoyed. They get a bit sick of Ministers for Health saying they need more money. The original allocation for Fiona Stanley Hospital was—correct me if I am wrong—in the order of \$450 million. We told the former government that was not enough. The cost at that stage, internationally, was \$1 million a bed. The then opposition said that, to accommodate 640 beds, it would cost \$640 million. Can I have an extension of time?

[Leave denied for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr J.A. McGinty: Can you get on to what the current problem is at Joondalup, please?

Dr K.D. HAMES: The current problem is that, firstly, I needed to secure an extra allocation of \$5.5 million to enable the process to continue and to indicate that I was committed to it, and that has occurred. Secondly, I had to seek that additional \$100 million. A submission has been given to cabinet, although, as the member can imagine, it has been there for only a short period. We have not known about the problems for long. The business case needed to be finalised for the extra \$131 million; it had not been done when the Carpenter government left office.

Mr J.A. McGinty: I thought that had been finalised.

Dr K.D. HAMES: No; it had not. I finalised it and submitted it as quickly as I could. I am waiting for Treasury to approve that funding. Treasury has not had the request for long, but I have told Treasury that it is urgent and that we need the money in the very near future to stop further cost escalation. Delays have been caused by the change of government, but delays should be for only that couple of months hiatus, and perhaps not even that, because that work has been able to continue.

Mr J.A. McGinty: Can we expect a decision before Christmas?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I am not the one who makes that decision, as the member knows. All I can say is that I very strongly support getting on with this hospital and getting it built as fast as we possibly can.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 12 November 2008]
p187b-223a

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Ayes (28)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr A.P. O'Gorman	Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr A.J. Carpenter	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr V.A. Catania	Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr J.A. McGinty	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M. McGowan	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (30)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion Resumed

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [4.33 pm]: Mr Speaker, please accept my congratulations on your election, and I congratulate all members elected to this Parliament. I thank the parliamentary staff for their warm welcome and assistance.

I would like to acknowledge the Nyoongah people, the traditional owners on whose country we meet. I am mindful of the rights and obligations they have to this land and the ongoing spiritual and cultural connection they have to the south west.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the people of Nollamara for the faith they have put in me and the honour they have afforded me so that I have this privilege of making my inaugural speech as the member for Nollamara. I acknowledge the good work of the past members in the area: Hon John Kobelke, Margaret Quirk and Hon Bob Kucera, and not to forget that community campaigner Ted Cunningham.

The new electorate of Nollamara includes the suburbs of Alexander Heights, Nollamara, Mirrabooka, Koondoola, Westminster and a section of Dianella. I appreciate the generosity of the different communities in Nollamara, as they have invited me in and shared their joys and disappointments during and since the election. I look forward to applying my energy and skills to working in the Nollamara community to build a better future for them and for Western Australia.

The fundamental responsibility of a member of Parliament is to listen to the people, represent them and seek commonsense outcomes in such a way as to advance their interests and the common good. Part of this responsibility is to work with the federal government and local governments to ensure efficient and effective government, to be clear about what we are responsible for and to work together for the public interest.

The Nollamara electorate is rich in diversity, with people from all walks of life and from all countries that can be walked. It has a large Indigenous community. The dominant language spoken, other than English, is Vietnamese, and the area has a secular diversity and cooperation that would be sought after in many countries. The goal of our community should be to ensure that such a rich cultural heritage is celebrated, that tolerance and acceptance are valued and that the vibrant community they deliver is enjoyed. I would like to congratulate both the City of Stirling and the City of Wanneroo for their development of this area to promote and develop its wellbeing.

The Nollamara electorate has a relatively young population, with 30 per cent of the population under 19 years of age and 22 per cent under 14 years of age. Therefore, quality education is vital. It has indeed been a pleasure to visit the schools in the electorate to witness the dedication of the staff and the enthusiasm of the children. The schools in the area have an outstanding calibre of teaching and support staff, who strive for the best learning and social outcomes. I was particularly impressed during my visit to the Koondoola Primary School and the integrated services centre, which is funded from the Department for Communities' Office of Multicultural Interests. Through this innovative, whole-of-government program, onsite assistance with health, social and trauma issues can be directly and quickly addressed to the benefit of the children and the community as a whole. A recent report to government on this pilot project found it to be effective and recommended ongoing funding for this facility and its extension to other schools.

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Special congratulations should also go to the Department of Health for its funding of the Happy Kids program that runs at Mirrabooka, Nollamara, Dryandra and Westminster Primary Schools. The program celebrated its tenth anniversary this year, and the dedication of the deputy principal at Mirrabooka Primary School in driving this program, along with his colleagues, is to be commended. My thanks also to the staff and parents at other schools in the electorate for the warm welcome they have shown me.

The work of these great primary schools and their teaching staff is continued at Mirrabooka Senior High School, which embraces and celebrates its diversity. The school has over 55 nationalities and language groups represented. While celebrating and catering for the challenges this creates, the core commitment of the school is to ensure that all students reach their full potential. I had the honour of witnessing this commitment at their recent graduation ceremony, where all the students entering year 12 graduated, many with awards attesting to their high level of academic and vocational achievements. That may not seem so surprising, but many of them started off in English language centres before they began their high school studies.

It is clear to me that education is the foundation of the health and prosperity of our community and our state. The source of this obligation to the community is the development of our children. This makes the provision of community services, quality child care and the role of early childhood education vital. The importance of early education and socialisation has been demonstrated in Nollamara with the Communities for Children program. CFC programs increase learning outcomes for children, ensuring the successful transition from home to school and throughout life. I first heard about this exciting approach to the health and development of our children at a conference on crime prevention in 2005. Without exception, at this conference presenters from police to polities all emphasised that the critical period in preventing crime is in our children's early years of development. If we truly want the best for our children, programs that support our communities, such as CFC, must continue to be funded.

There seems to be universal agreement in this place that we are committed to communities. My experience is as a volunteer board member of the community legal sector for the past 20-odd years. It is with great respect that I have witnessed many dedicated workers deal compassionately and competently with some of the most complex and distressing cases of disadvantage and difficulty. I would also like to recognise the commitment of those in the front-line services of government such as housing, health, child protection and police. These people work with issues in our community that many of us have limited appreciation of or exposure to. Community services are vital to ensuring that we build an economically sustainable, inclusive and cohesive Western Australia. As policymakers, we need to acknowledge that such services require sufficient funding to deliver the resources required for success. For too long governments of all persuasions have contracted out these services to the community sector without meeting the full costs. Although the cost benefit to government may look good on the balance sheet, the cost benefit to the community is often negative. This is no more evident than when unemployment is at an all-time low and workers leave the community sector, taking their knowledge and capability to higher paying industries. Those who stay because of commitment have to deal with rising costs and decreasing ability to deliver an appropriate level of services. It is clearly time to stop the cost shifting from government to the community sector and to ensure that the funding of the sector reflects the real cost of providing these invaluable services to the community.

Building community cohesion and collective involvement goes across all sectors of our society, including playgroups, P&C associations, police and community youth clubs, sporting and youth clubs, branches of the Returned and Services League of Australia and ratepayers associations. Organisations such as the Koondoola Ratepayers and Tenants Action Group and seniors clubs in Balga and Alexander Heights demonstrate to me the ongoing commitment and effort needed to develop our community. Given this particular day, I would also like to acknowledge the Nollamara State Emergency Service. In many ways these organisations are reliant on finding volunteers, something that has become progressively more difficult in WA as we have seen hours of work increase markedly in recent years. These work hours eat into our leisure time and affect our capacity to participate in school fetes, sporting clubs and our community.

For me, working hours is a critical issue that impacts on volunteering and community participation and is a matter that needs addressing by policymakers. This is especially so when governments and organisations throughout Australia profess a commitment to work-life-family balance. Work-life balance is dear to my heart, as it was through the support of my previous employers that I was able to build my career while participating fully in my family life. I was one of the lucky one out of three women in Australia who received paid parental leave, a critical factor for all women in their continued participation in the workforce and, therefore, contribution to the economy and wellbeing of their children. However, work-life-family balance is under threat, as around two million Australians, the highest proportion of any country in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and second only to Korea, work in excess of 50 hours a week each and every week. I

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congratulate the previous Labor government on establishing the review into extended working hours and the adoption of the working hours code of practice in 2006. However, we should go further and establish clear regulations on what constitutes a working day and working week, parameters that are vital to establishing a clear foundation for work-life balance and proper compensation for working additional hours or overtime.

I would like to thank those people in the Australian Labor Party and the labour movement who supported me as the candidate for Nollamara. In particular, I would like to thank the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union: the president, Nina Devlin; the secretary, Dave Kelly; the assistant secretaries, Carolyn Smith and Kelly Shay; and all the executive, staff and members who have supported me. I am a proud “misso”. In addition, my thanks go to all those at UnionsWA for their support. I acknowledge the responsibility that this position entails in defending and reinforcing the values of the Labor Party and the union movement, with their principles that encompass compassion and value human worth. I am a firm supporter of Labor’s core belief that a fair society is one that ensures that all its people are cared for and have fair access to the wealth of the state and nation. In addition, for me, Labor values have their foundation in the belief that society functions at its best when it acts together collectively, not when it focuses on individual gain and blame but when it values the need to participate and the right to dissent. This commitment to the working people at the heart of Labor values is a core belief that I bring to this place.

Being an employee of the “missos” was a rewarding experience, as the LHMU is a union dedicated to its predominantly low-paid members by bringing about positive social change that improves workers’ lives. The LHMU is a union with approximately 70 per cent women membership, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Its members are found in a wide range of industries, including cleaners, health workers, laundry workers, security guards, carers, and hospitality, manufacturing and early education workers. During my time as a misso I experienced firsthand the ravages of the previous Liberal government’s workplace agreements legislation as an organiser in the contract cleaning industry. I watched vulnerable people have their wages bargained down by companies driven by margins and a system that undermined any capacity to pay decent wages. Many of these employers were as much a victim of the race to the bottom as were the workers, as tender processes undermined the award safety net. Having witnessed this process and the distress of workers, whose only solution to a reduction in wage rates was to increase their working hours, I became committed to exposing the fallacy of the rhetoric that workers had a choice to make individual agreements with their employer. The subsequent federal WorkChoices legislation, which was modelled on the previous Liberal government’s workplace laws, was exposed for what it was, and the Australian people reinforced their strong commitment to fairness for workers in November 2007.

When I worked on the Your Rights at Work campaign, I was always encouraged by those I spoke to in the community who would acknowledge the importance of protections for workers, the right to bargain collectively and the need for fairness and equity in our workplace laws and regulations. It is interesting to note that most people believe that legislators legislate for the benefit of all people. This was made very clear to me when campaigning against WorkChoices. I was asked, “Why do you have to argue about this? Why can’t you sit down and talk with each other?” It was disheartening having to explain that the government refused to negotiate with the union movement and therefore we needed to campaign. This is an important message for governments of any persuasion: if you are not in dialogue with the labour movement, you are not talking to a great number of people in WA.

Prior to the September election, the previous Labor government also recognised the importance of ensuring equity for cleaners and agreed that workers employed to work in government buildings, whether directly employed or employed through a contractor, would be recognised for doing the same job and paid the same accordingly. I call on the current government to honour this commitment, as it is only fair and reasonable that workers be paid according to the work they undertake, not at a rate less than that because their work is outsourced by government to contractors. If it is good enough to increase teachers’ pay, it should be good enough to increase cleaners’ pay.

In my 15 years in the labour movement, I also had the opportunity to be the assistant secretary of UnionsWA to argue for pay equity and a fair minimum wage, was appointed as a member of the WorkSafe Western Australia Commission and the WorkCover board, and represented workers on two industry superannuation funds. I was honoured to work with the Indigenous committee on the campaign for compensation for stolen wages. I call on the current government to continue to ensure that this historic injustice is remedied.

My experience has exposed me to many instances of unfairness, but none is more outdated than the age discrimination perpetrated in the Workers’ Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981. Section 56 of the act provides that workers’ weekly compensation payments cease at age 65. When a worker is injured just prior to 65 or after, he or she is entitled to only a year’s compensation. This provision directly conflicts with the Equal

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Opportunity Act. In our society in 2008, in which 50 is the new 30 and workers are not required to retire at 65, placing workers at risk of not receiving compensation if they are injured seems inconceivable. The argument should not, and cannot, be about age, but about medical fitness.

The clear opportunities I have had reinforce my fundamental belief that economic independence is a cornerstone of a healthy community and the economic stability vital to the wellbeing of our state. Having represented workers who suffered workplace injuries and were unable to return to employment, I have personal experience of the devastating effects that unemployment has for people. The capacity of our economy to deliver the lowest unemployment rates in history over the past few years should be recognised as the crowning achievement of the previous Labor government and of the current Leader of the Opposition, as the previous Treasurer. Further, I applaud the Hawke-Keating government's establishment of universal superannuation and the establishment of industry funds that operate for the sole purpose of beneficiaries and provide economic independence in retirement.

I recognise the fear that currently surrounds the global financial crisis and agree with the Prime Minister that the excesses of capitalism have not served us well. My experience as an economics undergraduate in the 1980s taught me only too well that the doctrine of neoclassical economics and the rule of the market dominated to the exclusion of all other economic theory. However, I was never convinced by the supply and demand tables that would assume away other factors in our economic environment. It is clear to me now that faith in the free market has failed. Therefore, achieving real gains for the economy and alleviating disadvantage can be realised only by a resourced public sector, active regulation and application of the tools of government expenditure.

Many Western Australian citizens are doing it tough. This is evident certainly in the electorate of Nollamara where, in the 2006 census, unemployment was five per cent. The median individual income was \$407, almost \$100 less than the \$504 minimum wage at that time, and significantly less than the 2006 average weekly earnings of \$879.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: These figures have serious implications, as outlined in the recent Australian Institute of Family Studies report on social inclusion. That report found that areas of concentrated income poverty impact negatively on children's wellbeing and life chances. Although the areas I represent are not in the country, in many ways they are regional and remote from the experience of other Western Australians, and providing services to them to ensure their development is vital to the wellbeing of the whole Western Australian community.

I remember vividly as a young woman meeting Sir Ronald Wilson when he addressed a community meeting. His clarity of conviction was a key motivator for me. His message has remained with me that it is not about equal opportunities; it is about opportunities afforded to people that ensure the equality of outcome. For me, this should be a premise not only simply for social policy, but also for our economic policy.

One of the greatest economic challenges that faces us, however, is the environmental challenge. Our environment is as fragile as it is beautiful and as custodians of it for future generations we need to act. We need to support economic tools that ensure that investment in sustainable technology and manufacturing is prioritised over cost-shifting, environmentally damaging processes. In short, we must put sustainability into the economic models and put a price on carbon. In addition, we need to continue to educate members of the population about their usage of our scarce resources. We need to encourage them to use alternative forms of energy and make it second nature to recycle their waste, restrict water usage, compost their food scraps and get on a bike to go to the corner shop or even, perhaps, work. The 2006 census of suburbs in the Nollamara electorate indicated that they have a greater propensity to use motor vehicles to go to work in comparison with any other areas in the local councils. My anecdotal evidence indicates that they would indeed make greater use of public transport if efficient transport were available to them. It is clear that the residents of Nollamara, as well as the residents of the whole of Western Australia, see public transport and the provision of reliable and efficient transport as a priority in addressing the environmental challenge.

With respect to waste disposal, many residents in the area are concerned about how waste is disposed of and support the implementation of the container deposit legislation.

In closing, I acknowledge and give thanks to those who have supported me to be here today. I am grateful and thankful to my wonderful family, particularly my parents, who have instilled in me the confidence and capacity to know my own self worth while accepting my responsibility to the community. To my dear sister, who has always been my best friend and number one supporter, thank you. To my brother, who worked himself sick to get me elected, thank you. To their supportive partners, I appreciate your contribution to me personally and politically.

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Growing up in WA in the 1970s and 1980s, my life was peppered with many opportunities, one of which was access to free university education. At university I discovered the “F” word. Yes, that is right, “feminism”. My commitment to women’s rights was brought home to me when in my first politics tutorial we were advised we were about to learn political history and the “isms” that changed the world—capitalism, socialism, communism and fascism. When I asked whether feminism was to be included, I was dismissed with some considerable disdain as it was explained to me that feminism was not a political theory. Perhaps there is an intellectual argument to be had on this, but there is no argument that the fundamental premise of feminist theory of equality of women in society has changed, and continues to change, the world. I would especially like to thank the women who have inspired, mentored, taught and just demonstrated to me the fundamental humanity in women’s participation in all aspects of society.

I would like to acknowledge the profound impact Helen Creed, Sharryn Jackson and Kathy Digwood have had on my professional development and Anne Giles, Leikie Hopkins, Diana McTiernan and the Bradshaw women on my spiritual development. I would particularly like to honour Senator Pat Giles and Dr Carmen Lawrence who have inspired me in their capacity to achieve so much for their communities with grace, honour and inclusivity. It is also thanks to women like Hon Sue Ellery and Hon Cheryl Davenport that women like me are in this place in numbers to influence policy and bring the diversity that public debate needs to gain policy and legislation that is for all people.

My thanks also to my many supportive male colleagues and my mentor. For the vast network of friends and colleagues who have enriched my life, I thank you, particularly those of you who found the time and resources in your busy lives to contribute to my campaign to become the member for Nollamara. It was a great honour to have you participate, and I thank you very much, especially those of you who hit the pavement, came doorknocking, contributed to my campaign and are in the public gallery today.

The capacity to be part of the community I inhabit has been one of the most cherished things in my life. To my wonderful neighbourhood community, the school community and my book club, I thank you for your support.

I will single out the Nollamara campaign team and assorted other helpers for special thanks. Thank you Danny, Anne, John, Jodie, Shani, Phil, Helena, Ali, Lauren, Jo, Polyn, Kym, James, Karma, the two Fionas, Samuel, Rose and Bob. To anybody I have forgotten, I apologise.

I also thank Hon John Kobelke, Anne, Leida and Ken, Margaret Quirk, Michelle, Katie, Kylie and Tony for their moral support throughout the campaign and their assistance since I have been elected.

To the most important people in my life, John and Thomas, a special thanks for always returning me to the simple truth that at the end of the day I am mum and Janine and the daily routines of life continue.

[Applause.]

MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley) [4.59 pm]: I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners and my father’s family, the Nyoongah people. I also welcome the new members to this place and give them one piece of advice: parliamentary privilege is a very powerful thing and should be used the best way possible and respected because it is there to protect them, but it is not a tool to harm others. To the members who have been re-elected: “G’day, nice to see you back.” I would like to add a few things to the Address-in-Reply debate.

Firstly, Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing are back in the Kimberley electorate. For the first time since 1992 the people in those communities actually voted in the Kimberley electorate. I was really pleased to be there on the day.

Dr K.D. Hames: That is as it should be.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes, I agree. I welcome back those two areas into the electorate of Kimberley. I also pay my respects to the people of Kimberley who saw fit to re-elect me as their member of Parliament for a third term. They have found me worthy, and I believe that I will be worthy of their trust and I will do the job they have asked me to do.

Since my election to this seat in 2001, a number of things have happened in my electorate that I think are worthy of comment. First of all, the health service, which had been neglected for a very long time—decades in some cases—has improved. The task of correcting that neglect was taken up by a Labor government. Every hospital has been either fully refurbished or replaced. The only fly in the ointment is Wyndham. A word of advice to the new Minister for Health is that he should have a good look at Wyndham before making any real decisions.

The other area is education. For many years, as a mother and resident of the Kimberley, I have seen our children sent away to be educated by strangers in other parts of the country—some in Perth, some in Sydney and some in Melbourne. Now we have a residential hostel, so that our children can come to Broome and be educated in the region around people who make up not only their community, but also their family. Our kids no longer need to

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go to the other side of the country for a better education. The standard of education has lifted in a wonderful way. We have attracted some wonderful teachers and others into the education system.

Another area is a little more controversial, but needs to be talked about. We still have a bit of a way to go with roads in the Kimberley. People should remember one thing—our roads do not lead to nowhere, or to somebody's farm doorstep. Our roads lead to communities and places with substantial populations. We lose so many people on those roads every year, and many of them are our young people. We see our future dying before us. On the Beagle Bay road we lost two young people, both aged under 21, last year. There is always debate about it, but we need to have that road sealed, not only for safety but also to reduce transport costs, and therefore the cost of living to people at settlement. There are between 1 200 and 1 500 people there. We need to make sure that these things are on the agenda.

Another matter is the Browse Basin, which has been talked about for as long as I can remember. I can remember the discussions when I was on the shire council in Derby, in the early 1990s.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The gas was found in the early 1960s; it has been around for a long time.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I know, but my discussions started in the 1990s, and at that time we were gung-ho in saying that we should do it. We are still gung-ho, but we have now most likely lost Inpex. I keep my fingers crossed on that. The most important part of this discussion is not how the state will benefit from it but how my region will benefit. It is the furthest region from this place. We talk about royalties for regions, and I am up for that, as long as we are very careful. I am cynical about royalties for regions for two reasons. One is Argyle, which will go down the chute in 10 years. Its closure is already being planned. Those royalties will not be a part of our region, will they? Another is the Leonard Shelf, which has been in and out of mothballs and has now been closed down. We will lose out on those royalties as well. I do not just want my share; I want the Pilbara's share, and a share for any other area where royalties are generated. I want to make sure that my electorate gets everything it needs to survive and have the best lifestyle possible. I am talking about the future, which is our kids. I want to make sure that there is employment for them and that they have a future where they live. I do not want our kids to keep going to Perth or somewhere else to do their training. Our kids go amongst strangers and do not come home, and when they do, they have changed forever. We do not want that; we want our kids to have the same opportunities as anyone living in Perth or any other major city without having to leave the region. We need to look at development in such a way that will bring local benefits. If royalties for regions can pull that off, I am up for it.

The other reason is the Ord irrigation scheme. How long has it been going now? I think it has been 48 years. I hope the government can pull it off. I am happy for it to go ahead if the foundation is set properly. If it is just a matter of going in there to score a few more pats on the back, I am not up for it. If the foundation from which the project springs is established correctly, it will last forever. There should be no more of that sugar industry stuff. It cost \$10 million to pull them out. Let us have a look at crops that will actually sustain not only our region but the whole country. If the government wants a food bowl, there it is. There is a bit of lead there, but the government is dealing with that in Esperance and it may as well do it here as well. Many things need to be remedied, but with goodwill, good management, good vision and foresight, it can be done. As I said, I am a bit sceptical about royalties for regions, but we will work on that, I am sure.

I turn now to Geoff Gallop's contribution. He is my hero. What other man would take on every bureaucrat to deal with the Aboriginal problem? The Gordon inquiry and what came out of it has changed the lives of many people, although it has not affected everybody yet. After generations of lawlessness, multifunction police facilities now bring some normality into remote communities. That was a great start. One man did that, and he went against everybody to do it. Alan Carpenter made sure that the process was continued, but it took that first step, which must have been very difficult for Geoff Gallop. I have seen some amazing things in this place. Some have been dangerous and threatening.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I accept what you are saying, but there was bipartisan support for those measures. Do you believe there should be bipartisan support for Indigenous affairs?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I believe there should be one element in Indigenous affairs, and it is called goodwill. It is not just needed amongst politicians; it is about having goodwill towards Aboriginal people as well. Aboriginal people are citizens in their own country. The unfortunate thing about Indigenous affairs in my view is that there is always a need to be seen to be doing something, and to make policy for the majority. I understand that as a member of Parliament, but I do not say that it is necessarily right. Surely there is a better way of dealing with native title, for example. We are now seeing that these things do not necessarily work all the time, so let us find an Indigenous land use agreement that actually deals with the real life experiences of Aboriginal people right

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now, and changes them. There is no pill that we can give to anybody to give hope, and that is the issue with Indigenous affairs. Aboriginal people feel helplessness, hopelessness and despair, and that is why we have such a high suicide rate. That is why everybody who calls himself a politician should be looking at a way forward based on goodwill in Indigenous affairs. There has been a good start, and this state has done a great job to date, and the opposition has worked with the government to pull off some pretty amazing things. However, we have a lot more to do. We have had 200 years of this rubbish, and it is about changing the way that we think. If we can do that, we change the way we feel, and if we can do that it changes the way we do things. It is a long process, and we all need to acknowledge it.

In the Kimberley there is a multicultural tapestry of people who come from all over the world. Some of them came for a holiday and never went home. Some, like my stepfather, were hitchhiking around the country, or like me—I was only going up there for a few months. People go to the Kimberley and stay. The Kimberley is a beautiful place. It is a community in the true sense. What happens whenever there is a cyclone, a fire or something that buggers it up big time? We all get together and we all help each other. The pastoralists are not out there by themselves. When remote communities had floods, they were not there by themselves. Everybody pulls together; that is what a community does. I have to say that there is plenty of room in the Kimberley, so any member who is thinking of coming up there should do so. We have lots of water. We have the Ord River—the member for Joondalup is not getting the water; he can forget it!

Several members interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I am sorry about that. I was not going to do that. The member for Joondalup did it!

Mr A.P. O'Gorman interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes; nick off!

When I am talking about the Kimberley region, I am talking about the spectacular place that all members should come and see. I understand that some members are coming to the Kimberley to see the premiere of the film *Australia*. I think it is going to be brilliant.

Mr J.E. McGrath: What about the member for South Perth?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I am sorry, I would love to have all members, but all my mates are coming! No—I think a limited number of people can make it into the venue. However, it is an opportunity to get *Australia* out and promote it. Anyone who has been to the Kimberley will always go back because it is so beautiful. However, once members see the film, I reckon they will go there if they have not been there before. That is, therefore, an open invitation. If members want to come up there, they can let me know and I will organise their passport and visa!

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: Do you have a pet crocodile?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I do not have a pet crocodile; it is not true; the snake is not mine!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: That snake was not mine. These members have been traumatised by their visits up there, but only when they upset me!

I return to the Browse Basin. There has been a lot of information in the media about a small group of dissenters up my way. They made a great banner. Members should see it. It is really good quality calico; so I am going to use it for my artwork. The group had a big banner saying that they did not want this; but that is fine. I love it. I am into recycling, so I got some free calico.

Dr K.D. Hames: Do you know how many Aboriginals were part of that protest?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I did not see any.

Dr K.D. Hames: I think there was one.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I did not see.

Dr K.D. Hames: There was one blocking the road; the rest were whiteys.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Give them a go, okay! They have been really well behaved. The last road they blocked was for Noonkanbah. That was a long time ago; about 30 years ago.

Dr K.D. Hames: But there were a few more Aboriginals.

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Mrs C.A. MARTIN: There is a diversity of opinion up there. Some people feel that their needs are more important than others. That is fine; I accept that and I accept that people have opinions. I also accept that government members and we as a Parliament have an obligation to ensure a future for my kids. There are 14 000 kids under 16 years of age up there in the Kimberley. There is a very young population there. All I say to the guys opposite is that it is their job to help me ensure their future. It is so very important that those young people have a future. Let us not feed them a fear of helplessness, hopelessness and despair, which has happened in the past. Let us just go with them and say, "Come on kids, your job is to stay in school and our job is to make sure you have jobs at the end of it." I am suggesting a long-term vision and a long-term plan for kids. Deal with poverty. There is only one solution for poverty; that is employment and economic participation. We have left behind many opportunities because the old way of doing things in the old days of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was to de-fund it if it worked. We are stopping that; we are not doing that any more. Let us do things that actually work and support and resource them well. If we can keep people out of the welfare system, we will not have the social carnage that we have to deal with. The Aboriginal problem will never go away while people see it as a problem. What we must do is acknowledge Aboriginal people as full citizens of Australia and afford them the same opportunities that members of this place want for their children.

I am a mum. I have two great young people. They are adults; I find it hard to say that, but they are. I also have 14 little stragglers. I do not know what happened; they came home and never left. However, if kids have nowhere to go, I find somewhere for them. I look at these kids now but they are not kids. They all have problems. One of them is about six feet five inches in height; he is a big bulky kid. He got a tattoo the other day, so I gave him a freshie. Fancy doing that! Anyway, he kept it hidden for a couple of months before I noticed it, but I gave him the freshie anyway. As far as I am concerned I have had an impact on those young'uns. They all know they have a future because I have drummed it into them. When we have our big family get-together with them and their partners, I ask them to do two things: one, to tell me what they are doing now; and two, to tell me what their future is. They tell each other as well and take each other with them. One of them got stuck in Adelaide last week, so one of the other boys paid his fare home because he did not want to see his brother left there. Wasn't that amazing? I did not have to fork out for him. I was amazed. Do members see what I mean? These kids have formed a little family system. They all came from the same places that people like I came from—big families, overcrowding, poverty and substance abuse. These kids all came from there, yet none of them practises any of that because somehow we have broken the cycle; and it is about jobs, employment and self-esteem.

Another part of that, of course, is somebody like me who was brought up here in Perth.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I will end on a nice note. If a person like I can do that and can have the honour of being the first Indigenous woman elected to an Australian Parliament, I reckon my 14 000 kids can do anything. That is what I reckon, and I drum it into them every time they go to school. I go to their schools and interact with them, and that is what I drum into them: "You can do anything. All you have to do is feel good about yourself, respect yourself and know that you can do it. Believe in yourself."

Members can imagine how I felt last week when Barack Obama got in. I thought it would never happen. I was wishing he would, and I had my fingers crossed and all of that, but on hearing the actual news I was blown away. I reckon that was for two reasons: first, the people voted in a black man to be their president; and secondly, is the world going to change now? Are those barriers that have been thrown up not now going to be pushed aside? I am talking about that veil of difference and the "isms" that were spoken about earlier today. While we have those isms—racism and sexism—confronting us every day, and while we do not challenge them, we will be doomed never to move forward. Have a look at that man just having been elected there. We can do some great things now, I believe. If we consider the ethnic backgrounds of members of this place, we do actually have a multicultural tapestry happening right here, and I think it is brilliant. The whole Parliament has changed so much; so I think it is great.

I now have to talk about the election. I won! I just thought I would let members know for the record. I have a few people to thank. First, Jon Ford for saying, "Do this, do that." I will get him one day, if that is okay! Then there is Michael Hyde, who was my manager and who has been a very close friend for a very long time; he was very good. I also thank Jodie Lynch who was part of my critical support team. Then of course I have "He who rules"—my husband Brian—who would say, "Come on, I'll drive you there; you look tired." He was great. All of my family again rallied and came and I want to thank them all. I also thank the Maritime Union of Australia for its support. Without the MUA—which is here to stay I might add—and its early money, I would not have gotten anywhere. Talking about early money, I have to thank Emily's List Australia. I am a foundation member of Emily's List and therefore a declared feminist. I have been a feminist all my life, I believe; I just did not know I was. Emily's List is an amazing group of women who made sure I had early money. Early money is so

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important when a member is going into an election, and that group of women was always there and always backing me up with resources and what have you. Joan Kirner is a legend. She rings me regularly and sends me little postcards from her trips. I acknowledge all of them.

I also acknowledge the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, which, again, came along and helped me out. I am a Labor member of Parliament and I am from the old school; I believe in unions. I believe in the solidarity that makes us what we are. That, of course, falls in line with feminism, because united we stand, divided we fall, which is the principle that is usually used in Indigenous affairs analogies, so I fell into these things without a problem.

I will now say a couple more things about the remote communities in the Kimberley. I heard today about Lieutenant General John Sanderson coming back to Western Australia. He is an amazing man. He is a nation builder. He has been sent into other countries after wars to rebuild nations. What we need to do is fully utilise him to rebuild the Aboriginal nation, if that is what it is. But without infrastructure, there is no foundation for any growth or any change or any anything. When 40 people are living in a house, change will not happen.

The most important thing about Lieutenant General John Sanderson is that he has vision. I believe he undersells himself, because as a nation builder he has an opportunity to rebuild the capacity in Aboriginal communities to service themselves properly. I also think that he is a man of decency and integrity, and someone who could be trusted with people's kids. I have to say to members that that is exactly what we are doing. He is now in a position to provide whatever it is that will assist our kids to have a real future. If he does that right and if he is supported by both sides of this house, I believe that there is a way forward out of the horrific situation that exists in Aboriginal communities.

I must also say that as an Aboriginal woman I am appalled—appalled—that Aboriginal children have been abused by people and have received no support from any of the decent people in that community. Let me just say this: such people are a minority in that community, as they would be in any community. Not all Aboriginal people are deviants who rape children; not all are addicts of one form or another. I am appalled at some of the reporting of these issues. I am not undermining any of the words that have been said, but I will say this: not all Aboriginal men are involved—not my sons, my father, my brothers, my cousins. No. Every time those generalisations are used anywhere, they paint all of the most decent men I know in my community and my family as something they are not. This needs to be stated for the record: the deviants in our community who harm children and abuse women should be treated the way that they are being treated finally, instead of having this swept under the carpet. Finally these people are being arrested, being charged and being convicted. Children and women are now feeling safe in remote communities. But it could never have happened without the previous government. It had to do what it did. There had to be a start. All I say to the incoming government is, finish the job. These are citizens in their own country who should be afforded the same services as anyone else in the country. If that means more services that are a bit more expensive, so be it. The government should break the cycle and deal with what is happening. Without breaking the cycle, we will never get anywhere.

Where native title is concerned, the government must be fair. The government would not like somebody to come along and take something from it and give it peanuts in return. When dealing with native title, the government must remember that the land belongs to those people and that most of them have lived on it forever, as has been proven in the High Court. The government must respect them and treat them as equals, because if it does not, it will just plunge them back into despair, because we offer hope on one hand and we take it with the other, and we cannot keep doing that. We have to start respecting people who live on the land. We must respect their law and culture—not the rubbish law and culture that allows horrible things to happen, but the real law and culture that is out there and is strong.

I will close by saying again that this is a great place to be. The government represents this community and everybody in Western Australia as a collective. It must do its job well, with heart and with goodwill. If it does, it will not go wrong. I say that for all of us, including our new members. I think it is really important that things be done properly. Remember that what is done in this place reflects on members personally, but also on us collectively. If we can tweak things a bit and moderate some of the government's behaviour, I think we will be right. However, it will be a bit difficult to change, so I ask that the government treat this place the way it should be treated—with integrity, with respect, with honesty. The government will get it from me if it gives it to me. What it gives, I will give back.

[Applause.]

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [5.25 pm]: I begin by congratulating the member for North West on coming to the working chamber of Parliament—coming from the soft seats of the upper house down to where all the work is done. I also congratulate all the new members on both sides of the chamber. It has been great to sit and listen to the various maiden speeches, and I was only thinking today about the wide range of talents that

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have come into this Parliament. I think all new members will make a great contribution. The one bit of advice that I can give new members—and I am only a one-term member of Parliament, now into my second term—is the advice given to me by the late Phillip Pandal when I ran for the seat of South Perth after his retirement. He said, “Being a member of Parliament is the most rewarding thing that you will ever do in your life.” I am sure that all new members will look back on their time in Parliament and will remember what I said today, because that is how it will be.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the people of the electorate of South Perth for once again showing confidence in my ability to represent them. I was especially pleased that my vote increased quite substantially, because the two-party preferred vote went from 55.8 per cent in 2005 to 64.27 per cent in 2008; an increase of 8.5 per cent. A friend of mine said one day, “I didn’t think you could get another eight per cent of Liberal voters out of South Perth.” I said, “I must have got a few Labor votes.” It is great to be back in this place.

Today I will talk about a wide range of issues, the first one being the proposed media shield laws. The other night I was fortunate enough to be invited to represent the Premier at the media awards ball, which was held at Gloucester Park. One of the topics mentioned during the evening was the great concern of members of the media that they do not have a protection to protect their sources. *The West Australian* is challenging a decision of Justice David Newnes in the Supreme Court instructing the paper to hand over two audiotapes of a telephone conversation between reporter Sean Cowan and a confidential source. Refusing to hand over that tape could result in Sean Cowan being jailed until the recordings are supplied. Anyone who read that story would have to wonder whether, given the circumstances of the case, that is fair treatment of the media and whether it encourages a free press in Western Australia. I know that Paul Armstrong, the editor of *The West Australian*, has reacted quite strongly to that ruling. He stated —

“The ability of journalists to go about their jobs of exposing wrongdoing, corruption and other issues of importance is crucial to the health of a free and successful society,” ...

...

“To achieve this, journalists rely heavily on sources who divulge secretive information in the public interest knowing that their identity will be protected.

The threat of journalists being sent to jail for protecting their sources while doing their job should worry every Australian, not just reporters.

We are all aware of what happened earlier this year with the police raid on *The Sunday Times*. I think a lot of people were disappointed with that, and saw it as some sort of intrusion into free speech in Western Australia. The Australian Press Council’s position on shield laws is as follows —

... that journalists should only be compelled to reveal their confidential sources under stringent conditions, analogous to its position on disclosures in legal actions, where it argues for compulsion only:

- where a prosecutor can show that there is a probable cause to believe that the journalist has information that is clearly relevant to a specific probable violation of the criminal law, constituting a serious criminal offence ...
- where the plaintiff can demonstrate that the information sought cannot be obtained by alternative means less destructive of freedom of speech and of the press; and
- where the plaintiff can demonstrate a compelling and over-riding interest in the information.

So we can see that there is real concern about shield laws among journalists; nonetheless, there are obviously cases in which journalists should not be able to protect their sources, such as those involving some criminal activity or something that could prevent the police from solving a very serious crime. I have discussed this issue with the Attorney General, who has made public that he supports shield laws. However, before introducing legislation he wants to have a good look at it because it is a very complex area. Concerns about the protections available for journalists’ sources have been raised for many years. A parliamentary library paper of 1992 compared the laws in New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, demonstrating that, comparatively speaking, the debate for reform in Australia is both ongoing and moving very slowly. In 2005, in response to a case of two *Herald Sun* journos refusing to divulge the source of their report regarding a former veteran affairs minister, the federal Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock, made a promise that shield laws would be passed to protect journalists. Reforms of the commonwealth Evidence Act 1995 in 2007 resulted in the implementation of additional protections for journalists and their sources.

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As we can see, the situation in Western Australia is probably still a long way behind other parts of Australia. I am told by the state Attorney General that the law in New South Wales is almost identical to the commonwealth legislation. That is something that we must work towards, bearing in mind, of course, that the media also has a responsibility. They must work within laws of libel and things like that. It is a two-sided story and the media must also abide by the conditions laid down for them.

The Press Council wrote to former Premier Alan Carpenter in May this year, after the raid on *The Sunday Times*. The council advocates that only extreme circumstances justify the searching and seizure of material held by journalists. For instance, in a letter to the federal Attorney-General in 2007, the Press Council stated that, as I mentioned before, "extreme circumstances" included —

- where there is probable cause to believe the journalist has committed the criminal offence (and not merely a breach of "official secrecy" provisions) to which the materials relate;
- where there is reason to believe immediate seizure is necessary to prevent the death of, or serious bodily injury to, a human being; or
- where the search or seizure relates only to documents pertaining to a serious crime, but not to the journalist's own notes and other "work product materials", and the journalist refuses to produce documents under a court order or there is reason to believe they will be destroyed or hidden if a subpoena is issued.

There are many conflicting issues to be balanced with this reform. If a journalist is withholding some information that could affect national security, for example, that is obviously something we need to look at. Another issue is whistleblowers. In Western Australia in particular we are said to be lagging behind in protecting whistleblowers. Separate inquiries are underway in New South Wales. At the federal level I am told by the state Attorney General that there will be a report from the Attorneys General committee. Is that right?

Mr C.C. Porter: The Standing Committee of Attorneys General Evidence Committee.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes. That report should be released in December this year. I have spent most of my life as a journalist. I am therefore very interested in freedom of the press and would like to work with the Attorney General as this legislation is drafted for introduction into Parliament.

The second issue I want to talk about relates to housing. I am sure a lot of members have received the same complaints that I have. I am referring to the behaviour of Homeswest tenants. With the shortage of public housing in Western Australia it is unacceptable that people who are not prepared to be good neighbours can reside in Homeswest homes. Some years ago, the government, under Premier Geoff Gallop, introduced the Good Neighbour policy.

Mr F.M. Logan: That was me; I did that.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: He did. Homeswest tenants had to abide by the Good Neighbour policy. I know something about Homeswest homes because I grew up in one in the member for Cockburn's electorate in Hamilton Hill. At that time those homes were called State Housing Commission homes. They were often the first home of young families. My parents moved into one of those houses and were later able to buy a house. The fact that people live in Homeswest accommodation is no excuse for being bad neighbours. In my electorate, I continually receive complaints about people who are not good neighbours. The issue drives the people in Homeswest to distraction. I will talk about it to the Minister for Housing and Works. Homeswest needs some support in dealing with some of these families. Some of the families have issues to deal with—it might be a single parent doing it tough with quite a few children and finding it a battle to manage the family. Some of the government agencies do provide help but I do not think it is working. For example, after three years of enduring screaming, obscene language and children throwing all sorts of objects over his fence, one of my constituents felt that his family's safety was threatened, so they moved out of the house that they were buying. He rented it to someone and he has not returned. Now the tenants cannot take it anymore and they want to move out. The Department of Housing and Works gave the owner approval to install a fence between him and his Homeswest neighbour but he had to pay the \$800 cost. It is a very difficult case. What should be done? Should Homeswest throw the tenants out onto the street? If they are forced to move somewhere else, the problem is moved with them. It is an issue that we cannot ignore. Anyone who lives anywhere in Western Australia is entitled to enjoy a reasonably peaceful existence. Laws are in place to protect us from people who make too much noise, invade our privacy or whatever.

Another example in my electorate is a person being killed in a Homeswest block of units. The tenants got wind of the fact that someone had died and rang Homeswest, but Homeswest could not tell them what had happened.

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They felt a bit insecure about not knowing what had happened in the units. When my office made some inquiries, Homeswest told them later that it could not divulge any information because it was a police matter and confidential. In light of these sorts of issues we need to review the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 and look at whether we can give Homeswest more support. It is an agency that is under the pump all the time. Homeswest has a massive waiting list of, I think, 16 000 people. I will be talking to the minister about that because we need to look very closely at the issue. Homeswest tenants are no different from any other tenants or residents. Let us all get together. As the member for Kimberley said, we need to be working together as communities. I am sure that all new members will find that the issue of bad neighbours will come before them. It is a question of behaviour, which is something we have problems with.

The Good Neighbour policy was released on Friday, 22 April 2005. The then Minister for Housing and Works, Fran Logan, announced the introduction of the new Good Neighbour policy, requiring tenants to sign a contract in which they promise not to engage in antisocial behaviour.

Mr F.M. Logan: That is part of the tenancy contract. What Homeswest needs to do is to enforce it.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Suggestions have been made that the provision should be taken out and that there should be a separate contract.

Mr F.M. Logan: I agree with you. I think that support in the residential tenancies area would also help Homeswest.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes, we need to look at the tenancy situation. The policy that the member for Cockburn brought in as minister meant that any occurrence of antisocial behaviour might result in a tenant being in breach of his or her contract and possibly facing eviction. It is very difficult to evict people, and we do not want to be evicting people all the time, but sometimes people must get the message. For the sake of peace and quiet in an area it may have to be done. I think there was a situation in Medina earlier this year in which somebody was killed.

Mr F.M. Logan: It was in my electorate.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes. The member for Cockburn is getting a big mention in this speech. Someone died as a result of a fight between a couple of neighbours, which could happen in any society. A few fights took place in Hamilton Hill, as I recall, but I think they were settled rather amicably.

The next part of my speech will be of interest to the Minister for Racing and Gaming, even though it is not in his portfolio, because it relates to workers' compensation for jockeys. Many people might not be aware of the fact that the racing industry has workers' compensation, but if a jockey is injured, while he or she cannot ride compensation amounts to \$615.90 gross a week. Under the legislation they are given the same compensation as that prescribed for a stable foreman under the Horse Training Industry Award 1976.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Most jockeys in Western Australia earn much more than \$600 a week. To equate their compensation with that of a stable foreman, with no disrespect to stable foremen, is very unreasonable, especially as in other states jockeys are paid a lot more money in compensation. Western Australia has a racing carnival soon, when many top jockeys from around Australia will be riding at Ascot Racecourse. Some have had to take out their own insurance policies for the time they are in Perth, because they would otherwise be getting compensation of only \$600 a week if injured. When we look at the risks that jockeys take—a horse could stumble or fall and break a leg—they could easily be out of work. Some top jockeys in WA earn \$300 000 or \$400 000 a year and maybe more. However, they have commitments, just as everybody else does. People who earn a higher wage and have commitments need to receive proper compensation. I think this comes under the Treasurer's portfolio and the relevant act is the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981. I will be trying to push for an amendment so that jockeys can be paid commensurate with their average wage for the previous 12 months, which would be fair. If a jockey is riding at a certain level and earning so much money, to pay workers' compensation on that basis would be good.

Mr P.B. Watson: If he brings your horse home!

Mr J.E. McGRATH: If he were to win on my horse, he would get a little bit more! I believe we should look at this and I will be talking to the Minister for Racing and Gaming about it.

While on the subject of racing, and this gets back to what the member for Kimberley was talking about, the racing industry faces a massive problem trying to attract workers. It has a real problem getting track-work riders and even jockeys. Trainers have been bringing people into Australia on section 457 visas. The other day I was at

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Clontarf Aboriginal College, where I realised that Western Australia has a ready-made workforce for the racing industry among its Indigenous community. Indigenous people have a natural affinity with horses. Aboriginal stockmen were legendary because of their calm and gentle nature with animals. The racing industry should look at some sort of program, which I would be happy to support, even if it were through Clontarf college or one of the TAFE colleges, in which young Aboriginal people could be given the opportunity to do something other than become an Australian Football League footballer. They could be involved in a big racing industry, not just riding horses. They could be trained to become farriers or veterinarian assistants. They could be racecourse workers, track people or gardeners. They could be people involved in the hospitality industry or horse breeding.

I have been involved in the racing industry for a long time. I remember a famous jockey named Darby McCarthy who was Aboriginal. He rode in a great era for the Australian turf industry. He proved that there is an affinity between Indigenous people and horses. Another Indigenous jockey was Frank Reys, who won the Melbourne Cup on Gala Supreme. He was the only Indigenous rider to win the Melbourne Cup. We should encourage this involvement in the racing industry. The member for Victoria Park was at Clontarf Aboriginal College the other day for the graduation ceremony. Clontarf college is still in the electorate of South Perth, although I know the member for Victoria Park would love it to be in Victoria Park. What is being done at Clontarf college is outstanding. I was there last year when people from business enterprises spoke about opportunities in the workplace to young, soon-to-be graduates who were doing their tertiary examinations that year. They showed a number of films of Aboriginal boys and girls who had found jobs in the workplace. It gave the kids who were in year 12 the sense that there is a chance for them in the world and there are things that they can do. Some of the kids worked in government agencies. One boy was working in Broome as a mechanic. He was recorded on the video as saying that he had just bought a car. He was asked what he intended to do next. He said that he would put his money away for a house. Aboriginal kids need career paths.

Mr P.B. Watson: They also need role models. Those kids are role models.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes, not every Aboriginal kid is going to be an AFL footballer. It is silly to think that they all will be, because they will not. However, they can do other things and aspire to greatness. The member for Victoria Park might help me with the name of the doctor who spoke at Clontarf.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Kim Isaacs.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Dr Kim Isaacs was outstanding. She went through medical school. She gave us the statistics of how many Indigenous people have been through medical school. What a great role model she is.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: She was spectacular.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: She was outstanding and a great role model for Indigenous kids. A lot of people have mentioned the problems we are facing when trying to bring Indigenous people into the community to help the next generation of Indigenous people and to give those kids an opportunity. There are a lot of Indigenous kids in the schools in my electorate, including Manning, Como and Curtin Primary Schools. They are great kids but we have to give them opportunities. I agree with the member for Albany when he said that it is all about role models. If kids do not have role models, who will they follow?

Returning to the racing industry, there was one other person whom I did not name, the late Rod Bynder, a trainer and former jockey. I knew him when he was a young rider in Belmont. He became a trainer and won the Railway Stakes with a horse named Belle Bazaar. For those who do not know much about racing, the Railway Stakes is probably the second biggest race in Western Australia. It was amazing for him, a young Aboriginal man who had become a trainer, to win that race. He passed away only a few weeks ago from a heart attack. His funeral was at Ascot racecourse. Apparently, there was a massive turnout. It just goes to show that there is an affinity between Indigenous people and horses and animals. There is an opportunity for the racing industry to embrace those people.

While on racing, I also want to talk about the Perth Cup, which everyone knows. I do not know whether the minister agrees with the change in distance but I will go on the record and say that I think it should be 3 200 metres. I know that RWWA made a decision this year to make it a 2 400-metre race. There is a school of thought that we will not be able to get horses to come over to Perth for a two-mile race because it is a gruelling race run in the middle of summer, and it could be 42 or 44 degrees on the day. Another trainer said to me the other day that horses do not come back from two-mile races. I reminded him of Makybe Diva, who won the Melbourne Cup three years running. Running in two-mile races did not hurt her. On the hottest day on record for a Perth Cup, two mares, Philomel and Ace Queen, fought out the finish. That was probably before some of the members here were out of short pants. It was a very, very hot day. The Perth Cup is about tradition. If we are going to get rid of all our tradition, it will be a very sad —

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Mr P.B. Watson: You have to bring in good horses, though.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: It does not matter. People go to the Perth Cup as an event. It is a bit like the marathon at the Olympics. The member for Albany would not be in favour of shortening the distance of the marathon because —

Mr P.B. Watson: I would, actually.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Because it is a marathon, there is a bit of mystique and intrigue. Who could ever pick the winner of the marathon at the Olympics? We might identify who will win the 100 metres, the 400 metres or the 800 metres, but the marathon can be won by anyone. We would generally say that it will be won by a Kenyan, but there could be seven or eight Kenyans in the field. We should return the Perth Cup to 3 200 metres for next year. I know that it will not change this year; it is too late to change. Perth Racing told a meeting of members—I was present as a member of Perth Racing—that it will review it in March. I will be interested to see how the cup goes next year and whether a decision is made to return to 3 200 metres. About 90 per cent of the members at that meeting felt that if the race was changed from 3 200 metres, we would be selling off our tradition. I will be interested to see whether the new Minister for Racing and Gaming has a different view on that after he has had a good look at the next Perth Cup.

As far as my electorate goes, I am happy to be the member for South Perth. It is a fantastic electorate. I do not think there would be an electorate in the whole of Western Australia that has the community spirit that can be found in South Perth. I know that all members say that about their electorate. The people of South Perth have a great feeling of community. Fifty years ago when they decided they needed a hospital, because they had heard that a former Premier was going to close Royal Perth Hospital, they said, “We’ll have to get a hospital for South Perth.” They did a collection around the area. Many people bought a brick. A lot of people were born at South Perth Community Hospital. That 50-year old hospital was started by the people of South Perth and is actually owned by the people of South Perth.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I had my adenoids out in that hospital.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Another successful operation. That is another example of how the people of South Perth get together. It is such a close-knit community. I hope the people of South Perth think they have a good local member.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [5.55 pm]: It is my pleasure to say a few words tonight after contesting my third election in a very marginal seat. I have heard the member for Albany grizzling about how close his election was. I think he got home by 68 votes. I remember my 34-vote margin some time back. I congratulate everyone who has been elected. It is a major part of anyone’s life to come into this place. We certainly have to change some habits over time—if we do not, we get caught! I will not go into that. Representing our area is not only pleasurable but also an honour. I feel that honour here tonight.

I have many people to thank. On other occasions I have not gone through the full list but I will this time. The four years that I was here for initially all of a sudden became eight. I was told that I would be here for only four years and that I should enjoy myself while I am here. I am lining up to go into the full 12 years, depending on what happens between certain alliances around the place. Sometimes we have to take time out and thank the people who have made sure we get here. That starts off with my electorate staff. They have certainly been excellent over the years. In the Collie region I got 82 per cent of the vote in one of the booths, a major booth in town. That does not come about because of the Labor Party or the person standing here. It comes about because the people are given good service. When we think about it and wonder how we got here, we can only go back to the office staff. Laurel Dhu, Donna Davies and Nola Green are the main three who have been in my electorate office over the past couple of years. A few others have been short-termers. I do not know whether it was because of the boss, but they left. Laurel, Donna and Nola have been great stalwarts and certainly do a lot of different jobs. Most country members would agree that they have to be a local dog catcher or snake chaser and get all sorts of things done. Country areas are quite remarkable. People ask me why I do it. It is about giving service to the people. Recently a lady came into my office wanting to know how she could arrange her own funeral. There is nothing unusual in that, but she wanted to start by making her own coffin. I had to say, “Laurel, that’s your job, not mine”, and pass it over to someone else. I sincerely thank the staff there.

My branch members were excellent during the election and gave support. During the times I thought I had a good idea, they would take me to task, straighten me out and move me in the right direction. The secretary of the branch delayed his holidays when the election was called; Gary and Evelyn Benton have been above reproach. The work that they have done over the years has been very much appreciated. Gary is the sort of bloke who has ideas, does the hard work, puts up the banners and does everything we could think of, including manning the

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booths. I thank him and Evelyn as well. Daphne is our major ticket seller. One could not take three steps without buying a ticket off Daphne. She has been around for years. I probably should not say that about a lady. She has been around a long time and is still working away. She comes in as a volunteer and folds letters and those sorts of things. She enjoys the interaction and it gets her out of the house. I thank her very much as well.

I also thank all the volunteers, including the booth workers. These days it is a major job for people to volunteer. We did not have one paid booth worker. Every person who manned my booths was a volunteer and I really respect and appreciate what they did for me. I thank John Kearney, Gary Wood, Andy Duffy and Brett King and their respective unions for the strong support they gave me. As members would be aware, Collie is a strong Labor town and is one of the few towns in which the mining industry is fully unionised. It has not done Collie any disservice over the years. The towns that are not unionised are experiencing problems, including workplace practices, that are slowly but surely getting worse. It is disappointing that some pay rises will not be passed on by the new government. It is of concern because if the government takes that action we will end up with confrontation that we do not need. Everyone who does a good day's work should get a good day's pay. Unfortunately, Western Australians are working more hours than people in other states and other parts of the world and that is contributing to some of the problems that are being experienced. Labor shortage has been an issue, but with the way things are heading we will no longer be able to use that as an excuse. I thank all those people with whom I worked previously for donating to my campaign. I appreciate what they did because we did not have much time for fundraising and, as usual, we left that to last. It has been a pleasure to work with the companies in the town to ensure they provide a safe work area and that their employees are well paid.

I refer now to the shires that will no longer be in the electorate of Collie-Preston—the Shire of Waroona and the Shire of Harvey. I have had some good tussles with the respective presidents over what was good for them and what was good for me. Noel Dew, the president of the Waroona shire, sat me down at our first meeting and told me what was good for his shire. That procedure was followed during the time I was the local member. Noel is a tremendous guy who must be in his 70s now. He loves the area he represents and does anything he can through the political spectrum to ensure that the area covered by the Shire of Waroona is the best of both worlds. It certainly does get better south of Mandurah, and Waroona is one of the first towns after Mandurah.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Mandurah is the biggest city outside the metropolitan area.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will not mention the patient assisted travel scheme as it applies to people in Mandurah because we can now give them a train ticket. I take my hat off to Noel Dew.

I refer now to the president of the Shire of Harvey, Peter Monagle. Peter has served on many committees. It took Peter and me some time to warm to each other. That occurred after he, his chief executive officer Michael Parker and I understood that our concerns were for the whole of the Shire of Harvey. Michael Parker has a very bad trait—he barracks too strongly for the Eagles and cannot see the wood for the trees. We have had a few arguments about that. All in all, it has been a pleasure to work with and for those communities. For 20 years prior to my election as the local member for those areas they were conservative areas. On my election, I was not sure what reception I would receive. It comes down to treating people with respect, and if we do that they will return that respect irrespective of their political alliances. That makes for a strong community. I thank those guys and their communities.

Political life is a strange thing, especially considering the things that members have dealt up to them along the way. In many cases they are not of one's making. In the 2001 election I represented Boyup Brook, Donnybrook, Dardanup, a part of Capel and Collie. At the following election I no longer represented Donnybrook and Boyup Brook and ended up representing Harvey, Waroona and a bit of the Australind area. Now I have lost Waroona and Harvey, but have gained Donnybrook and Capel. I look forward to representing these people. Steve Thomas had a very good following that was due to his hard work. It is unfortunate that we ended up campaigning in the same electorate but there can be only one winner, and thank goodness it was me. I will have to work hard to gain the confidence of the people in those areas. I look forward to doing that. The rail line and the number of trucks using the roads are issues. Unfortunately, there is disagreement in the local communities on these issues. It will be a long, hard slug. However, I remind the government that \$20 million was promised for the railway line and if the community requests it, I will pursue it every inch of the way. There will be no ifs or buts; I will make sure that the railway line is opened. It was stated many times by the previous member, Steve Thomas, that logs should be carted by rail. Here is an opportunity for the government to accede to his request.

I must also thank the member for Rockingham, Mark McGowan, the previous Minister for South West, who gave me good advice, direction and help in the political arena. Thank you, Mark. It is not often that we agree, but city folk can be knocked into shape; it just takes a bit longer. I also thank Adele Farina, the upper house member for the south west. Adele is a very hard worker, but please, Adele, no three o'clock in the morning emails

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anymore. Enough is enough! It is time to knock off and have a bit of a rest. I thank Adele for her support before and throughout the election.

The families of all members of Parliament make sacrifices. Country members are away from home often. One of the worst things I have done is to allow my wife to retire. It has given her far too much time to sit around and grizzle.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I will tell her that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Anna, I say that tongue in cheek. My wife deserves to retire but unfortunately the yard is not getting any better, because she has retired and I am still working.

Mr P.B. Watson: Who is that on the phone?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Anna will know that I am only joking. My children have supported me throughout my political career, and that is special. My youngest granddaughter was horrified that I might lose at the last election. I asked her why and she said, "I won't be able to come up to Parliament House for jelly and ice-cream." She really understands politics! My children have been very supportive. As we all know, our families always bunk down and do their bit when an election is called. Generally, they are the ones who go to the far-flung places where there are not too many Labor supporters. In one area near Capel only 120 votes were lodged and I think only three were by Labor voters. I sent people there to man the booth. If I know that someone can expect a tough day, I will get my kids to do that.

The people in Collie are passionate Labor supporters. The vote in Collie was tremendous and I thank people in the town for that. Collie has done it tough over the years and I am concerned that under a conservative government it will have to do it tough again. Over the years the Premier of the day has not been a great supporter of Collie. I was disgusted by his behaviour when some time ago I had guests in the public gallery and he interjected and asked how many murders and rapes had occurred in Collie that week. It tells a story: a lack of friendship between the Premier and the people of Collie. I certainly will keep on the Premier's toes to make sure that Collie is part of the regions. I am not quite sure whether it is within the boundary because I am not sure whether the TV ads had us in. Bunbury was not included, so I do not know what the member for Bunbury will say! Has the member for Bunbury made friends on his side of the house? I am not quite sure.

Mr G.M. Castrilli: We'll look after you!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We will count the dollars as they come through, and if they come from a different area, we will not allow them to be discounted as some have already been.

Of course, coming from a coal industry background, I feel very strongly that the industry has been maligned. Paul Murray's comments in *The West Australian* on Saturday demonstrated the ignorance of some people who write about the coal industry. He talked about how gases from the carbon capture and geosequestration process may leak if there is an earthquake. Unfortunately, Paul Murray did not do his homework, because the carbon dioxide is in a solid form. It is not a gas anymore. Once the carbon dioxide is put under pressure, it turns into a solid state. It is then pumped approximately three kilometres down into the earth, where it interacts with salt water and becomes a carbon calcinate. Over a few years it gravitates around, but it then becomes something similar to a limestone brick and stays under the earth's crust. Those sorts of uninformed comments, with their great headlines, made by commentators are sad in a way. People do not understand that coal still has a role to play and will do for the next hundred years no matter which country it is. It is surprising, I suppose, that Dubai of all places is building a 600 megawatt coal-fired power station because it thinks its gas is far too valuable to use in power stations. Dubai exports its gas to other countries around the world for other products, including power generation. Therefore, when we think that we export coal to Dubai, it makes us raise our eyebrows a bit.

The Coal Futures Group is doing tremendous research work on geosequestration and gasification, which I think provides a big future. May I have a short extension please, Mr Speaker?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.P. MURRAY: While I have stopped my speech to ask for that extension, Mr Speaker, I welcome you to your position. It is good to see a good country lad in a position like that. Maybe that will gain me some leniency.

Certainly, when we think about the future, gasification is one possibility. Even at this moment there is talk of a urea plant being built in the Collie region for about \$2.2 billion. It is something we cannot walk away from; it is downstreaming of the coal. We could be penalised under the Labor Party's emissions tax scheme, but we are working hard to make sure that everyone is given a fair go, especially when they are downstreaming and not just using resources in a raw sense.

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One of my proudest moments as a resident of Collie was during the recent gas crisis. We held the state together—I do not say that lightly—with our coal-fired power generation. Would it not have been fun if we had turned off the coal-fired power then? People would have said, “Where’s the coal now?” It would have certainly given them a shake-up. However, in the future I hope that members opposite who will make decisions about the research into the coal industry and its emissions will not roll that money away to somewhere else; I hope that the research will continue. We are blessed to have an opportunity to have coal, gas and fuel oil as our generating drivers. Not many countries have that opportunity; most rely on one source alone. We saw what happened when the gas pipeline up north blew up; we found that we were too reliant on gas alone. Therefore, I beg all the decision-makers to ensure that we have a balance of fuels. The Collie community is not asking that its coal be the one fuel source; it is simply asking for a fair go and for the government to make sure that our state can survive if one or another fuel source drops out.

There are a few issues around the place, and I do not quite understand some of the things happening in our world. One issue is Homeswest. Why do we not have regular inspections of Homeswest houses? I think that would really tidy up some of the problems we have with a very, very small group of tenants who cause heartache for others. People who go into private rentals are expected to have the house clean and tidy for when they have their property inspection. Why should state housing not be the same? In Collie we had five single old housing units that had been refurbished two or three years ago. People were put into these homes under protest, because we put on the political pressure to have the government put people into these homes. Now these houses have been emptied again to bulldoze them and leave the block vacant. Yet I have 70 people in Collie on a waiting list for accommodation. A lot of these people are single people who probably do not fit into mainstream society, but they want a roof over their heads. I am sure they will keep the places clean and tidy. I cannot see any logic in knocking down houses and putting people out on the street when these houses are quite liveable by anyone’s standards. These are things that we must keep an eye on. It is really about balancing the books and our social obligations. It is very important that we look at social issues as well as the dollar issues.

Another change of pace, I suppose, concerns a story in last week’s paper. I am probably a day late in telling this story, but a local Aboriginal gentleman came to see me more than two years ago. He was looking for his grandfather’s war medals. We found out that they had not been issued. The rigmarole that we went through to get them was terrible. He is a very unassuming gentleman and he came in day after day as we went through the process of getting the medals. Only a fortnight ago he was able to get his grandfather’s war medals. We can imagine the times in which his grandfather lived: when he came back from the war he was not allowed to have a beer in the pub and did not have voting rights and all those sorts of things. We chased the medals up and got them last week. Some of the medals, other than just service medals, that he was awarded were the 1939-45 Star, the Pacific Star for 1939-45 and the Australian Service Medal. Private Ramsell served in the Pacific and was discharged in 1946 after spending four years in the Armed Forces. It was great to see the pride on his grandson’s face—even now I can see it. He was so proud. Yesterday, on his way to the service at the eleventh hour, he knocked on the window of our office and stood there with those medals. That was something really, really special and the staff were just beside themselves. This type of thing is still happening; we still put hurdles in the way of people. However, this is a great story, because this person is fulfilled in knowing that his family had done their bit for our country. I had hoped to tell that story yesterday. This man is looking so far ahead; on 25 April next year he will be marching down the street with those medals proudly displayed on his chest.

There are many projects that are still to happen in Collie. Believe me, I have listed every promise, from part promises to full promises, that were made by the Liberal Party. I was one of the lucky ones in that I think a bit of laziness crept in and the Liberals shadowed my promises. I put members opposite on notice that at every opportunity I will say that my annual promises should be enacted immediately, if not sooner!

Mr R.F. Johnson: Trust us; we’re the government!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I hope that the member for Vasse will get the chequebook out earlier rather than later for the Collie-Preston electorate.

In finishing, again I say that I look forward to working with all members. We know that at times in this house it can get a bit tense and that some terse comments are made by all. One good point that I have always made is that, outside of this place, it is another world, and people should be treated with respect. The other point I feel strongly about is that I will never bring up a member’s family issues in this house, and I expect the same courtesy in return.

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray-Wellington — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.20 pm]: First of all, Mr Speaker, congratulations on your ascension to the position of Speaker. I am sure you will bring dignity to the position and do the best possible job, and that members will show you the respect that the Speaker’s position requires. I

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congratulate all the new members who have just arrived in the house. I have not yet met some of them and others I have met in the corridor. I will take the opportunity in the near future to touch base and begin some sort of a relationship. Sometimes, as the member for Collie-Preston just mentioned, the adversarial situation in the house can become a bit heated, but on other occasions things can be quite cordial, and a lot of work gets done behind the scenes.

I would like to thank a bunch of people who helped me get re-elected to the seat of Murray-Wellington. For those who are not aware of it, my seat has been changed from Murray to Murray-Wellington, which is a traditional seat name that has been in existence for a number of years. It was held at one stage by the former Premier of Western Australia, Sir Ross McLarty. The McLarty clan has been synonymous with the people of Pinjarra. The seat of Murray-Wellington has existed in different forms over time but has now been restored to its original name. Interestingly, it is now very similar to the seat that Sir Ross McLarty held many years ago. It includes the Shires of Murray, Waroona and Harvey. The redistribution brings back to the electorate an area in which I used to live and work—Australind and Brunswick Junction. It is the food bowl of Western Australia. Thousands of people pour Harvey Fresh milk on their cornflakes every morning. Brunswick Junction, and the Peters creamery, is probably the heart of the dairy industry in Western Australia. My friend from Bunbury would be enjoying Harvey Fresh orange juice every morning with his lovely wife, Loretta, when he rises. It is a wonderful electorate to represent.

There are six Liberal Party branches in my electorate. We had 20 booths to staff, and we had more than 200 supporters. Logistically, covering 4 500 square kilometres of land was no mean feat. I managed to get to every booth on polling day, although it took me all day. I worked out that I was able to spend 20 minutes at each booth. I thank all the people helping at those booths whom I did not get to see on that day. Without such helpers, none of us would be here. They are wonderful people, and I find it quite humbling that they give their time to do their two hours on polling day. I thank my campaign team, Rob Filmer, David Napoli and Geoff Gare. Without their support and guidance, and a whole lot of work, the campaign would not have run as efficiently as it did. I also mention my staff, Sabina and Beth. It is great to have them supporting me. I also thank my family. Not a lot of my family actually live in my electorate, although a few live down Australind way, but most of them came down on election day. No-one can embarrass a person as much as his mother. My mother sat at the polling booth in Yarloop. It is a small booth, but I am sure that everyone in Yarloop will now know my antecedents and bad habits and every idiosyncrasy that one may not wish to share with many people! I am sure that the people of Yarloop got a great insight from my mother. I thank her dearly for embarrassing me as only a mother can.

I will speak a little of previous members who have held the seat in its various shapes and forms. Neil McNeill was a long-time member of this Parliament. He originates from Waroona, and is synonymous with that area. In the southern area, part of the former seat of Leschenault was absorbed into the seat of Murray-Wellington, and some was incorporated into Collie-Preston. Dan Sullivan, in the seat of Leschenault, represented his people very well, particularly those in Australind, and I acknowledge him. John Bradshaw was the member for Murray-Wellington for 21 years, and he has always been a great source of advice and counsel. He knows absolutely everybody in the electorate, and he was of assistance as well.

The seat of Murray-Wellington is not without its challenges and its issues. Some of those issues, which are not exclusive to Murray-Wellington, relate to the beef industry. Traditionally, the beef industry was the genesis of the development of that part of the world. Pinjarra was established in 1834 and is the fourth oldest municipality in Western Australia. It is the home of families who went into other parts of Western Australia and created the beef industry. For instance, the Kimberley was settled by a number of prominent families from the electorate of Murray-Wellington, including the McLartys, the Emmanuels and the Rodgers. They have always seen Pinjarra as their base in the beef industry. As we know, the beef industry is struggling at the moment. There are reports that beef producers are losing money. The cost of fuel and fertiliser has pushed their margins to the extent that they are not even getting a return on their capital investment. Although these people may be asset rich, they are money poor because they are not getting a return on their capital. The causes of this do not lie only within Western Australia. We are looking at these influences in attempting to mitigate the effects on the beef industry.

I am very pleased that the Barnett government has committed \$25 million to upgrade and relocate the WA College of Agriculture in Harvey. That is a tangible way of the government telling the beef industry that it will maintain the corporate knowledge in the community and pass it on to the young people to maintain the beef and dairy industries. It is a fantastic idea. For those members who are unaware, the agricultural school was annexed off the senior high school a number of years ago for those students with an interest in agriculture. For those who are unaware—if it is not too much trouble, perhaps the member for Mindarie would like to either sit down and listen or leave the chamber—the agricultural school is some eight kilometres away from the farmlands where all the practical work is done, and there are logistical problems. In addition, there is a problem of accommodation for those agricultural students. I am sure the member for Blackwood-Stirling is paying attention because our

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good friend Neil Armstrong, the principal of that school, is very pleased that we have given a commitment to relocate the agricultural school at Wokalup.

Mr M. McGowan: Do you have a \$25 million commitment for that?

Mr M.J. COWPER: That is correct. I understand that that is something the previous government said it would not do. I am very pleased that this government has seen fit to do it.

The other issues that are of concern have to do with property rights. Property rights underpin a lot of concern in my electorate and throughout regional Western Australia. For various reasons, acts that have come from this place are impacting on the rights of landowners to do what they want on their properties. I agree that there are circumstances that must be taken into consideration, but one cannot lock up people's land without giving them fair and just recompense. The words "fair" and "just" appear in the commonwealth Constitution but are absent from the Western Australian Constitution. This is something I would like to take up with the Attorney General and rectify. There are property rights issues associated with the Perth-Bunbury highway. The previous government was going to pay a certain amount—according to the land value at the time—to owners of the land through which the highway will run. However, if a highway bisects a functioning farm, it destroys that business. These small producers are business owners. A 500-acre property is barely big enough to sustain an income; if it is chopped in half and the owner is paid for a small strip through the middle of the property, the logistics of getting cattle or hay from one side to another are very difficult. Although the owner may be paid for the strip of land, the overall value of the property will be diminished. It would be simply not fair or just. This is an issue that needs to be resolved.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Perhaps we can have that discussion later.

I am very pleased that construction of the Perth-Bunbury highway has gone ahead. I understand that it will be near completion sometime during the middle of 2009. There was a suggestion by the previous minister that it would be finished by Easter. I think that is a little ambitious, but it will not be long after that.

Mr P. Papalia: Not unless there's an asphalt issue.

Mr M.J. COWPER: There is an asphalt issue in the member's electorate; I have become aware of that.

The royalties for regions scheme is obviously something I take a very keen interest in. I would like to put forward a number of issues over the next four years, particularly the state of our schools. There are State schools all along the strip beginning at North Dandalup and continuing through North Pinjarra, Pinjarra, Waroona, Harvey, Brunswick and Clifton Park. They were all built around the 1950s. They are beginning to show their age and they will need some capital investment to get them up to what could be regarded as a reasonable standard. I acknowledge that the previous government made a commitment to a new primary school in Kingston, which is most welcome; it is a fast-growing area and —

Mr M. McGowan: I think it's built.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It was still under construction when I went past the other day. I also note that the previous government selected a very good headmaster for that school.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: That is correct.

Health is another issue of concern. A couple of weeks ago I visited the Murray District Hospital with the Minister for Health and we saw the refurbishment that had taken place, which will be great for the local community. For members who have been keeping a close eye on what has been happening in the Murray district, significant growth is about to take place in that shire. I heard the other day that in 10 to 15 years, we will be one of the fastest growing shires in Australia simply because Mandurah city has expanded to such an extent that it is almost full, and the only way for that part of the Peel region to expand is into the Murray shire and the eastern side of the estuary. That will present issues for the welfare and health of the waterways of the Peel and Harvey catchment areas. That is another issue that I will be taking a keen interest in with our new Minister for Environment in the other place. I look forward to holding some briefings for her so that she can gain an understanding of the major concerns that exist in that area. I will also be keen to explore ways in which we can improve the situation at the Harvey District Hospital and the services available to the people of Harvey. I am aware of some interest from the private sector, which is very promising and will hopefully increase services to the people of the Harvey shire.

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Next time members are surfing the internet, I suggest they look at the statistics for road deaths and injuries on the Western Australia Police site. It provides a breakdown of the number of road deaths, of which there were 198 in 2007. It also provides a breakdown of accident statistics in metropolitan areas—the ratio of male to female, age groups and so on. It is very apparent that the Murray-Wellington electorate is unfortunately an electorate in which a disproportionate number of terrible road accidents occur. In the short time since the previous Parliament was dissolved, there have been some horrific crashes in that part of the world. Four people were killed in Ravenswood and a double fatality occurred in Coolup and only a few days before that there was a fatality on Old Coast Road, or “Old Ghost Road”, as it is commonly referred to. Hopefully, the new Perth-Bunbury highway will make that journey safer and improve driving conditions. However, given the volume of traffic travelling on South Western Highway and Old Coast Road, there needs to be an increased police presence in that area. I am very pleased to have had some discussions with local police in the area. There is a new sergeant in Harvey and a new superintendent in Bunbury. One of the things I have drawn to their attention is the need to have a police presence on those roads. In recent times I seem to have travelled those roads continuously; I have driven thousands of kilometres in recent months, and it disturbs me to note that I have seen very few police during my travels along those highways and byways.

Mr P. Papalia: That’s hardly conclusive. I’ve been up and down those roads many, many times too, and I see police all the time.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am very pleased. I would like an increased police presence.

Mr P. Papalia: You should be talking about a comprehensive police strategy.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We can have that discussion a bit later.

When I took over at Australind Police Station in 1996, there were 13 officers in our contingent; the population of the area was 16 000. There are now some 26 000 people, including the people of Eaton, but there has been no increase in the police contingent at that station. A new police station has opened in Harvey and there are a few extra police. I would like to see the creation of a specialist police group that looks after the traffic issues on our roads. The fact is that there are probably not too many people living in that part of the world who do not know someone who has been killed or injured on those roads. I have unfortunate memories of having pulled dozens of dead bodies out of cars on those very same roads. That is something I hope no member ever has to experience, particularly having to go at 2.00 am to tell the father of a 17-year-old kid to whom one has given a driver’s licence that he will not be coming home tonight. Road safety is an issue that we can never overlook and it is of particular concern to the people in my electorate.

Local governments everywhere in Western Australia want an increased police presence. This government has made a commitment to increase the number of police, but we need to free them up from the burdens that are currently placed upon them by various pieces of legislation that keep police officers off the road, including occupational health and safety legislation. I do not support single-officer patrols anymore, in spite of the fact that when there are two police officers in a car, it means one less police vehicle on the road. Back in my days in the police force one officer would get into one car and another officer would get into another car during the daytime and away they would go. These days there must be a minimum of two police officers simply because courts will not convict someone on the evidence of a single officer; the evidence must be corroborated. Therefore, an infringement given by a single police officer in a vehicle, which is not supported by other evidence will not result in a conviction.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr M.J. COWPER: The Criminal Investigation (Identifying People) Act and a range of other acts impact on the ability of police to get out on the roads.

Another issue we are considering, which is something I read about in a lot of local newspapers, is the incidence of trail bike riders causing damage to the environment and annoyance to people in the community. There has been an increase in the popularity of that sport. I am very pleased that, in conjunction with Motorcycling Western Australia and armed with a recent report from the Department of Sport and Recreation for the previous government on a trail bike strategy for Western Australia, we have approached Alcoa, as a good corporate citizen, and asked the company to provide a parcel of land in my electorate to establish an area for people to operate in. I am very pleased that I have support for this initiative from the president of the Shire of Murray, Noel Nancarrow, and the City of Mandurah Mayor, Paddi Creevey. We are looking at getting a lot of these people back into a club situation and into a structure in which they can be taught the virtues of this particular sport and that it is a sport that requires discipline. Unfortunately, a lot of motorcyclists in the community get a

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bad reputation because of the behaviour of some of these riders. What we are trying to do is get them to wear proper protective equipment, use the proper gear, be supported by their families in a club structure situation and get them off the streets. The alternative is to let them run wild, as they are now—a situation that causes concern to the police, who are tied up because of a lack of resources. It is a problem for local governments and also for health services. Members may recall a tragedy last year when a young lady who used to work at the Silver Sands newsagency passed away, unfortunately, in tragic circumstances. We are therefore trying to provide a solution to the problem. Everyone complains about the problem but no-one is prepared to try to fix the problem. That is what we are trying to do.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I applaud that effort; that is excellent.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We will wait and see, and keep our fingers crossed about that one.

An issue I have left until last is water. The manner in which some issues have been thrust upon the electorate has caused me concern. In particular in the Harvey pines region there was a practice of people taking slurry from the metropolitan sewerage works to the Harvey pines, which is the biggest pine plantation in Western Australia. They used a spreader to go up and down the Harvey pines spreading what they called “compost”. That is what Mr Kneebone called it—compost. It is really the remnants of the sludge from the sewerage works. Let me tell members that on a rainy July day it did not smell like any compost that I had ever smelt. I will leave it to members to imagine what it smelt like, but it was not very pleasant. Subsequently the people of that community, who had not been advised of the practice, asked whether I would investigate the biological hazard signs that had started appearing everywhere. As a result of that, I wrote to the then minister to see whether the practice could simply cease until the people in the area could be reassured that, first, this practice was safe; and, secondly, that the pathogens that would stay in the soil for up to five days would not be a threat to the community which, rightly or wrongly, used it for trail bike riding, horseback riding and simply walking in those pines.

The other issue, which I am very pleased about obviously, is the decision to re-open Logue Book Dam. There was a strong representation from people about the decision to close the facility last year. I am very pleased that the 30 000 people of Western Australia who have utilised that facility in the past four years will be able to go back soon. I am told by my friend and colleague the minister that very soon there will be an announcement and, hopefully, they will be back in there by Christmas. That is something I believe fits in very well with some comments I heard in a speech made yesterday by a member on the opposite side of the house. It was about the importance of family, keeping families together and getting them away and interacting. I think I heard that very same sentiment from a number of new members of this place. To my mind, therefore, the re-opening of Logue Brook Dam is a great example of the capacity for families to continue to operate. I believe it goes to show that, ultimately, the 30 000 people plus their supporters had an impact on polling day, among other things, and that it played a key part in turning around the election result. I believe it is also part of the reason we are standing on this side of the chamber and the former minister is on the other side.

Mr P.B. Watson: So you won the election, did you; just you?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I did not say that.

Mr P.B. Watson: You nearly lost yours.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We will debate that a bit later. The member for Albany is a serial interjector.

The fact is that Logue Brook Dam will be back up and running very shortly, and I look forward to that. Perhaps we might even get the member for Albany down there behind a set of waterskis. He is a great athlete and I can just see him behind one of those ski boats in his bright yellow budgie-smugglers. He is more than welcome to come down there and watch the faces —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I hope you don't wear budgie-smugglers!

Mr M.J. COWPER: I have seen the member for Victoria Park in his budgie-smugglers.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Not a bad look, eh?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I will put it this way: the notion of putting potatoes in is not a good look, and I would recommend that in future he puts them down the front and not the back!

We also have a problem with desalination and I will touch on that issue. Back in 2006, when I was visiting Secret Harbour in the member for Peel's electorate, there was concern from a large number of people whom I

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had met through my association with surf-lifesaving about a decision by the previous government and the Water Corporation to put in a desal plant. There were three options. For those members who are unaware of the issue, it was intended to put in three desal plants in the Hillman area, suck water out of Kemerton and pump it out at either Golden Bay or Port Kenney into Comet Bay. As a result, I attended a number of meetings and received many emails about the issue. I kept a copy of these emails, believe it or not. It is interesting to read some of the sentiments of these people about why there should not be a desal plant at Secret Harbour. Let me say that the very same sentiments could be said by the people of Binningup, inasmuch as the previous government considered putting in a desal plant at Hillman and pump water out into Comet Bay. The previous government decided not to go with that idea because of the pending Peel by-election brought about by the political demise of the former member for Peel. As a result of that, a decision was made—I believe a political one—to not put the desal plant there. The previous government then decided that it had a problem and that it needed to find water somewhere. The Yarragadee aquifer was a contentious issue and it decided that it would not go with the Yarragadee aquifer. On 14 May last year the previous government announced the decision, which I believe was a political decision by cabinet, to put the desal plant at Binningup. There was no consultation process whatsoever with the people of Binningup prior to that date.

Mr P.B. Watson: Are you going to pump it into the Yarragadee?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I support the right of the people of Binningup to stand, as the people in Secret Harbour did in the member for Mandurah's electorate, and say that they do not want it there because of these issues. They have put forward their submissions, and I believe ultimately the right decision will be made. At this time, members opposite are asking where it will be. I do not know. However, I will say this to members opposite and to members on my side of the house: I will speak out robustly on behalf of the people of Binningup. Just because the people of Binningup are a small group of 140 does not mean that their voice should not be equal to that of anyone else in this great state. I will speak on their behalf, which is what they have elected me to do.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Perhaps we can put the member for Bassendean there.

This matter must be resolved. I have the same grave concerns that I had when I advocated for the people of Secret Harbour and Golden Bay. I am concerned because of the costs involved in running a desalination plant. As a result of the fuel crisis, fuel prices are going through the roof. Every time the price of oil goes up, so too will the cost of water from that plant. Already the cost has increased from \$1.15 to \$2 a kilolitre, and it can only increase further. Having said that, the price has just come down a bit, but inevitably the price will be unsustainable. It is a billion-dollar project and, at a time when this state must preserve its coffers, the government should keep an eye on what is happening at Kwinana for a period before it commits another billion dollars.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Certainly a Pinjarra bypass is on the radar.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is an important road.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is very important. I thank members for allowing me to speak.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 6.51 pm
