

Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Bob Kucera; The Acting Speaker (mr A.J. Dean); Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Matt Birney; Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr John Bradshaw

GALLOP GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO DELIVER ON KEY PRIORITIES

Motion

MR D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.16 pm]: I move -

That this House condemns the Gallop Labor Government for its failure to deliver on key priorities in Western Australia.

The most important responsibility of any member of Parliament is to be a champion for the people who live in his or her electorate.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: It is unfortunate that that particular role is not necessarily fulfilled by every member of this Parliament. I am sure members would agree that if the community or a family or an individual had an issue of importance, their local member of Parliament should take every opportunity to raise that issue and pursue a fair and just outcome. We are fortunate in Parliament because we have advantages over other advocates within the broader community. Undoubtedly the most significant advantage is that we can bring issues to this Parliament. Unfortunately, some members of this Parliament have been remiss in that respect. A number of very important local issues in the State have not been raised in this Parliament. People in a number of electorates throughout Western Australia have not had the opportunity to have their grievances and concerns voiced in the people's Chamber and for appropriate action to be taken.

Every now and then a Liberal or National Party member will raise an important issue regarding their constituency in Parliament. They will champion that matter and very often put it to the vote in this Parliament. That has happened whether we are in opposition or in government. It is the way that we in the Liberal-National coalition go about fighting for our electorates and the people living in them. Labor Party members operate differently. Indeed, it is my understanding that when a person seeks preselection for the Labor Party he or she signs away, in effect, his or her rights to freedom of speech in Parliament. In a nutshell, Labor Party members are not allowed to go against a Caucus decision, even if it means they have to come into this Parliament and vote for measures that are not in the best interests of their electorates.

The Liberal and National Parties have decided that if Labor members are not going to pursue important local issues in Parliament on behalf of their constituents, we will raise them. We are fortunate because we have a number of candidates on the ground who are working with their local communities and picking up on local issues. We are in a position to raise the matters that are raised with those candidates by local communities. The reason we are doing this is that local Labor members have been remiss in their fundamental responsibility to their local communities by failing to raise such issues in this Parliament.

I will start by touching on important local health issues raised with us by candidates across the State. I refer to the metropolitan area, the northern suburbs specifically. A number of people in the community have been pointing out for some time that health services in the northern suburbs are not being expanded at a rate that can keep up with the tremendous growth in population and demand in that area. Working with members of the community are people such as Mike Lowry, Dean Solly and Paul Miles, who have gone out into the community and surveyed families who live in that local area. They have spoken to members of the medical fraternity, including doctors, nurses, and other people who work in the hospitals. They have spoken also to families living in those areas. They have told opposition members that they have been able to paint a very good picture of the needs of people living in the north metropolitan suburbs and of the enormous pressure that the health system is under at the moment because the current Government is starving it of funds. I will give one very simple example of that. The Labor Party recently announced its plan for metropolitan hospitals over the next 10 years. Apart from the fact that it provided only a minimal increase in hospital beds across the whole of the north metropolitan area, it is very interesting to see how the Labor Party will treat people who live in the most northerly suburbs of the metropolitan area, such as Wanneroo, Joondalup and Mindarie. The Government's plan for metropolitan hospitals shows that it will provide the most important health centre in the suburb of Nedlands. This means that people who live in Wanneroo, Joondalup or Mindarie or anywhere in the north metropolitan area will have a considerable distance to drive - assuming they have their own car - or would need to spend a considerable time travelling on public transport to get to the major health centre.

By listening to people in the community, the Liberal Party has developed a plan that will develop a far more extensive local health facility at Joondalup than that under the Labor Party's plan. We have provided for a number of other improvements, including an increase in the number of hospital beds and also for the prospect of a very major co-located health facility at Joondalup. By that I mean the development of a government-owned

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and run hospital alongside a private hospital. An excellent arrangement of that type exists in Bunbury, for example. That gives members an idea of the type of goal that could be achieved in Joondalup. There are other models, and the Liberal Party's plan provides for these to be progressed and for the best model to achieve an increase in health services in the north metropolitan area to be implemented at Joondalup.

Immediately there is a stark contrast between the Liberal Party's plan and the Labor Party's plan. The Liberal Party wants to deliver health care nearer to people's homes. It wants to prevent people having to visit hospitals as much as possible by providing community-based support, in-home care and so on. However, if people need to go to hospital for whatever reason, we will do our best to make sure that a hospital is available locally. That is extremely important in the case of emergencies. I will touch on that matter in a moment.

The Labor Party's plan to make minor redevelopments to Joondalup Health Campus will not be completed until the financial year 2007-08 and when it is completed, it will include only 37 new beds. Our candidates in that area have told me that the community will not accept that situation. There is an enormous demand for additional beds. There is a crying need for an urgent upgrade of the emergency department, and additional staff are needed at the hospital now, not in 2008 or in 10 years; they are needed now. I visited the Joondalup Health Campus with Dean Solly. The hospital administrators were very open with us and explained the situation in some detail. What stood out the most in my mind is that when I went to the emergency ward at the Joondalup Health Campus all the emergency department cubicles were full and operating to capacity. In addition, eight people were lying on trolleys in the corridor. I asked whether that was an unusual circumstance and was told that it was quite common to have the emergency department overcrowded to that extent in a major hospital, one which services one of the fastest growing areas in Australia, not just Western Australia. Clearly the hospital has been starved of the resources it has needed in recent years to cope with that enormous demand. I saw it with my own eyes. I saw eight people lying on trolleys in the emergency area.

Of course, the Government has said that down the track it will put some money into improving the emergency department and that it has provided in the forward estimates some money for that. However, I inquired whether any recurrent funding had been allocated and committed. By that I mean funding to enable extra beds to be opened, for extra nurses to be employed or for doctors to be able to provide their services and a range of other ancillary hospital services that are required to keep an emergency department operating. I asked whether the Government had promised or indicated that additional funds would be made available so that an expanded emergency department could be run properly. The answer was that the Government had not given a commitment to provide additional recurrent funding. That is the problem. When one visits the State's hospitals, one generally finds two problems: management issues and resourcing issues. There is no doubt in my mind that there is a serious need for additional resources to be provided to the Joondalup Health Campus.

The Liberal candidate for Mindarie, Mike Lowry, gave me a very good example of the lack of resources at the local hospital. Ms Allison Oldfield Hiosan's daughter suffered an injury to her arm on Sunday, 20 June at about 3.30 pm. Upon ringing the Joondalup Health Campus she was asked about the severity of the injury; that is, whether any bones were protruding from the girl's arm and so forth. When Ms Oldfield Hiosan informed the staff that no bones were protruding from the girl's arm, she was told to bring in her daughter the following morning because no doctors were available. This hospital, in the fastest growing urban area in Western Australia - one of the fastest growing areas in Australia - did not have a doctor available to look after this lady's daughter on a Sunday afternoon. The girl was taken to the hospital at 7.30 the following morning. They waited for a doctor until 6.30 that evening. They arrived at 7.30 in the morning and waited until 6.30 in the evening without seeing a doctor. Ms Oldfield Hiosan was then told to take her daughter home, which she did. She returned to the hospital an hour later. After waiting until 10.00 pm on the Sunday without seeing a doctor, the girl was again taken home. During that time two other children were also seeking attention at the hospital. One of the children had a broken arm and the other had a broken collarbone. Neither of those children was treated and I believe they were being fed Panadol to relieve their pain. Monday passed without the lady's daughter having seen a doctor. Eventually Ms Oldfield Hiosan took her daughter to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children where, fortunately, she was treated within the hour.

If that does not tell members that there is a need for additional resources and backup for the hospital, I do not know what does. We have raised a number of these very important individual examples with the Minister for Health in Parliament. In this case, on behalf of Mr Mike Lowry and the people he seeks to represent, we are now calling on the Government to apply the resources that are needed at Joondalup to ensure that those types of situations do not happen again in the future. I want the Government to ensure also that when I next visit the emergency department or when the department is upgraded, I will not see patients lying on trolleys in the corridor and will not hear about these types of situations having arisen again.

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Unfortunately, members will not hear issues such as that raised in Parliament at the moment because the three members in the areas to which I referred earlier - Wanneroo, Mindarie and Joondalup - are, of course, represented by Labor Party members. They would much rather toe the party line and not raise these types of issues in the Parliament for fear of upsetting the Premier and the ministers and for fear of breaking their oath to the Labor Party that they will always abide by Labor caucus decisions. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to bring these sorts of matters into the Parliament to ensure that members are aware of just how serious the situation is in the north metropolitan area and to put pressure on the Government to make some positive changes.

I will give another example that Ms Oldfield Hiosan gave to Mike Lowry. It too demonstrates the extreme shortcomings of health services in the northern suburbs. This case involved Ms Oldfield Hiosan herself. On 16 August she suffered a severe allergic reaction and had to be collected by ambulance. Although the ambulance driver advised her that the Minister for Health had just been on the radio - I believe that day - saying that no ambulance bypass was happening that day, she was diverted from the northern suburbs to Rockingham for treatment. The minister said on the radio that, no, our hospitals were not operating a bypass system on that day; yet, that lady, who wanted to go to the Joondalup Health Campus, ended up having to go to Rockingham because Joondalup was on bypass. I know that the members for Hillarys and Kingsley and other north metropolitan members have pointed out these problems. However, they are Liberal Party members. We do not hear from any of the Labor Party members in the northern suburbs on these matters. They are absolutely silent. I take my hat off to Mike Lowry, Dean Solly and Paul Miles for coming forward to us with this information, so that we can put pressure on the Government, through this Parliament, to get some positive action.

As I said earlier, this is happening already. As a result of consultation with people in the community, much of it organised by the Liberal candidates in the northern suburbs, we have been able to develop an alternative metropolitan hospital plan, which has some tremendous benefits compared with the Labor Party's plan, and nowhere more so than at the Joondalup hospital. Under the Liberal-National coalition's metropolitan hospital plan, Joondalup will be expanded so that it will have 350 public beds. That is an increase of 87 hospital beds. I want to explain the importance of that for an area such as Joondalup. Not only does it mean that more hospital beds would be available so that people could have elective surgery carried out nearer their home in Joondalup, but also it would result in significant improvements to the emergency department.

The reason for that is very simple. One of the key problems with the emergency departments at hospitals in this State is that the staff are working flat out. They have excellent facilities, but once they have stabilised a patient in the emergency department, they have nowhere to send that patient on to. For example, when Joondalup's emergency department is flat out working on patients who have been involved in accidents and have other serious health problems, there are not enough beds to put the patients in to free up cubicles in the emergency department. By providing 87 extra beds at the Joondalup hospital, and by providing significant improvements to the emergency department, including additional resources and staff, there will be a much better throughput in the emergency department. People will be seen and cared for more quickly, and they will be able to be moved on to a ward in the hospital for appropriate care there. In other words, the hospital will start to function in the way that it should, and people such as Ms Oldfield Hiosan and her daughter will not have to be taken by ambulance to Rockingham to get the care that they require.

As I said earlier, the Government's somewhat downgraded plan for Joondalup does not even take effect until 2008, whereas under the Liberal plan improvements will commence next year. Work on the expansion of the public facilities as a whole, including the upgrade of the emergency department, will be commenced, and much of it will be carried out, in the first term of a coalition Government. Much of this is due, as I said earlier, to the representations of Mike Lowry, Dean Solly and Paul Miles. It really does beg the question: where were the local Labor members of Parliament when this issue needed to be debated in Parliament? I want to put on the record that none of the northern suburbs Labor members of Parliament is in the Parliament today. That is how seriously they take health issues in their own electorate. Absolutely none of them is in this Chamber today. I say that as a scathing attack on local Labor members.

Time and again they have failed to stand up for their local communities. They have toed the party line every single time a matter has arisen that could be an embarrassment to their Government. If members asked the people in Joondalup, Mindarie and Wanneroo what their local members should do first and foremost, they would say that they should stand up for their community. The Labor candidate for Mindarie is not in the Chamber today, nor is the Labor member for Joondalup. They are skulking in their offices. They do not want to participate in this debate, because they know it would embarrass their Government and the Labor Party. My words might be strong, but I mean what I say. Their first responsibility should be to stand up for the girl who could not get her broken arm attended to at the Joondalup hospital.

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Mr M.J. Birney: Member for Mitchell, I am sorry to interrupt, but it is no wonder that the member for Innaloo, the wannabe member for Mindarie, is not here today. I recall that when I asked him on radio whether he would be prepared to move to Mindarie if he in fact lost the election, he refused to answer that question. He really does not care much about Mindarie. If the Labor Party gives him a job, he will move there; otherwise, he could not care less about the people of Mindarie.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: Clearly, the member is spot on. I know that the member for Innaloo is not the only Labor member who does not live in his electorate.

However, this does not happen in only the metropolitan area. I want to deal with some of the country areas and some of the problems being experienced with health care in the country. I refer to the area of Collie-Wellington. I note that the member for Collie is in the Chamber today, and I acknowledge that. Hopefully, he will support this motion, so that we can put pressure on the Government to improve the health facilities in the electorate that he wishes to represent. I can tell the House that the Liberal candidate, Craig Carbone, has been very vocal in this regard.

When people look at what the Labor Party has done to health care in the country, they can reach only one conclusion. It has gutted health services throughout country areas. To start with, the Labor Party abolished local country health boards, and we have seen the ongoing deferment of significant regional capital works throughout Western Australia. There we have it. One of the first things the Labor Party did was abolish local country health boards. In other words, it said to the volunteers who had helped sustain and develop good, effective health services throughout the country that it did not want their services any more; it would run a centralised, bureaucratic health structure, so that Labor Party policy could be implemented. What is that policy? It is very simple: to deprive the country of funds and transfer them into the metropolitan area to cover up the minister's massive health budget deficit. He has admitted that he started the year with a \$136 million deficit. Where did he get the money? He got a lot of it from country health services by depriving our hospitals and community health services in a number of country areas of the money that they need to look after country people.

We know full well that there is a lack of staff involved in country health care. We are seeing increasingly now that people from country areas, particularly areas such as Collie, must be transferred to major regional hospitals such as Bunbury Regional Hospital, or, alternatively, they must be transferred to Perth. More and more the South Western Highway and the Bunbury highway, otherwise known as the Old Coast Road, are known for the number of people who must -

Withdrawal of Remark

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: The member for Collie made an unparliamentary comment about the member for Nedlands and he should withdraw.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will provide a couple of examples of what I am talking about, because there is an enormous leakage - that is the technical term - of patients to Perth. People from country areas have to travel all the way to Perth for fairly routine procedures. That entails additional cost and anguish for the patients, as well as for their families and friends, when that surgery, procedure or medical care could have been carried out locally if the resources and appropriate management structures had been available.

I am pleased that Craig Carbone has been standing up for his local community. He made representations on behalf of a Mrs Marie Spence of Harvey, whose grandson needed stitches to his knee after a bad fall, but because of a lack of doctors at the Harvey District Hospital he had to be taken to Bunbury Regional Hospital, where he waited for two hours. As the member for Murray-Wellington will attest, the South Western Highway is in desperate need of upgrading. It was being upgraded under the previous coalition Government, but of course money has been cut back under this Labor Government. These people had to drive to Bunbury hospital on that road and wait there for two hours. Mr Carbone has also spoken to a Mrs Angela Shephardson who took her daughter to Harvey District Hospital with a possible rupture of the appendix. As members would know, that is a very serious situation. Her daughter was sent to Bunbury hospital where she was forced to wait for several hours. Luckily the situation turned out to be not too serious. I recall not so long ago another situation of a 10-year-old girl who lived in Gelorup who presented at the hospital with her mother at approximately 9.30 one evening and was told to drive to a hospital in Perth. They were not even provided with an ambulance. That is the sort of service that country people have to put up with. The hospital had no-one to look after Mrs Shephardson's daughter and they were told to go to another hospital where they waited for several hours. In the case of the other constituent I mentioned, she was told to drive to Perth. That is becoming a common catchcry in

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the south west: drive to Perth. What do local members think about that? Rather than admit that there are problems in the area, that the health care needs of people in Collie, Harvey, Brunswick and other areas are inadequate and then join us on this motion to do something positive by presenting a united voice in Parliament on behalf of the people in that region, the local member for Murray-Wellington, who I bet will not be supporting us on this -

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I meant the candidate Labor for Murray-Wellington. It was a slip of the tongue. He will not be more than a candidate for Murray-Wellington unless he listens to people such as Mrs Spence and Mrs Shephardson. The member is actually smiling and joking as I relay these stories. That is another thing about Labor members: they do not take these problems seriously. On a number of occasions we have raised individual circumstances in this Chamber and even the Premier has laughed at these sorts of matters rather than give them the respect they deserve.

I will now refer to the situation in Albany. I put on the record that the member for Albany is not here today. Whether he is out of the Parliament I do not know, but he has an opportunity today to join with us and stand up for the people of Albany to improve services particularly at the Albany Regional Hospital. We all know there are problems at that hospital and that, at the very least, major improvements are needed. There is a shortage of beds at that hospital. What has the Labor Party done? It closed 10 beds. I can remember my predecessor, the member for Murdoch, raising that issue. When he was the shadow Minister for Health we went to Albany and he championed the cause for the people of Albany. Why did he do that? He did that because the local member for Albany was silent on this issue - because the local member for Albany is a Labor Party member of Parliament who toes the party line rather than stand up for his community. Staffing shortages, bed closures and unmet capital works needs have resulted in serious problems at the hospital, all of which have ultimately meant a reduction in the quality and availability of health care for people who live in Albany.

I will provide members with a simple example. The member for Murdoch has been to that hospital as well, and he will attest to this. When I walked around the hospital I could not believe that there are two rooms for women to give birth. If a patient in one of the rooms needs to go to the toilet, she has to walk past the bed of the other patient to use the toilet in that room. There is not even that level of privacy or the sorts of standards that many people, particularly in the metropolitan area, take for granted. One can imagine why the people in Albany feel frustrated. They can see that facilities were built in recent years under a Liberal Government, but they cannot understand why nothing is happening now. It is very simple: they are not getting the representation they deserve. As I said, 10 beds at the hospital were closed, leaving many patients waiting for excessive periods. The Liberal candidate for Albany, Andrew Partington, has raised this matter extensively with me and organised a tour of the hospital for me. I have met with a number of people involved in health care in Albany and I thank him for taking the trouble, on behalf of the people of Albany, to do so. It is a shame that the member for Albany is not as persuasive in his representations. Mr Partington told me he was contacted by a local resident, Frank Candeloro, who is in his 70s and suffers from a heart condition. Mr Candeloro went to the hospital with high blood pressure, only to wait 12 hours in the emergency department for treatment because a bed was not available. Can members imagine that? This is a hospital that services the broad needs of the greater southern region, as well as the immediate needs of people living in Albany. When an elderly gentleman presents at the hospital he has to wait for 12 hours because a bed is not available. As I said earlier, relieving pressure on the emergency departments is part of a broad plan that is needed at hospitals not only in the metropolitan area but also in the country.

A local doctor, Mark Zafir, with whom Mr Partington has been in contact, apparently stated that patients are waiting up to 24 hours in the emergency department because of a lack of beds. I will put that on the record again: patients in the Albany Regional Hospital are being forced to wait up to 24 hours in the emergency department because of a lack of beds. That does not come from me; a local medical practitioner has attested to that fact. Where is the local member for Albany today? He should be representing his constituents and putting this case forward. It has been left to a Liberal candidate to raise this issue so that we could bring it before the Parliament and apply pressure to achieve some positive change.

The Australian Nursing Federation has also received complaints from nurses about excessive workloads. When I was in Albany I had an informal discussion with some nurses. I have enormous sympathy for the tasks that many of them have before them and for their workloads. Again there needs to be better management of the health system in that region and we need to look at improving resources. The hospital definitely needs an urgent capital upgrade at the very least, including an expansion of the mental health ward, which currently has only nine beds. It does not have a secure section or anything like that. Some current wards need to be converted into one

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and two-bed rooms to provide better services for patients. The people of Albany need additional bathroom facilities at their local hospital and the day procedures unit needs expanding.

The birthing suites are in desperate need of improvement; the hospital is also lacking in other areas, especially the radiology unit; and even the kitchen needs significant improvement. Again, I have not heard the member for Albany raise any of these issues. It is only because of Andrew Partington's forceful representation on behalf of the people of Albany that this matter is being raised in Parliament today. More importantly, the Liberal and National Parties have listened, and members will hear some interesting policy announcement in due course in relation to the Albany Regional Hospital.

Of course, under the Labor Party's current arrangements, work at the Albany Regional Hospital will not be completed until 2012-13. Therefore, under a Labor Government, the people of Albany will have to wait until 2013 for any significant improvement in their hospital. Anyone who has been through that hospital will know it is a far greater priority than that indicates. I am indebted to Andrew and all the others I met in Albany for briefing me on the matter and showing me the situation first-hand. The coalition has already committed to developing a master plan for capital works at the Albany Regional Hospital. Further announcements will be made to ensure that the hospital can meet the needs of the great southern into the future, as well as meet the needs of the people of Albany.

Mr A.J. Dean: You need to be in government to do those things, and you'll not be in government for another 12 years.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: The member for Bunbury is in the Chamber. Let us look at some mental health care issues in Bunbury. It is no coincidence that in July this year I called for an independent audit of the mental health services in Bunbury and the south west. My call followed revelations from whistleblowers within the system about the mental health unit at the Bunbury Regional Hospital. We were told that acutely ill patients had been held in the hospital's emergency departments and in general medical wards, possibly in contravention of the Mental Health Act. Nurses without adequate training were put at risk because they had to supervise high acuity patients, including a potentially dangerous former prison inmate who required security guards before being transferred to Perth. Members should put themselves in the position of those nurses: they looked after a potentially dangerous, former prison inmate. No resources were available to back up the nurses because of the penny-pinching attitude of this Government, which has taken money away from country health care to prop up its metropolitan health budget deficit.

There has been a chronic shortage of nurses at the mental health care unit as hospital management will not allow overtime to be worked with up to 20 nursing shift vacancies in one week. A lack of psychiatrists meant that the unit was on the verge of being deemed unsafe to receive patients in accordance with section 47 of the Mental Health Act. Interestingly, WorkSafe orders were issued but not complied with in the required time. One wonders why staff morale throughout the hospital, not only the mental health unit, is at an all-time low. Instead of the member for Bunbury championing in this Parliament the cause of people who work at the hospital and those who expect nothing short of a first-class health system, when problems are raised by not only me, but also people in the health system and the broader community, the local member states, as he did on 30 October last year, that there is nothing to fix. He was referring to the South West Health Service.

Mr A.J. Dean: It's a fantastic department, with fantastic nurses.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: He just said that it is a fantastic service. He will not acknowledge the problems that are causing difficulties for nurses, patients and others. Thank goodness someone is making representations on behalf of the local community; that is, the Liberal candidate for Bunbury, John Castrilli. I attended a public meeting to deal with health care issues on 25 May. I notice that the Liberal candidate, John Castrilli, was there and spoke to people to receive a first-hand account of what was going on. I do not recall seeing the member for Bunbury at that meeting. The member for Bunbury had the opportunity to come forward and meet people affected by the health care crisis in Bunbury. He did not do so, and it was left to the Liberal candidate to talk to people and make representations to us to raise the matters in Parliament today.

I will be pretty scathing in my criticism of the Government and its members in relation to mental health care services in Bunbury because, of course, it is my home town. For example, concern was raised that a very important program known as the Bunbury Pathways was being threatened by budget cuts by the Labor Government. Indeed, the coordinator, Joscelyn Jones, is recorded as stating that the carers support service was at risk; I refer to the only program of its type in the area, which reduced hospital admissions and relapses by helping family members deal with the mentally ill. This service covers the whole of the south west area and, indeed, the great southern. Pathways has helped more than 4 000 people in the first six months of the program. I

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find out today - I am indebted to John Castrilli for his work in this area - that Pathways is under enormous pressure at the moment to provide extra help because of the difficulties in the public mental health system. Again, as the Government is starving the mental health system of resources, a successful program like Pathways is under additional pressure. According to the people working there, people who rely on Pathways are becoming increasingly concerned that services are being closed or limited. I provide the example of the Living Skills program. Indeed, the coordinator has advised that this situation can play a big part in the treatment of patients because worry about the future is detrimental to people's mental health. There is no comprehensive plan for mental health services in Bunbury and the south west, and resources are being taken from that system. Keith Wilson, the foremost advocate for mental health services in the State, estimated that the Labor Party has taken \$13 million out of mental health care. As the system is starved of resources, there is enormous pressure in this area as well. As local members will be aware, Pathways had no formal contract last year; it faced enormous uncertainty. As of today, Pathways still has no contract so its future security is still not assured. As of today, the coordinator of Pathways has advised that there is no contract, but there is a waiting list of about a dozen people. Again, it can be seen that the Government is not providing support to a community-based program that has been incredibly successful.

It was not long ago that a senior clinical nurse who was appointed to head up the inpatient mental health service at Bunbury Regional Hospital resigned, I think, after only two days on the job. I spoke to this person, and I look forward to speaking to him again. He resigned out of frustration over curbs placed by the Government on the services in the area. At the time, Mr Keith Wilson, a former Labor health minister, someone who has the guts to take a bipartisan approach and an apolitical stance on health matters, said that the health care situation in Bunbury stood out as the worst in the State. The member for Bunbury is not heard championing the cause for mental health care patients and their families in the south west. He stated today that it is a fantastic service in the south west. He would rather turn a blind eye. The sooner Bunbury has a champion, someone who can stand up for people in need, and a person who admits there are problems and works to solve them, the better. Frankly, the people in Bunbury are looking forward to John Castrilli taking over in the seat of Bunbury. I know that people who met John at the mental health forum and heard his genuine concern for their situation, and those for whom he followed up these matters, will appreciate his efforts. I think the matters I have just raised are quite newsworthy. It is a shame that the member for Bunbury has not raised those matters in the Parliament to represent his community. Indeed, where were the country members of the Labor Party when the Minister for Health recently allocated some additional funding for mental health services to metropolitan hospitals? There was absolutely nothing for regional areas - not one cent. Again, that is another example of the Labor Party's city-centric approach. Not one country Labor Party member has stood up for his or her constituents and asked why the Labor Party is putting a few extra dollars into mental health care in the metropolitan area - but nowhere near enough of course - yet is starving the regions of funds. It is not just mental health care that is a problem in Bunbury, but it is one of the most important priorities at the moment. A while back Paul Skerritt, who at the time was the Vice President but is now the President of the Australian Medical Association in Western Australia, made some comment about a situation in which a suicidal man had to wait nine hours at the Bunbury Regional Hospital's emergency department. At the time he was reported as saying, "I've been saying something like this is going to happen because emergency departments are a bad place to keep people with a mental illness." This shows that Bunbury, the State's second major city, does not have the resources to provide adequate mental health care for those in need. In this case, the member for Bunbury referred to the mental health unit at the hospital. In June this year he said that he was pushing to have the size of the unit doubled. The member for Bunbury at last admitted that there was something wrong with the system and that he was pushing to have the size of the unit doubled. If that is the case, he can back this motion today. He can speak on the motion and say that he agrees with the member for Mitchell and the Liberal candidate for the seat of Bunbury, John Castrilli, that mental health care services at the hospital are inadequate, that more resources are needed to back up the nurses and staff, and that he will back the Liberal Party in an apolitical way to do something positive for his local community. He is on the record as acknowledging that the size of that unit needs to be doubled. The funny thing is that he never mentioned that to the Government when the budget was being struck. I have another article in which the member for Bunbury is reported as saying, "I am happy with Bunbury's share of the budget". There was no money to improve the mental health services at the hospital, which the member has said needs to be doubled in size, and no money for any other improvements in health care in the region, yet the member for Bunbury sits back and says that he is happy with it. He will toe the party line rather than stand up for the community he represents. In another newspaper article he is reported as saying that there was nothing about the south west health service that needed to be fixed. It has been front-page news week in, week out. The nurses in Bunbury have taken industrial action. Doctors and health professionals have complained. The person in charge of the psychiatric wing resigned after two days in disgust over the Government's handling of the matter. Nursing morale is at an all-time low. A 10-year-old girl with appendicitis could not get treated at the hospital and could

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not get an ambulance to Perth, so her mother had to drive her to Perth almost at midnight. Yet the local member for Bunbury says that there is nothing wrong and is not prepared to come into the Parliament and champion the case.

I will give members a final example. Mrs Doreen Platts, a 79-year-old lady, had an accident and ended up with a broken arm, pelvis and hip. Her son had to drive her to Fremantle for treatment. Do members know what the member for Bunbury did when this matter was raised? Do members think he came into the Parliament and said that he was appalled at the situation and would put pressure on the Government for improvements to his local hospital? Do members think he went to the media and called on the health minister to visit the hospital in Bunbury first-hand to see the problems, as I did as a representative of the city of Bunbury and the people in the area? He did not do any of that. I will read the local newspaper's coverage of what he did. It states -

Bunbury MLA Tony Dean said apart from a few "glitches," he thought the hospital was excellent.

When 79-year-old Doreen Platts had to be driven by her son to Fremantle to be attended to, that, according to the member for Bunbury, is a glitch. That demonstrates the lack of representation that people in Bunbury are receiving in relation to health care at present.

The shadow Cabinet met in Geraldton this week. I am indebted to the Liberal candidate for the seat of Geraldton, Kevin Giudice, for organising some meetings with representatives of mental health services in the region. I put on record in particular my appreciation to Mr Ian Lake, who chaired the mid west mental health forum that was held earlier this month. Geraldton has a population of about 25 000 people. As Kevin Giudice and the member for Greenough have pointed out, only one psychiatrist is based in the town and only two beds at the hospital are currently available for use by mental health care patients. There is no backup for them. No nurses are trained in mental health care. There is no specialist mental health care nurse. Those beds are not in a distinct, secure setting. In other words, they are just two general beds that are available if someone needs them. That would have to be the worst situation in any of the major regional hospitals in Western Australia. Bunbury's hospital might be overcrowded and under-resourced to the extent that nurse morale is low and the coordinator has quit, and Albany's hospital may be completely inadequate for the region, but at least they have dedicated facilities. Geraldton does not have those facilities. The hospital that is being built at the moment, which is an initiative of the previous coalition Government, is not even being expanded to provide for adequate mental health care. It turns out that there will not be any dedicated mental health beds at the new hospital. The member for Greenough and the Liberal candidate, Kevin Giudice, have made that very clear to me, to the Leader of the Opposition and to our shadow cabinet colleagues. Hopefully, by raising the issue in the Parliament in this way, we can put pressure on the Government to take some action.

Again, it is a shame that the member for Geraldton is not in the Chamber. In fact, I cannot believe he is absent today. This was his opportunity. He could have stood and said that he agrees that the Geraldton Regional Hospital needs dedicated mental health care beds and improved community mental health care services.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Mitchell knows well where the member for Geraldton is. He is in a place that is associated with this Chamber; he is in a committee meeting. The member for Mitchell knows that only too well, yet he has raised that issue.

Mr M.J. Birney: What is your point of order?

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I object to what has been said. It is as simple as that.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: That was not a point of order. However, I put on the record that the member for Geraldton is not in the committee meeting at the moment. The member for Greenough is a member of that committee and the member for Geraldton is not in there at the moment.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: The member for Greenough is on the same committee as the member for Geraldton, but the member for Greenough has come into the Chamber to take part in this debate. The member for Greenough is sitting behind me at the moment to put pressure on the Government for better health care services for the people in Geraldton and the mid west, yet the member for Geraldton has not come into the Chamber. There is a stark contrast between a Liberal Party member who stands up for his community in the Parliament and a Labor Party member who skulks somewhere else rather than stands up for his local community.

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Where is the member for Geraldton? The member for Greenough is in the Chamber, but the member for Geraldton is not.

The Liberal candidate for Geraldton has been instrumental in consulting with local general practitioners. I note that Dr Ray Cockerill has worked with the President of the Mental Health Council of Australia, Keith Wilson, to deal with the lack of mental health care services in Geraldton. Indeed, I believe that Mr Giudice helped the community push for an independent and open forum into mental health care problems, which was held on 13 September and was very successful. The forum heard allegations of delays in treatment, lack of staff, lack of communication between departments, dangerous sedation of patients to transport them by plane, and a lack of consideration for families and carers. Mr Giudice tells me that nurses in the town have spoken with him and said that when they inquire about training as a psychiatric nurse they are told that not enough resources are available to provide that training. There is therefore a lack of trained psychiatric nurses. People in the town are keen to step into the breach and perform this vital role, but the Government will not provide the funding. Even the director of the local health region, Mr Shane Matthews, has called for additional resources. He has done so publicly and it has been reported in the local newspaper. I met with Mr Matthews and a number of community health workers this week as a guest of the member for Greenough and Kevin Giudice. It really was an eye-opening experience. I am hoping that, as a result of those representations by the Liberal candidate and the current Liberal member, the Liberal coalition will present some innovative and positive solutions to these problems. It is a shame that the local member is not in the Chamber to lend us the support we need in this Parliament.

The town of Geraldton desperately needs an additional permanent psychiatrist, additional beds and additional training for psychiatric nurses; indeed, those services need to be developed and provided on a regional basis throughout the mid west region. I mentioned Hon Keith Wilson earlier on. He has pointed to what he has called the dislocation between mental health service providers and Geraldton Regional Hospital. I found that there is a dire need for improvement in the management structure for health care services in Geraldton, nowhere more so than in mental health care. When I explained to mental health workers that the Liberal-National coalition would bring back local health boards and I explained how they operated, they said that they could see that it would resolve many of the problems they are experiencing in Geraldton at the moment. I take heart from that. Of course, the Labor Party scrapped the local health boards, so quite clearly the Labor Party is directly responsible for the lack of good coordination of mental health care services in the Geraldton region.

I take my hat off to doctors, such as Dr John Pollard, who have had the fortitude to highlight the lack of specific mental health care facilities at the regional hospital. The Liberal candidate and the Liberal member in the area will be working very hard, along with people like Dr Pollard, to develop the sort of solutions that are needed in that area. There is certainly a telephone crisis service. The member for Geraldton applauded that initiative when it came into being. However, it demonstrates the Government's approach. Rather than providing training for local nurses so that they can provide psychiatric care at the hospital, the Government would rather people picked up a telephone and spoke to people in Perth. I will suggest that is a backstop, a second-rate system when compared with what Geraldton expects and deserves. It is a shame that the member for Geraldton is not in the Chamber at the moment to champion the cause. Of course, nothing in the Minister for Health's last two announcements will change any of this - absolutely nothing whatsoever. Better nurse training or the availability of nurse training should be provided in Geraldton. It needs another full-time psychiatrist, a dedicated psychiatric ward at the hospital, more resources for community services and better management for better coordination.

If members thought that I could talk about regional issues and not mention fuel prices, they are wrong. I want to put on the record today another area in which Labor members have not represented their constituents. It is to ensure that the Premier lives up to his promise to close the gap between Perth and country fuel prices. The difference today between the price of unleaded fuel in Perth and country areas is as follows: in Albany the difference is 9.9c; in Bunbury, 11.4c; in Geraldton, 12.4c; in Collie, 15.4c; and in Broome in the Kimberley electorate, 21.4c. It says something when people in my home town are paying 11.4c a litre more than motorists in Perth. Why am I raising this matter? Why is it not being raised by the member for Albany, the member for Bunbury, the member for Geraldton, the member for Collie and the member for Kimberley? I take my hat off to the Liberal candidates in those areas who will represent their constituents in the way they should be represented in this Parliament, forcefully and without fear or favour.

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [5.17 pm]: I too support the motion moved by the member for Mitchell. I wish to raise the issue of roads and road funding cuts that have resulted in key projects around the State being abandoned or delayed. I have often said in this place that the functional review task force set up by the Treasurer resulted in \$200 million being cut out of Main Roads' budget over a four-year period. That has certainly had a huge impact on road projects, whether in the metropolitan, regional or remote areas of the State.

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I want to touch on a number of the key projects that have been either abandoned or delayed, because they are very important to many electorates in the State. The first I want to speak about is the Fremantle eastern bypass. This issue will not go away, regardless of what this Government thinks. It is an issue that is about people, and people, particularly in the electorate of Riverton, are certainly incensed by this Government's blatant disregard for those communities' wellbeing, safety and amenity. This vital road project would provide freight movement in and out of the port of Fremantle. We saw over a period of time the Government's intention to delete it. The Western Australian Planning Commission received in the vicinity of 9 736 submissions, plus 132 late submissions. Of those submissions 8 290 or 85.1 per cent opposed the deletion. That is an extraordinary number of people who were so incensed that they wrote to the WAPC. Public hearings were held. The community again raised with the WAPC its absolute abhorrence at the notion of deleting the Fremantle eastern bypass. It is a vital road. As I have said, the issue will not go away regardless of what this Government thinks. It will be an election issue in the southern metropolitan seats.

I hazard a guess that the member for Riverton will really struggle at the ballot box. The Liberal Party candidate Margaret Thomas has certainly been working very hard by getting out and talking to those people who were in the first instance saying to the minister, through the WAPC, that the minister should at least consider retaining the land in the reservation until such time as the minister could prove her six point plan. That has been said on a number of occasions in this place. The member for Murdoch introduced a private member's Bill a few weeks ago to show that we are prepared to resume that land. This issue will not go away. We have committed to building that road. Members should be very concerned about how it will impact on their seats. Even the Minister for Education and Training in Willagee will be affected.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Yes?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The minister may laugh, but I am imploring government members to listen to people in the electorate of Riverton. People who were firmly committed to the Labor Party are now saying that there is no way they will support the Labor member at the next state election. It may be that he has a good buffer in the electorate, but I am absolutely certain he will get a very salutary surprise.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You should hear what they say about your party and your leader; in fact, you should hear what your own party members say about your leader.

Ms S.E. Walker: You should hear what people say about you.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): Order, member for Nedlands!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Mr Acting Speaker, the minister may wish to try to put me off my address today, but I am not interested. I was not being personal. I was talking about what is in the general good of the community. This Government is not interested in the general good of the community. I talked about the Liberal candidate for Riverton, Margaret Thomas. She advised me that Dr Milos Nedved, who is the Associate Professor of Occupational Health and Safety at Edith Cowan University, the Assistant Director of the World Safety Organisation National Office and a member of the Western Australian national executive of the Safety Institute of Australia, said that the increased use of trucks on Leach Highway, which will happen, will cause damage to the environment and residents' health if the Fremantle eastern bypass is not built. Dr Milos Nedved is a highly learned individual. He has made those types of comments because he has researched the issue. He knows that more trucks will travel on Leach Highway. The Liberal candidate in Riverton understands what that means to the local communities and the impact that will have on them. Mrs Thomas has been advised by Mr Paul Ng, the president of the Rossmoyne-Shelley Ratepayers Association, of the concerns residents have about vehicles running red lights if semitrailers or trucks are behind residents when they drive on the road. I can understand how they feel. For members who are not familiar with Leach Highway, I advise that some of the intersections are at the base of a hill. As people drive down the hill the traffic light might flash for them to stop. However, when a heavy vehicle is driving behind them, of course they will be concerned. It should concern all members that people would even consider running a red light.

Another future constituent of the Liberal candidate for Riverton, Mrs Shirley Oliver, who lives near Leach Highway, has told Mrs Thomas that her roof and outside walls are already black with carbon emissions. Shelley resident Michael Pavledis already deals with the constant noise of freight traffic. The situation will only worsen now that the Government has deleted the Fremantle eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme. Members are aware that the transport committee recommended that it not be deleted and members know that there is widespread support for its retention. However, the Government continues to refuse to govern for the general good. As I said, this issue will not go away. The Government has started selling the land that was previously reserved for the bypass. That is a disaster that the coalition will work to reverse when it wins the next

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state election. We have committed to completing Roe Highway stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. This will mean restoring the bypass to the metropolitan region scheme and resuming the land if necessary.

Another key project about which I will speak is the Peel deviation. I have referred to it a number of times in this place. It is a 50-kilometre deviation that will provide a dual carriageway to connect the future Kwinana Freeway link north of Mandurah to Old Coast Road near Lake Clifton. It is one of the most desperately needed road projects in Western Australia. It will benefit many electorates in the south west, including yours, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), as you are aware. I am sure you are aware also, Mr Acting Speaker, that traffic volumes on the existing Perth to Bunbury Highway are increasing by approximately seven per cent per annum. That is an enormous increase. This road project must be built as a priority. I have often heard the member for Mandurah speak about the issue. He is a strong advocate for it. The project will benefit many electorates, including Bunbury, Collie, Wellington, Vasse and a number of others, which escape me at this point.

The existing road currently services residential, freight and tourist traffic. Along with rapidly increasing traffic volumes, this has resulted in greater levels of traffic congestion, has reduced traffic efficiency and road safety and has decreased the quality of life for residents who live adjacent to it. As members know, trying to get through Mandurah, particularly on a long weekend - or any weekend these days - is a difficult task.

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: And we must consider the environment because less fuel will be consumed to put stuff into the air.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is right. The member for Murray-Wellington's electorate will benefit from it also.

The completion of the Peel deviation will provide a safe, free-flowing alternative route for regional traffic and it will relieve growing traffic congestion on the existing route and the South Western Highway, which is another road that desperately needs an upgrade. The former coalition Government committed to establishing a special task force to develop, design and provide funding options to complete the project by 2005. That has not happened because we lost the last state election, as members are aware. Despite committing to the project as a priority before the last election, this Government recently confirmed that work on the deviation will not begin until 2007. It is not expected to be completed until 2009 at the earliest. Therefore, it will not be constructed until almost a decade after the election of the Gallop Government, which is a long time.

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure failed for three years to properly apply for federal road funding. She refused to provide detailed plans and designs to the federal Government. We have seen a lot of political posturing by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure over the funding. Recently the minister said that the Government would build the Peel deviation, although when and how is still questionable. Some \$5 million has been spent on land acquisition for the project but no funding has been provided in the 2004-05 budget for the Kwinana Freeway leg of the project. Some \$100 000 has been spent to date, which is 0.13 per cent of the cost of the deviation. Despite constantly claiming that the State Government was waiting for matching federal Government funds to be provided before commencing the project, the minister has now backed away from that because the federal Government has committed \$170 million for the Peel deviation project with a start date of 2006. That funding comes through AusLink. A future coalition Government will make the Peel deviation a priority and take advantage of the Commonwealth's generous funding offer and start the project in 2006.

Another project in which the Acting Speaker would have an interest is the Bunbury port access road. You would be well aware, Mr Acting Speaker, that the project is needed to deal with the growing demand in your electorate. I understand from talking to the Liberal candidate for Bunbury, John Castrilli, that road safety will be an issue if the road is not built, particularly in light of trying to get traffic from the port diverted away from residential traffic. It should be a priority of all members to ensure that residential traffic is moved away from freight traffic.

In October or November this year Tiwest Pty Ltd will ship mineral sands in and out of the port and blue gum exports will increase to approximately 1.5 million tonnes over the next two years. Hansol has completed its chip-mill, which means a big increase in container trucks on the roads. I am sure that the member for Bunbury would be concerned about that volume of traffic moving in and out of Bunbury port being in conflict with residential traffic. I have just talked about the Fremantle eastern bypass. Again this is an issue about road safety. I am committed to ensuring that we address these matters as a priority. It is an access road and transport corridor for vehicles servicing the port of Bunbury. It has been long identified by the Western Australian Planning Commission, Main Roads Western Australia, the South West Development Commission and the Bunbury Port Authority as a key project for the area. Although \$1.2 million has been spent by the Government on land acquisition, there is no funding for the project in the 2004-05 budget and no timetable for its completion.

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The coalition is committed to provide \$17 million for stage 1 of the project in 2006-07, which is vital for that port.

Another key priority is the Albany ring road. This is another project desperately needed to move freight traffic from residential roads and it is another project this Government has delayed. I understand from talking to the Liberal candidate for Albany, Andrew Partington, that heavy trucks are travelling to and from the port and that the number of vehicles is expected to increase significantly over the next seven years, with an anticipated jump in exports from 1.7 million tonnes to 4.7 tonnes by 2011. While we committed to beginning the \$7.9 million first stage of the ring road immediately, Labor does not plan to commence the project until 2007-08. Certainly that is a key concern to the local candidate Andrew Partington, who is keen to see this project up and running. I certainly support him. It is another example of why this Government has got it wrong with funding cuts to Main Roads. Cutting \$200 million from the Main Roads' budget is simply not good enough.

Indian Ocean Drive is another key project. It has certainly been abandoned by this Government. It was one of the most important projects for the country. The final section of Indian Ocean Drive between Lancelin and Cervantes is very important to that area. It is important because it will create a major coastal link between Perth's northern suburbs and towns as far north as Kalbarri. It would have been completed in March 2003 under the previous Government.

Mr R.C. Kucera: It is so important that your federal Government didn't commit one single cent.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The minister can make his own speech in due course and say whatever he likes. However, I am making my comments in this place.

Despite committing to this timetable prior to the last election, this Government has not progressed the project at all. Why? Because it cut Main Roads' budget and poured all its money into the Perth to Mandurah railway project. It has cut funding for road infrastructure, which is vital to the State. Around \$700 million of tourism investment rides on the completion of that project. This Government's delays are estimated to be costing around \$200 million a year and nearly 1 000 permanent jobs in development alone. That is hugely important to the region. We are committed to completing that road as a matter of priority. It will also divert 38 per cent of traffic from Brand Highway, thereby reducing the risk of major accidents between passenger and tourist traffic and road trains.

In the few minutes that I have left, I will refer to the Middle Swan Bridge, which is in desperate need of an upgrade. As I understand it, upgrades to existing roads are not being carried out even if they pose potential safety risks. The Middle Swan Road, which I visited with the Liberal candidate for Swan Hills, Steve Blizard, and City of Swan Chief Executive Officer, Eric Lumsden, is in desperate need of widening. The road leading to the bridge where Roe and Reid Highways merge is four lanes wide and yet the bridge is just two lanes wide. Rather than widening the bridge, this Government is taking the cheap option and recapping it. That is simply not good enough. However, as I said, it has cut Main Roads' budget and has siphoned money from the road budget into its pet project, the Perth to Mandurah railway. Meanwhile key projects and important road infrastructure are not being built, at the expense of the community. As I said, this Government is not governing for the general good. That is evident when these key priority projects are being disregarded by this Government.

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [5.35 pm]: I also wish to speak to and support the motion moved by the member for Mitchell. One of the key priorities that has been affected by the inaction of this Government in the mid west is the Oakajee strategic industry area. Oakajee is located in the Shire of Chapman Valley. It is approximately 23 kilometres north west of Geraldton in the mid west region. It comprises approximately five and a half thousand hectares, of which 1 100 hectares is for heavy industry and 150 hectares is for operations that support heavy industry. The previous coalition Government undertook planning work to the value of approximately \$16 million at the Oakajee site. The Labor Government has failed to offer any support for the development of industry at Oakajee. In fact, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure refuses to acknowledge the potential benefits of the site, even though government reports state that it will provide the mid west region with a vital economic boost. Minister MacTiernan instigated another review of industrial sites - probably the third review in the past 15 years. Regardless of what people on the other side of the House think, I was very much involved in all those reviews, as a councillor and shire president of the mid west region. As would be expected, the other sites failed to meet the benchmark and Oakajee remained the chosen site.

In recent months the Liberal candidate for the seat of Geraldton, Kevin Giudice, has been constantly pushing for the State Government to be proactive in supporting the development of industry in the mid west. He has been very vocal. In March 2004, the minister rezoned the Oakajee site to industrial investigation under the Shire of Chapman Valley's town planning scheme which, of course, effectively means that the cost of any industrial

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development will have to be met privately. The State Government has consistently refused to provide financial support for the development of the site, but it is happily willing to provide funds for the Burrup Peninsula.

On 31 March 2004, the President of the Mid West Chamber of Commerce, Craig Patterson, said that the chamber would welcome the recognition that Geraldton needs to identify its next industrial estate but that the zoning is clearly a step backwards considering the commitment given by the Government to other industrial areas like the Pilbara. He stated that it does not seem that this Government is committed to ensuring a downstream process and that they are in the same limbo as before the announcement.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Chapman Valley, Mr Maurice Battilana, said he would welcome the development of a deepwater port at Oakajee, as would his council. Believe it or not, the member for Geraldton agreed with the Liberal candidate for Geraldton, Mr Kevin Giudice, in supporting the development of the Oakajee site. He recognised - rightly so - that a lot of clean industries could look at the site. That was reported in the *Midwest Times* on 15 September 2004. It would be interesting to know whether the member for Geraldton consulted with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure before making his comments to the Press. It will be interesting to know what discussions took place.

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: Has the deepening of the harbour been a benefit to Geraldton, or could that money have been better spent at Oakajee?

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I say to the member for Murray-Wellington that it has been of benefit to Geraldton. However, the industrial site and the deepwater port will be of further benefit. They can work in conjunction with each other. The people who were involved in the early stages of the development of Oakajee took that into consideration in their planning.

The state Labor Government's unwillingness, and in particular the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure's unwillingness, to promote the growth of industry in the mid west is robbing the region of potential jobs and a major economic boost. That is an issue that I have raised on more than one occasion in not only this House, but also my local media. It seems that the Government is failing to be proactive in encouraging value-adding industries in the mid west. I guess to some degree that comes down to the minister's pride and stubbornness in recognising that the previous coalition Government was correct in identifying Oakajee as the best industrial site in the region. That view has been supported in recent reports. I refer to a recent report entitled "Northern Strategic Industry Areas Environmental, Social and Economic Study", which was prepared by the Department of Industry and Resources and released by the Minister for State Development. It identified Oakajee as the least expensive strategic industrial area to develop. It benefits from its proximity to Geraldton as it is not constrained by housing shortages, proximity to rail, air services and the north west gas pipeline. It is also recognised that a port facility of the kind earmarked for Oakajee would be a great attraction to resource development in the region. Planning for the deepwater port has already been undertaken, thanks, of course, to the previous coalition Government.

It is probably salutary to say that in today's environmentally conscious world, which of course it needs to be, it would be very difficult to try to establish an industrial site on the coast. I think this site is the only industrial site between Perth and Port Hedland. Therefore, there is certainly a benefit from that point of view.

As I have already said, the site is in close proximity to Geraldton. It is well serviced with social infrastructure. There are 10 primary schools within the vicinity of the proposed industrial estate. There are two senior high schools and tertiary education providers, including the Central West College of TAFE, which is a particularly good college, and the university centre in Geraldton, which is making great ground as well. The Shires of Northampton and Chapman Valley are serviced by the Geraldton Regional Hospital and St John of God Health Care. Members heard the member for Mitchell say a little earlier that the Geraldton Regional Hospital is being extended. That project was planned by the previous coalition Government, and, fortunately, it is being continued by the current Government. Northampton is also serviced by the Northampton District Hospital and the Kalbarri Health Centre, which is a multipurpose centre.

Residents in the Shires of Chapman Valley and Northampton have access to a wide range of recreational facilities, including tennis and basketball courts and community ovals. Geraldton also has a wide range of community facilities. Obviously, due to the small population, limited community facilities are available in the Shires of Northampton and Chapman Valley. The point I am making is that it is a good place in which to live. The site is well placed in terms of social infrastructure.

Again, the Liberal candidate for Geraldton, Kevin Giudice, latched onto the contents of the report that I mentioned earlier and called on the State Government to acknowledge that its own departments have identified

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Oakajee as the least expensive industrial site to develop. He immediately called on the State Government to show some vision and financially support the site.

It is probably worth mentioning the industrial infrastructure in that area as well. The industrial infrastructure is made up of transportation and access, which are well provided to Oakajee and the surrounding areas. The Geraldton Airport, which is some 25 kilometres to the south of the site, is the closest airport to Oakajee. It consists of three runways, two main taxiways and two aprons. It is a significant airport and is therefore suitable to service any additional demands associated with the development of Oakajee. The only seaport in the region is the Geraldton port, which is managed by the Geraldton Port Authority. That is approximately 23 kilometres south of Oakajee. The current port has the capacity to handle vessels up to about 80 000 tonnes dead weight, with a maximum draft, I think, of about 11.5 metres, or perhaps 12 metres, at zero tide. However, the port does not have the capacity to cater for larger vessels associated with the heavy industry located at Oakajee. There is both social and industrial infrastructure within the region.

The Oakajee development would overcome many of the problems being experienced by users of the Geraldton port, as I have just said. The State Government must assist - I stress that - in the provision of infrastructure at the Oakajee site to provide a catalyst for industry to establish itself in the mid west. Oakajee is the only industrial site between Kwinana and Burrup. I previously said that it was the only industrial estate between Perth and Port Hedland.

To add further weight to the cause of Mr Giudice, the Liberal candidate for Geraldton, Midwest Corporation Ltd has signalled its interest in exporting from the Oakajee site by developing a \$120 million port at the site if the proposed Weld Range mine were to be developed. The mid west would be very well placed to handle any iron ore that came from Weld Range. The port proposed by Midwest Corporation -

Mr A.D. McRae interjected.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I suggest the member ask them. The port proposed by Midwest Corporation would be based upon the designs drawn under the previous coalition Government as part of the planning that was done for Oakajee. I believe that has been heavily criticised by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Minister MacTiernan, and the Premier himself. In *Hansard* of Wednesday, 2 June 2004, the Premier of the State is reported as saying -

As we flew north of Geraldton I said to the media, "Look down there at the millions of Liberal dollars at Oakajee that have created nothing for the people of that region."

I hope the Premier is ashamed of those remarks. The Premier is a Geraldton local, born and bred, and that is the sort of support he gives to a site that could help employ people and put infrastructure in the mid west region. That was a shameful comment to make. I recall it now. In fact, it was in answer to a question, I think. The Leader of the House has just come into the Chamber. I will remind him that he is reported in *Hansard* of Wednesday, 15 October 2003 as saying that -

Oakajee was an absolute waste of money.

If there is a coalition Government, I guarantee that the Leader of the House will be eating his words.

Midwest Corporation, which of course is the company interested in the iron ore at Weld Range, and other investors that have approached the company appear to feel very differently from the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Leader of the House, fortunately. I have maintained for a long time that Oakajee is the best industrial site in the mid west. In fact, the Government's own departments have recognised that. Even though the State Government guaranteed the cost of approximately \$100 million for the Geraldton port, that site lacks the space needed to support an operation of the size proposed by Midwest Corporation. Oakajee is the solution to that problem. The minister has dug herself a hole by saying the following, again taken from *Hansard* -

We have made no commitment to pour infrastructure into the Oakajee site, given the massive investment we have made in the Geraldton port . . .

Again, that comment has no vision at all; it is short-sighted. The minister has labelled the site "the mirage of Oakajee". I refer to *Hansard* of Tuesday, 23 October 2003. The reality is that it is not a mirage, but a fantastic and worthwhile opportunity for the mid west for employment, a larger population and all the things that accompany industrial infrastructure. It is time the Government showed some vision, stopped playing games and came out and supported the Oakajee site. At least it should state something definitive and positive. The minister admitted the following on 21 May 2003 -

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... we need an industrial site, particularly given the reality that Oakajee will not be a goer for at least a decade. All of the infrastructure that we have put in place is very much concentrated on the port of Geraldton being the focus...

The minister admitted that despite the funds that had been put into the Geraldton port, an industrial site is needed. I give her credit for that recognition. However, the minister is not prepared to let that site be Oakajee because she does not want to concede that the previous coalition Government was right. The coalition has recognised that the Oakajee industrial estate would help secure the future in Geraldton in relation to jobs for our youth and attracting other industry. The Government needs to give some thought to the Oakajee issue. The minister needs to take off her blinkers and put some support behind the proposal, instead of trying to find an excuse for not supporting a site at Oakajee.

There are a couple of other key priorities in the mid west region. I have been on my feet about this many times in this House. I refer to power supplies. Members must be sick to death of hearing me talk about the power supply at Kalbarri, but I intend to raise it at every opportunity. Apparently some new autoclaves have been put in at Kalbarri that are supposed to address the power issue, but I believe power died for three hours a couple of weekends ago. The Minister for Energy will obviously need to do better in this regard.

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

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: Power is an issue that will not go away. I know that the Government is aware of this issue. People in the northern regions are sick to death of constantly having to replace machinery, computers or technical infrastructure because of a lack of consistent power. The issue remains. The situation does not seem to have got a lot better.

I move on to the Geraldton port. I mentioned the Geraldton port in my delivery on Oakajee. The \$103 million or \$104 million that was guaranteed by the Government to deepen the port was very welcome. I say "guaranteed" because the port users are paying for deepening the port of Geraldton, not the Government. I make that point because the Government takes credit for it. The Geraldton port has some infrastructure that is 30 or 40 years old. Larger vessels can come in following the deepening of the harbour, and that puts pressure on the old infrastructure. Three or four different materials are being handled in the port, such as talc, iron ore and mineral sands. Those three materials do not go particularly well together. It is a matter of sorting out in the port where the materials can go so no cross-contamination occurs. Members can understand why this is the case with the red dust generated when handling iron ore. Funds need to be spent on the current infrastructure. I am aware that the Government has allocated \$4 million, in round figures, to try to upgrade that infrastructure. I refer to a loader and the changing around of berths. A very important issue is that berth 5 be deepened, which will cost a lot more than the \$4 million allocated. As a minimum, those costs are somewhere between \$20 million or \$50 million. One could happily walk into the port and spend \$100 million to do the job properly, but I am cognisant of the fact that the Government could not do that off the top of its head. I say to the minister and the Government that \$4 million will not have an enormous impact on the infrastructure, and some of the port users are becoming increasingly frustrated about the restricted use of the port. Some demurrage costs are involved because ships cannot come in to load - this involves many thousands of dollars - and the port is currently paying those costs. However, if industry paid for it, I am sure there would be an enormous hue and cry. Funding needs to be reassessed. The \$4 million is welcome, but the Government should look at the matter carefully and, if possible, make sure more adequate funding is provided in the coming budget; that will apply to whichever Government is in office.

MR M.J. BIRNEY (Kalgoorlie) [5.57 pm]: The motion moved by my friend the member for Mitchell is telling indeed. It reads -

That this House condemns the Gallop Labor Government for its failure to deliver on key priorities in Western Australia.

In many respects, one would expect Oppositions to move such motions against Governments, and perhaps even for political reasons. However, the reality is that this motion has quite a deal of substance as outlined by the speakers before me.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan interjected.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Notwithstanding the constant barrage from the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I will indicate where the Government has fallen down in respect of law and order and policing and crime. Apart from all the points the members for Carine, Mitchell and Greenough made, the key issue at the last election was crime and policing. Who could forget Labor Party members going on ad nauseam about how they would increase police numbers and that everybody would be safe under a Labor Government? They said, "If you vote

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for us, you will be safe.” Crime would go away and police numbers would increase and everybody would live a happy, harmonious life. Sadly, that has not happened.

I would like to outline a couple of statistics for the House. The latest set of figures tabled in this very Chamber refers to the 14 policing districts. Members should remember that police districts are the front line of the fight against crime, not quasi-units squirreled away in head office or Curtin House. The 14 policing districts house the police stations and police officers who respond to calls from the public. Six of the 14 policing districts have gone backwards in terms of police numbers since the Labor Party came to power. How can the Minister for Police, the Premier or any member opposite sit there with a straight face and try to tell us that they have increased police numbers in Western Australia, when the number of police officers manning six of the 14 policing districts has gone backwards? Some members will be aware that each policing district has what is known as an authorised strength of police officers; that is, the number of police who are required to undertake the fight against crime in each district. Every district has a different authorised strength, depending on a formula implemented by the Commissioner of Police, which takes into account crime rates and the like, geographical borders and boundaries and other matters. The latest set of figures tabled in this Chamber indicates that 11 of the 14 policing districts in Western Australia are operating below their authorised strength. Perhaps we could forgive a Government that has perhaps two or even three policing districts operating below their authorised strength, but by any measure 11 of 14 policing districts operating below their authorised strength is a failure. In fact, it is a massive failure and one that will hang around the neck of the Labor Party going into the next state election. Members can rest assured that I and other Liberal members of Parliament and, indeed, Liberal candidates will spread that message far and wide. We might even read out the Labor Party’s pre-election “more police, better policing” policy. I remember it well. In fact, I do not even have to refer to it; I can tell members that it states that Labor will ensure that all police stations in Western Australia are staffed at their authorised strength. Guess what? There could be an election in two or three months, and 11 of the 14 policing districts are operating below their authorised strength. There is no greater test of a Government’s success or failure than the number of police operating in the policing districts at the front line. As I said earlier, by any measure this lot has failed.

The lack of police numbers in those districts is directly parallel to an increase in crime in some of the more disturbing categories in some districts. For instance, the south east metropolitan district takes in the seat of Riverton. It is unfortunate that the member for Riverton is not in the Chamber, because I am sure that he would be particularly disappointed to learn that there has been a 15 per cent increase in aggravated sexual assaults in 2003-04 compared with the number in the previous year. There has been a five per cent increase in aggravated assaults and a 27 per cent increase in non-aggravated assaults. In fact, more than 490 more offences have been committed this year than last year. There has been a 13 per cent increase in total offences against the person. Those are the most disturbing offences; that is, assaults and offences that are directly perpetrated against an individual.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Are you going to outline the decreases as well? No, of course you aren’t. As usual, you are being selective and using half-truths.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: What else is there apart from sexual assault, aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault? Perhaps the number of car thefts might have gone down by the odd one or two. I do not know; it probably has not. Nothing else really matters apart from aggravated assault and sexual assault, does it?

Mr R.C. Kucera: The boys up there think you’re an absolute joke, mate.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Does the minister want to bet?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I talk to them regularly, mate.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I can name 10 who do not. Can the minister name one who does?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I don’t breach confidences like you do.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I can name 10 who do not. The minister cannot name one who does. I know who they think is a joke, and that is the minister. Plenty of people were absolutely delighted when he made the jump from assistant police commissioner to Labor Party hack. In fact, they still follow his career and they still laugh because they still think he is a comedy of errors. Let us get that straight.

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

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Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Notwithstanding old gum banger opposite, let me move on. Margaret Thomas is the Liberal candidate for the seat of Riverton. She is a person of very high integrity, an extremely hard worker and a person who has the people of Riverton's best interests at heart. She has been moving through the electorate of Riverton and has told me that she has spoken to the residents of Mandora Way in Shelley, who have also expressed concerns about graffiti levels. I am not talking rhetoric here. The Labor Party abandoned the previous Government's graffiti task force in 2002. It is no wonder the people of Mandora Way in Shelley have expressed concerns to Margaret Thomas. Once again there is a direct correlation between government policy and increases in crime. The indication I am getting from all our candidates who are doorknocking and talking to people at a grassroots level, just like Margaret Thomas, is very clear; that is, despite what the Minister for Police and the Labor Party would have us believe, crime levels have not come down, particularly disturbing crimes committed against the person such as assault, sexual assault and aggravated assault.

In the east metropolitan policing district we have a very strong and dedicated community member in Steve Blizard, who is the Liberal candidate for the seat of Swan Hills. Of all the issues in the electorate of Swan Hills, he is very concerned about crime. In fact, a suburban sports store owner has indicated to Mr Blizard that he sold his business after a recent ram-raid that followed a spate of burglaries. Despite what the Minister for Police would have us believe, crime in the seat of Swan Hills certainly is not going south; in fact, it is going north to the point at which one hardworking business owner has decided to sell his business. In fact, Mr Blizard has also advised me that one Ellenbrook resident is selling his home and leaving the area after being held at gunpoint this month. These are the sorts of stories that hardworking, dedicated local candidates pick up while they are doorknocking areas. Crime is still a significant issue in the seat of Swan Hills, and I will prove it. In comparative terms, there has been a whopping 83 per cent increase in aggravated sexual assault in this year's crime statistics for the east metropolitan policing district compared with those for the previous year. That 83 per cent increase represents 91 more aggravated sexual assaults. That is almost two extra aggravated sexual assaults a week.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: When you were referring to that matter, the minister, who is a former serving police officer, indicated that, to his mind, there would be one or two such offences, and you have just said that it is more than 90. Does that not show you how out of touch with the sources of the problem they are?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I suggest that that is probably why the Minister for Small Business left the Police Service. He was a dud there and he is a dud here. He really does not have a clue about much at all.

Mr R.C. Kucera: One thing I was not is a drunk like you.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: He has been a dud minister from day one. Ever since he came into this place he has been a moving circus.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: The Minister for Small Business made an unparliamentary comment and I ask him to withdraw and apologise.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I was simply relating what the member for Kalgoorlie himself has said. He said that he was a drunk for four days in Bali. I was simply repeating that. I do not see that repeating something that the member has said publicly is anything close to being unparliamentary.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: The minister would well and truly be aware that that comment was clarified further on in the article to which he has referred. The minister is simply misrepresenting me.

The SPEAKER: The reference to "drunk" is unparliamentary. The reference to "dud" by the member for Kalgoorlie to denigrate the minister is just as unparliamentary. I ask the minister to withdraw and I ask the member for Kalgoorlie to withdraw.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I withdraw.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I withdraw. I did not mean to call him a dud.

The SPEAKER: Order! We do not need smart answers like that. I ask that the member for Kalgoorlie also withdraw that particular comment.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Certainly, Mr Speaker.

Debate Resumed

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I have no issue with that at all. As I was saying before the Minister for Small Business -

Mr P.G. Pendal: Apart from that he thinks very highly of you!

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Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Yes. As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by the Minister for Small Business, there has been a 14 per cent increase in non-aggravated assaults in the seat of Swan Hills, which represents 119 more offences. There has also been a 3.2 per cent increase in total offences against the person; that is 60 more offences. There has been a massive 31 per cent increase in drug trafficking in that area and a 19 per cent increase in the incidence of graffiti.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: That increase in the incidence of graffiti amounts to effectively about 91 more offences.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that other members will have an opportunity to contribute to this debate. The member for Kalgoorlie is on his feet and whether we like his comments or not, he has the right to make them.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: They do not like my comments because the truth hurts. It is as simple as that.

I pay tribute to Steve Blizard, who I think is one of the hardest working community candidates among our current batch of candidates. He talks to people on a daily basis about the issues in Swan Hills and, almost daily, he relays some of those terrible stories to me. The message is loud and clear that when the Labor Party tells us that crime has decreased in Western Australia that is certainly not the view of the people in the electorate that Mr Blizard hopes to represent.

I move on now to the north west metropolitan policing district, which takes in the seats of Mindarie, Wanneroo and Joondalup. Once again, the crime statistics in this area are atrocious. We might even ask ourselves why that might be. The fact is that that particular policing district has lost more police officers since Labor came to power than any other policing district in Western Australia. That has occurred despite - members will love this - the fact that before the last election the member for Joondalup towed around a monstrosity of a trailer that contained a sign with the words "Vote Labor for more police and better health".

Mr A.D. Marshall: The sign wasn't big enough.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: It was a massive sign that encouraged people to vote Labor for more cops. His policing district has lost more police than any other district in Western Australia. I could probably rest my case on that. When I get out to that area during the campaign - and I will - I will tell any journalist who will listen that that is what the member for Joondalup said to the people of Joondalup prior to the last election on his circus-like trailer. In fact Joondalup has lost more cops than any other district. The situation does not get any starker than that.

I have some fairly disturbing figures on that policing district. It may come as no surprise to members that the more serious crimes have increased in that area, particularly in light of the fact that a massive number of police officers has been lost from that area. There has been a 108 per cent increase in aggravated sexual assaults in the north west metropolitan policing district, or in the areas of Mindarie, Wanneroo and Joondalup. There has been an 11 per cent increase in aggravated assaults, a five per cent increase in non-aggravated assaults, a two per cent increase in total offences against the person, a 34 per cent increase in the incidence of graffiti and a 26 per cent increase in drug trafficking. If Joondalup were represented by a strong local member of Parliament or if the member for Joondalup carried any weight in the Labor Party or the State Government, he would have ensured that those police officers were not transferred out of that district. The reality is very much different. The member for Joondalup has absolutely no say in this place. He sits almost in the public gallery and is told to put his hand up when the Premier wants him to and to shut up when the Premier does not want him to say anything. There is no way known that he will rock the boat by going to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and asking what she has done with all the cops from his district while reminding her about that silly looking trailer he towed around containing a sign telling people the number of cops would increase. Has he done that? He has not. In fact, Dean Solly, the Liberal candidate for Joondalup, has made more representations to me and the Opposition about crime in that area than the member for Joondalup has to his own Government. If the member for Joondalup had done anything, he would have stopped the flow of police officers out of that district. Dean Solly is working his little heart out in the community. He is an active fellow who is in touch with the Joondalup community and every shadow minister in the Opposition. When we get into government, Dean Solly will have a serious voice in a future Liberal Government, unlike the fellow who towed the trailer around containing a sign with the words "Vote Labor for more police". However, all the police in his district have disappeared out from under him.

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: It is as though the member for Joondalup is sinking into the Labor Party's quicksand.

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Mr R.C. Kucera: You won't answer that will you?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I did not hear the minister. I try not to hear him.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Has Solly paid back the \$5 000 yet that he said the other day he used from the Sports Centre Trust?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Is the minister asking me?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I am asking you.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Why is he asking me? Mr Solly has done nothing inappropriate; it is as simple as that. However, he has worked from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm for the people of Joondalup, making representations to shadow ministers and the state Opposition on behalf of the people of Joondalup, which is more than I can say for the meek little fellow, known as the member for Joondalup, who sits almost in the public gallery and who has presided over one of the worst depletions of police officers from a district in Western Australia. There is not a helluva a lot more that I can say for him.

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

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: The mid west Gascoyne policing district, which takes in the City of Geraldton, is also an interesting case study. The number of aggravated assaults in 2003-04 has increased by 22 per cent compared with those of the previous year. There has been a 5.5 per cent increase in non-aggravated assaults, which represents 39 more offences; and a massive 26 per cent increase in the incidence of graffiti. Are members aware of a pattern developing here? Graffiti has increased in almost every electorate across Western Australia and the Labor Party abandoned the former Government's graffiti task force. Let us look at what has happened. Actions have results and the result of the Labor Party's action of abandoning our graffiti task force is an increase in the incidence of graffiti. One does not need to be a rocket scientist or even an ALP member to work that out.

According to the last set of figures tabled in this House, that policing district was a whopping 12 police officers below its authorised strength. Once again, the Labor Party, which said that every police station would be staffed to its authorised strength, is presiding over the Geraldton policing district, which was 12 officers down at the time these figures were quoted in Parliament. As a result, there has been a 22 per cent increase in aggravated assault, a 26 per cent increase in the incidence of graffiti and 5.5 per cent increase in non-aggravated assaults.

Kevin Giudice, the Liberal candidate for Geraldton - the soon-to-be Liberal member for Geraldton - has on many an occasion spoken to me about the issue of crime in Geraldton. One of the biggest issues in Geraldton, as Mr Giudice said to me, is juvenile crime. I am pleased to say that on Monday I spoke to the police in Geraldton and they have confirmed that juvenile crime is a very serious and significant issue there. Mr Giudice has made consistent representations to not only me but also the Leader of the Opposition and other members of the shadow Cabinet on juvenile crime. As a result, I am pleased to say that the Liberal Party has now decided that if we are successful at the next election, we will implement a curfew policy throughout Western Australia in those local communities that request the use of such policies. In contrast to those meek and mild Labor members of Parliament, Mr Giudice has achieved something tangible by talking consistently to members of the shadow Cabinet and the Opposition about issues of crime in this area. He has been not merely talking but also proposing solutions. As a result of those many and varied conversations with Mr Giudice, the Liberal Party has decided to implement a curfew policy, should it be successful at the next election. It is for those local communities that request the use of such a tool.

At the last election the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Labor Party members ran around telling anybody who would listen that a future Labor Government would tackle the issue of crime in Western Australia. The reality is something very much different. In fact, they have hamstrung the courts to the point at which courts are now prohibited from handing out jail terms to some serious and repeat offenders. That is not a myth. They have even come up with a formal policy, which is known as Labor's reduced imprisonment strategy. If that does not say it all, I would be very surprised. Included in Labor's reduced imprisonment strategy is increased access to bail for some crooks and not jailing people who breach their parole. Of course, we all saw what happened in the southern suburbs some time ago.

Point of Order

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member has talked about increased bail for some crooks. Many people in this State at the moment are on bail. They are simply charged with offences. Many may be proved to be innocent. This point is consistently raised with the member for Kalgoorlie in response to his rhetoric. It may put those people who are on charges at the moment in jeopardy and relates to issues such as those you raised, Mr Speaker, about the sub judice rule. The member should temper his language.

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The SPEAKER: I did raise the point last week and I indicated that point of orders should not be used to make a debating point. If a member wishes to refer to a breach of standing orders, points of order are for that purpose; they are not for the purpose of interrupting a debate and they are also not to be used to make a debating point.

Debate Resumed

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: I could not have put it better myself. Had you allowed me to contribute to that point of order, Mr Speaker, I would have said that many people who are on bail are convicted criminals - crooks. The Labor Party members do not like calling them crooks. They want to wrap them up in cotton wool and hope that they can get to see the error of their ways. They do not call them nasty names. However, the reality of it is that many of them are home burglars, people who commit assault and people who commit rape. Even though members of the Labor Party do not like to think of them as crooks, members of the Liberal Party certainly think of them as crooks. There is no doubt about that.

The reality is that under the Labor Government, fewer and fewer people are going to prison, and that is deliberate. The Attorney General is on the public record as saying that courts are simply reflecting the Labor Party's reduced imprisonment policy. Far from fixing crime in this State, far from sending a message to would-be and repeat offenders, the Labor Party has presided over a situation in which many categories of crime have spiralled out of control. It has presided over its own reduced imprisonment strategy. Law and order and crime are anything but under control in this State under the Labor Government.

MR A.D. MARSHALL (Dawesville) [6.25 pm]: When the member for Carine spoke of key priorities in Western Australia she referred to the Peel deviation. I have fought passionately for it for over eight years. I remind members that *Hansard* records that I have spoken to the minister in this House on 35 occasions, lobbying and urging her to do something about it. In 2002-03 she was always stalling on making an announcement that it could happen. She challenged me and said that if I could get federal money for half the project, she would match it. Only six months ago we obtained a promise of \$150 million of federal money from the Howard Government to get this priority Peel deviation under way. The project is still stalled. The Labor Party said that a future Labor Government would give \$170 million. As soon as that announcement was made the minister said that the Peel deviation would be put in place and that planning would commence in 2007. It looked like pork-barrelling to me and to everyone in the Mandurah area. If that announcement could be made immediately after the Labor Party had promised that a future Labor Government would commit \$170 million to the project, why was the announcement not made three years ago? There has been a Gallop Government for four years. Everyone knows the situation. I believe that if the public were consulted on its view of the importance of the Peel deviation to the Mandurah area, over 50 per cent would say that they think that the Peel deviation is more important than the southern railway.

The Old Coast Road was not built to handle the enormous amount of traffic that is currently using it - 15 000 vehicles a day. Only last Monday two heavy haulage vehicles collided at Navarre and nearly went through a store. Had the vehicles travelled another 10 metres, a huge number of fatalities would have occurred. Only a month ago a fatality occurred on the Old Coast Road near Lake Clifton. Every Easter a fatality occurs on that road. I have fought to prevent the disasters that happen on that overcrowded road. The Peel deviation will be the answer because it will remove heavy haulage vehicles from that route. Urban development is continuing, and when the Peel deviation is completed, 15 000 local vehicles will use it every day. The Old Coast Road must be properly surfaced. At the moment the surface is crumbling. The promises to patch it up have never been fulfilled.

The Peel deviation, the number one priority of the Peel region, has been overlooked by this Government. Now, only a few months before an election, it has suddenly popped out from the cabbage patch and said that it will put the Peel deviation in place and start planning in 2007. I believe, and so does anyone else who knows anything about planning, that it should have been put in place the year that this Government came into power. The Government has stalled and stalled. Fatalities have occurred because of that. The minister must now say that, because of the petitions that are being presented, the Government will look at the project next year, instead of 2007, and that in 2006 the Peel deviation project will begin.

MRS C.L. EDWARDES (Kingsley) [6.29 pm]: I also support the motion. I will particularly focus on the area of education. Under the Labor Government of the past three and three-quarter years the backlog for school maintenance has doubled to \$73 million. The minister and the Premier announced on 8 August this year that they would fix our schools by spending \$65 million to clear the maintenance backlog. They promised to fix every school maintenance issue currently on the books at every government school in the State. I am pleased to give them some information on where that maintenance is sorely needed.

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Mr E.S. Ripper: It was a great decision.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: It was due only to the pressure of a looming state election and the fact that the shadow Minister for Education and Training the week before had identified the backlog of maintenance. The backlog for school maintenance has doubled to \$73 million. That is at today's rate. The Government has promised \$65 million, which is already short of the necessary sum. Over the next four years, that backlog will increase even further, and there will be even further pressure on the Government for funding. I will identify some of the areas of concern.

The Liberal candidate for Collie-Wellington, Craig Carbone, recently toured the Collie Senior High School. The school, which was built in the 1940s, has leaking roofs, overcrowded staff offices and what could be only described as prehistoric science laboratories. Mr Carbone has also met with Heather Graham from the combined school council representing schools in Collie. According to the council, some schools in the electorate are in dire need of repair. Some of the problems it has identified include rusted gutters and downpipes, gas heaters that do not meet departmental guidelines and constant leaking in classrooms and library areas.

Capital works have also ground to a halt under Labor, with funding over the past four years not even keeping pace with inflation. The result has been a lack of desperately needed extensions at our schools. The Liberal candidate for Riverton, Margaret Thomas, recently toured Willetton Senior High School and discovered that although the school has a specialist basketball program, it does not have a full-sized basketball court. The school desperately needs a new gym, which would also double as a covered assembly area, to accommodate the program. As the school does not currently have an assembly area to accommodate the whole school at once, it holds its assemblies in shifts. The home economics area also needs upgrading, and the food preparation area of the school is actually a converted cupboard.

This skimping on education capital works is also affecting residents from the hills. Labor not only has failed to build a full high school in Ellenbrook, but also it is not even opening a full middle school for years 7 to 10. On 6 May 2004, the Minister for Education and Training told this House -

The member can go back to her constituency and say that the Minister for Education has stood up in the Parliament and said that work on Ellenbrook High School will begin in the forthcoming financial year and the target for its opening is 2007.

However, far from a full middle school opening in 2007, it was later revealed that under Labor, only a small amount of funding for planning had been set aside for the school, and the facility will take students from only years 7 and 8 when it opens.

Maintenance in the electorate of Swan Hills is also suffering, with the students at Eastern Hills Senior High School forced to endure leaking roofs, rotting floors in demountables and overcrowding. The Liberal candidate for Swan Hills, Steve Blizzard, has been told by teachers at the school that they have resorted to painting their own classrooms. The coalition has committed \$300 000 for four new classrooms at the school, with two dedicated to music, and \$100 000 for urgent maintenance work, which will be decided in consultation with the school community.

The Wanneroo Senior High School was recently given some funding for a new administration building and an upgrade of the design and technology area, but it has a long maintenance list that continues to go unattended. According to the Liberal candidate for Wanneroo, Paul Miles, that list includes replacement of flooring and lights and improvements to toilets and cracking concrete. The school has also not been painted since it opened nearly 30 years ago.

In Bunbury, Newton Moore Senior High School is another school desperately in need of an upgrade. The Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal candidate for Bunbury, John Castrilli, recently toured the school, which currently has 15 demountables and is overcrowded by -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The chatter going on in the Chamber is becoming increasingly out of order. I am sure that the member on her feet can do without the assistance from the left, and without the interjections from the right, and whether someone has a moustache is absolutely irrelevant to this debate.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: The Newton Moore Senior High School in Bunbury currently has 15 demountables and is overcrowded by around 400 students. Although the coalition has committed to an upgrade at the school, Labor has not provided one single cent in the 2004-05 budget for any work at the school. However, in the meantime it has announced \$65 million in funding to clear the maintenance backlog. It identified \$6 million of savings in December 2002 and put that across to some school maintenance, which was called Operation Refresh.

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Some of the schools have referred to it as a bit of a stunt because it provided only superficial painting and flooring to selected schools, some of which were only two years old.

I will also identify a couple of schools in my electorate. The latest building condition report of the largest senior high school in my electorate is very serious. After being in existence for almost 20 years, a large number of items are requiring attention prior to their becoming much more serious problems in the not too distant future. The building condition assessment has been clearly marked with those issues. One of the biggest issues it has identified leading to maintenance problems is that this school, being close to the ocean, has experienced major corrosion to exposed metal and roof fixings. Some corrosion treatment has been undertaken, but it requires more for extensive works before it becomes a major issue. That matter is of particular concern when quite extensive areas of corrosion are occurring in the colourbond roofing. Much of the woodwork in the school is also in need of repainting.

Earlier this year, I wrote to the minister about one of my local primary schools and the issue of perimeter security fencing and resurfacing of the tennis courts. This school is only 15 or 16 years old and was opened by the current Premier when he was the Minister for Education in a previous Government. Security fencing was identified as being absolutely needed because of the long history of graffiti, vandalism and theft at the school, which in the past two years alone has exceeded \$60 000, including insurance costs. Every time the windows are scratched and other graffiti activities are carried out that cannot be removed, a more negative environment is created for those students. The community from that area, in particular the parents and citizens association, has requested the installation of perimeter security fencing. This fencing has been installed at a nearby primary school, and it has had the desired effect of reducing the type of damage to which I have just referred. Of course, the parents of the primary school who are requesting the fencing are well aware of the success of the program to the point at which they are becoming annoyed and frustrated. They are very concerned at the extent of the negativity and the vandalism that is occurring at the school and, more importantly, at the cost that is being put on the education system. It would be cheaper to install the perimeter fencing. If there is community support, there is no reason it cannot be done. The response from the minister about the perimeter fencing was that funding for security fencing is targeted at schools at which a high number of recorded offences together with the greatest level of wilful damage is recorded. All applicants are assessed on an annual basis. As the selection of schools to be fenced is based on priority, a school's application is not automatically successful in subsequent years. The minister advised that the allocation for 2003-04 had been fully allocated, and the planning for 2004-05 at that time had already been completed; therefore, my primary school was not successful. We are now putting in a request to the minister for the third time to ensure that that perimeter fencing is installed.

Another concern I have is the safety of children at the primary school. The tennis courts need resurfacing. They have been on the list for preventive maintenance in the education district for almost four years. The minister tells me it is usual practice for a district committee comprising several school principals to consider maintenance requirements across the district and determine which works should be funded. Of course, it is the bottom line that must always be considered when determining funding priorities. The non-slip surface on the school courts is deteriorating, especially in the high traffic areas. The parents and citizens association estimates that if the situation is not attended to in the near future, the maintenance costs will drastically increase. More importantly, if the high traffic areas are not resurfaced, the entire area will need to be resurfaced in the future at a considerably greater cost. All I am talking about is \$10 000. It seems that that money cannot be found for the safety of children who play on those tennis courts. This is a serious issue to that school and its community.

I highlight to the minister that he has already underestimated the amount of funding that is needed for some of these maintenance works. He said that all the school maintenance that is currently listed will be attended to. I have identified only those areas that are currently listed. I have identified just two of the more serious issues at the local primary school. The external painting needs redoing because it has not been done since the school was first established. As I understand it, the carpets at the school are the original carpets. Carpets do not last because of the continual wear and tear on them. That raises safety issues for teachers and students.

In supporting the motion, although I agree that the identification of the \$65 million is good, it is absolutely needed. However, it is nowhere near the amount needed to carry out the repairs on the current list of schools that are in urgent need of maintenance work. The Government must attend to this major issue. I will continue to make sure that the schools I have identified today, and indeed all schools in Western Australia, have lodged on the financial books for next year their maintenance list, which has already been lodged but for which no money has been received.

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MR J.L. BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [6.42 pm]: I support the motion. We are getting towards the end of this Government's four-year term. The Government came into power promising that big things would happen under a Gallop Labor Government.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: It has happened.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I am just about to tell the member that it has not happened. I tried to find a big list of all the promises the Labor Party made before the election, which was printed in *The West Australian*, but it must be in my office in Harvey. Obviously the big promises referred to health care, education, and law and order. Members can see what has happened to health care; it is not travelling all that well. I remember when the former Minister for Health said, "I will fix it."

Mr R.C. Kucera: No, I didn't.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Yes, the minister did.

Mr R.C. Kucera: No, I didn't.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister said, "Watch this space."

Mr R.C. Kucera: No, I didn't.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I can tell the minister what he said because I remember it distinctly.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You find it in *Hansard*.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: It is not in *Hansard*. The minister whispered it across the Chamber. The minister said, "Watch this space."

Mr R.C. Kucera: Does the member have conversations in whispers?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister does. I was on my feet speaking. What I said was reported.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Get back to a proper debate instead of talking in whispers.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I am telling members what has not happened in the past three and three-quarter years. When we were in Government there was the odd ambulance bypass. Since the change of Government there is not an odd ambulance bypass - all the hospitals are ramping because they have nowhere to go.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: It is down by 84 per cent.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: No, it's not. Don't believe the minister's figures.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: They do not get recorded any more because the hospitals have told the ambulances that they are not allowed to bypass the hospitals. The figures have been fudged. The Government has got over bypassing by ramping.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: The Government introduced the recommendation you and I made as members of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Well, it has not worked. The fact is that under our Government one hospital at a time was bypassed. That was a major crisis in Western Australia according to the then Labor Opposition. However, when we mention bypassing and ramping the Government says it is part of the process of dealing with the situation and that it is not a major crisis any more. Under our Government one hospital at time was on bypass; under this Government, they are all on bypass. They can no longer bypass, so they are ramping. That is one area on which the Government has fallen down.

I refer now to the Government's promise to increase the numbers of police. I cannot find out whether the Government has increased the numbers of police. Everyone seems to have different views on what are the numbers. I have not noticed any difference in my electorate. A big problem is that many police are on sick leave, annual leave or whatever. A huge percentage of the Police Force is never on the job. In my electorate - and it probably happens everywhere else - when those police take sick leave or are on their long service leave or whatever, they do not get replaced; therefore, their numbers are reduced. That is not acceptable.

I will refer to some local issues. If the former Government had been re-elected, the South Western Highway between Waroona and Harvey would have been upgraded by now. It is a major problem because it is a narrow road. The road keeps breaking up and is continually being repaired. Every year it is being patched up. Over a number of years upgrading had not occurred between Armadale and Waroona. However, a couple of years ago we planned to repair that part of the road and deal with the South Western Highway. It is a narrow and dangerous road with no passing lanes.

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I asked questions about this matter recently and was told that \$800 000 would be spent on it this year. That seems like a lot of money; however, that amount of money goes nowhere on repairing a road. All we will get for that is two passing lanes. That will be better than having none, but it is unacceptable to have just two passing lanes on 30 kilometres of road. As I said, the road is continuously breaking up and is narrow and dangerous. An enormous number of trucks and a great volume of traffic travels on that road today. The increase in population and in the activities that occur in the south west means that the amount of traffic will continue to increase rather than decrease. It is very important to upgrade that road. It is sad that the project is put on the never-never. The money that is wasted each year on patching it up from one end to the other should be spent in one fell swoop to fix the road so that it would not have to be patched up for another 10 or 20 years. I do not know how long roads last. This is a poor situation.

Another situation that concerns me regards the Yarloop District Hospital. I can remember when the gentleman sitting opposite me - I use that word loosely - as the then Minister for Health, and a couple of other ministers, visited Yarloop and guaranteed that no changes would be made to government services at the Yarloop District Hospital for at least two years. Within about a month there was a crisis there when a fire officer came through and put a black ban on the Yarloop District Hospital because it was regarded as a fire hazard.

Mr R.C. Kucera: That happened with two hospitals - that one and Kalamunda - and in both instances something was done about it.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I will tell the minister what he did at Yarloop. He kicked out the patients. He did something all right!

Mr R.C. Kucera: Would you prefer to see patients put at risk?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Funnily enough, the people were happy to stay there. Apart from having been upgraded perhaps 25 years ago, and some maintenance work having been carried out since then, that hospital has not changed. The fire hazard has been there since the hospital was built.

Mr R.C. Kucera: A fire hazard was identified. Any Government that did not take action would be irresponsible.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is correct, but that is not the problem. I appreciate that the patients were kicked out because there was a problem there, and that the Government is under pressure because somebody has written a report that indicates there is a problem. That was fair enough, but nothing was done. I kept asking questions about what was going to be done, and I was just put off until, as a result of community pressure - it also happens to be a marginal seat - the Government decided to put in fire safety equipment so that the patients could be returned to the hospital. It has been promised, but it has not happened yet, and I do not know when it will. In the meantime, we have only a few people in the hospital, so the hospital is being underutilised in a sense that a base number of staff are still required to run it, maintain the gardens and all those sorts of things. There was also the inconvenience to the people who had been living in the hospital, because it really became a nursing home. Most of the people in there were nursing home patients.

Mr R.C. Kucera: With no money for their care flowing from the federal Government.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: That is an issue the member must take up with the federal Government. I agree that aged care should be funded by the federal Government. It was sad that a number of nursing home beds for the Harvey shire were allocated by the federal Government, but the Moran Group, which was considering establishing a nursing home in the area, said it wanted 50 beds. I was a bit disappointed in the Moran Group. I telephoned somebody in Western Australia and asked if they needed assistance, and was told the company would get back to me if it needed any help. I have never heard from the company, so I think it has probably gone cold on the idea of coming to the Harvey area. This was pretty sad, because it would be great to have a proper nursing home. There does seem to be a difference between a nursing home and a hospital, because I can remember some years ago when the husband of a lady from Harvey became a nursing home patient. She wanted him to go into the Harvey District Hospital, which has four or five beds for nursing home type patients. As it turned out, they were all full. This fellow was a good Labor supporter, by the way, but he was a top fellow. We used to have our verbal sparring matches every now and again. He finished up going to a nursing home in Bunbury. His wife said it was probably better that he went there because the patients are better looked after in the nursing homes. They get better activities, and the staff are trained for that situation. It would have been better if that nursing home had been built in Harvey shire somewhere. It would have taken the people out of the Yarloop District Hospital. It is disappointing that the Government has promised to fix up the fire safety situation at Yarloop District Hospital, but that it has not happened at this stage and nobody seems to know when it will happen. There has been another problem since with the Yarloop District Hospital because the storm that went through a few weeks ago blew the roof off. Now there is a canvas roof, and the Government has a dilemma. The hospital really needs to be rebuilt. It is a pretty old wooden building and now it has another problem.

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People have been to look at it but nothing seems to be happening in a hurry. It seems to keep on being put off. It is important to give security to those people in Yarloop, because Yarloop has gone through a huge problem over the years with the Alcoa issue. The town will be given security if the hospital is kept, because it employs a lot of local people. The Government should fix the fire safety hazard and the roof, and get on with it.

I have been writing to the Minister for Education and Training for three years now, asking him to come to the Pinjarra Primary School. A funny thing happened earlier this year. Cabinet was coming to Harvey. The Minister for Education and Training is like all the other ministers, basically. He does not bother to tell the local member when he is coming to an electorate. He happened to drop into the Pinjarra Senior High School. He inspected the high school, and at the end of his inspection he said that he was supposed to be at the Pinjarra Primary School. He intended to pull the stunt of coming to my electorate and going to the school, about which I had been asking for three years, and for some reason or other he went to the wrong school. By then he did not have time to go to the primary school, which was the school I wanted him to look at, because there are major problems there. There are 650 students at the school, when it was probably built for about 300 at the most. There are demountable classrooms all over the place, some of which are very old and depressing. I find it hard to understand why some of the teachers have not actually gone on strike at that school because of the teaching conditions they are in. The paint is peeling off the outside of the school, on the iron railings, gutters and downpipes. It is not good for the image of the school. Some of the teachers have actually taken to painting their own classrooms. That is how unhappy they are with the state of the classrooms. I give them credit for having the initiative to try to improve their lot. The school library was built for 200 to 300 students, and now 650 students are trying to use it. This is unacceptable. It is a similar situation in the outdoor play area. It was built for 200 to 300 students and is now being used by 650. It goes on and on.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Which school are you talking about?

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: Pinjarra Primary School.

Mr R.C. Kucera: I am sorry, I thought you were talking about Harvey. I was down there the other day and I looked for you.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: There is another minister who comes to my electorate and does not bother to tell me.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You were not there. I asked where you were.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I am there all the time. The North Pinjarra Primary School, or Carcoola Primary School - I am never sure what to call it because it seems to have both names - has a flat roof. I do not know why it was built with a flat roof, which would be prone to leaks. That roof has major leaks in it. Repair people have been called several times this year. The drainage at the school is not acceptable. It floods in the outdoor area, just outside the doorways, whenever there is a bit of rain. This is a major problem for that school. There is a similar problem at the Harvey Primary School. Did the minister go to the primary school or the high school in Harvey?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I went to the high school. I offered to go wherever they wanted me to.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: The minister should have gone to the primary school because that is where all the problems are. Harvey Senior High School has benefited from expenditure of \$500 000 from the sale of AlintaGas in the past few years. The school is happy with what it got. Some of the classrooms were done up. At Harvey Primary School, however, mould is growing on the ceiling of one of the classrooms because of the leaking roof, and the toilets smell. There are a whole range of problems there. I do not know who advised the minister. It is a pity the minister did not ask me where he should go, because I could have told him where the problems are, rather than somebody who thinks he knows where the problems are.

Mr R.C. Kucera: I listen to the people in the community.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: They obviously do not know either, do they?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I do not think I would say that about my community.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: If those people took the minister to the high school when there is a problem at the primary school, they took him to the wrong school. I can tell the minister that the condition of the primary school is not good. We have those situations. The Brunswick Junction Primary School has been asking for a covered assembly area for I do not know how many years.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.