

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Consideration of Tabled Papers

Resumed from 12 September on the following motion moved by Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health) —

That pursuant to standing order 68(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 506A–E (budget papers 2013–14) laid upon the table of the house Thursday, 8 August 2013.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [3.09 pm]: Before I commence my budget reply speech, I would like to thank those members who were able to attend the opening of my electorate office last Thursday night. By all accounts it was well received, particularly the wine that was branded “Ladies who Shoot their Lunch”! In view of the menu on offer, I would particularly like to thank the President who had enough faith and trust to bring along the Saskatchewan delegates after attending Government House.

I want to relay a conversation that my wife, Brenda, had with one of the female members of the delegation. She said to my wife that she was surprised that some Australians opposed hunting and fishing. She said that it was quite the opposite where she came from, where hunting and fishing are viewed as perfectly natural pursuits. I feel that that sums up things very well. I will be working to build on that premise to provide recreational opportunities in this state. It must always be remembered that baiting a hook or reloading one’s own ammunition is the first step to fine dining.

Unfortunately, I was away on urgent parliamentary business last Thursday morning and missed Hon Lynn MacLaren’s non-government business on World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day. However, I watched the video broadcast yesterday and I want to commend Hon Lynn MacLaren for bringing this very important matter to the attention of the house.

I want to make a brief comment on R U OK? Day. As I did not have time to watch the contributions to the debate made by other members of the house, please forgive me if I say something that has already been covered. Fortunately, I have never suffered from depression. I have had the odd down day and I have worried a lot through some tough times, however I have never felt the profound sadness, isolation or hopelessness experienced by those who battle the black dog. I have to confess that in the past I really did not appreciate the seriousness of depression or its dangerous and ominous partner, suicide. It is not until a family member is in a desperate and dire emotional state that the stark reality of depression strikes home, and unlike a physical injury it is difficult to deal with. Anxiety and depression can affect members of our community from all walks of life—from people who have issues with substance abuse to the great Sir Winston Churchill, who often complained about dealing with his black dog days. Even a past Western Australia Premier stood down citing depression as the culprit. Because it is not always visibly apparent, we rarely acknowledge or give credence to the effects of depression on not only the victim but also their family and friends. I acknowledge organisations such as Lifeline, beyondblue, Black Dog Institute and others for their good work in assisting sufferers and creating public awareness. I also acknowledge the counsellors, psychologists and medical staff who deal with this every single day. It must be emotionally demanding and draining. It is something that I just could not do. I know from personal experience that just simply asking someone who may be suffering from depression, “Are you okay?” and taking the time to listen and care can literally save a life. Again, I commend Hon Lynn MacLaren for bringing up this matter.

Moving on to my budget reply speech, I accept that this has been a challenging budget for the government. Prior to making comments on fishing, marine parks, firearms, the axing of funding to the Law Reform Commission, feral animal control and live exports, I would like to make some brief comments about the Duties Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I know this bill passed after a marathon sitting, but I feel compelled to speak about it. I accept that the state’s economic circumstances have changed and that this requires the government to retain duties on the transfer of non-real assets. I understand that it would be unwise to rip a \$120 million hole in this budget. Despite all of this, I want it on the record that I am bitterly disappointed that a promise in 2008 to abolish this tax by 2010, which was deferred to 2013, has now been abandoned by this government. The abolishment of the tax is a real kick in the teeth for many hardworking business people in this state. We all need to acknowledge that these business people take substantial risks, sacrifice family time, work very long hours and have to deal with changing economic circumstances. Members, it needs to be appreciated that business does not have the luxury of the government to simply put up their prices to cover any shortfalls. If they did so, their customers would go elsewhere and their businesses would go bust. To put some perspective on this issue, I used the duties calculator on the Office of State Revenue’s website and I can advise that the general duty rate that would be applied to the transfer of a typical small business having a value of say, \$1.25 million dollars—this would be only a family-run newsagency or modest-size restaurant—would be \$58 290. This is a substantial impost to put on any small business, particularly when new owners are taking over and cash is a scarce and precious commodity.

I know that there are many in the Western Australia business community who are disappointed, who may have relied on the government's promise to abolish this tax, which, like that other unfair impost payroll tax, is sometimes referred to as a dirty tax. Business purchases, restructures, succession plans and other business modelling and plans of businesses expecting relief from this tax are now uncertain for many. It shakes business confidence when governments promise relief and then take it away. Business, particularly small business, is crucial to our economy, as it employs much of our workforce and drives economic prosperity. Entrepreneurs are people with dreams and hopes prepared to mortgage their homes, work hard, wade through and comply with mountains of bureaucratic red tape and worry a lot. How does the government reward them? It sticks them with a tax. If this duty tax was flagged to be abolished five years ago, I cannot fathom why it could not have been scaled down over a number of years in increments rather than blow a \$120 million hole in the annual budget. It was never going to happen. I am disappointed that, at the very least, the bill to abolish the abolishment of duties on non-real assets did not provide for a deferment to another date to keep the scrapping of this tax on the agenda.

I stand here today to support the interests of the more than 740 000 recreational fishers in WA. That is about a third of our population. I place on the record my disappointment with the absence of any election commitment in the budget to restocking. The recent state budget does not deliver on all of the promises made to the fisheries portfolio. Western Australians are amongst the world's best managers of fish stocks. I was alarmed when I read in the budget that there was no funding for restocking. I, the fishing community and, I am sure, Recfishwest are disappointed that this budget did not include the government's \$2.4 million commitment towards restocking and we would like assurances that this commitment will be met during the term of this government. This money should be new money. I urge the government, particularly the receptive and commonsense Minister for Fisheries, to not take this money out of the recreational fishing account.

I am also disappointed that the government has failed to follow through on providing any specific funding in the budget for its election commitment to establish an inland fishing and recreation hub at Wellington Dam for the stocking of iconic fish species. I urge the government to develop a recreational fishing initiative similar to those that currently exist in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. I urge the government to follow the lead of Victoria in this area. The Victorian recreational initiative has resulted in the government improving fishing opportunities by investing around \$16 million over four years. The initiative has been successful in breeding more Murray cod, golden perch and rainbow trout for restocking.

Other projects being delivered under the initiative include improving boat-launching facilities, installing fish-cleaning tables, conducting more public forums for recreational fishers, improving access tracks, improving fish migration by installing fish ladders and removing in-stream barriers, and developing new recreational fisheries through stocking in suitable waterways. The recreational fishing community called on the Standing Committee on Public Administration in its investigation in 2010 to allow access to catchments and water storages, arguing that with modern technology they should be opened and the water treated before entering the reticulated system. The committee found this to be cost-prohibitive. In my view, the example used to argue against this is not reflective of what could be achieved in the Perth hills and south west Western Australia. Inland fishing is a big business in other states and WA is simply missing out.

The only government funding to Wellington Dam I could find in the budget is for the upgrade of the turn-off into Wellington Dam at Collier, stage 1. I urge the government to revisit its election promise. The government needs to appreciate that the recreational fishing community places a high social value on the environment, natural bush settings, rivers, water bodies and catchments. My view is that allowing fishing in water storage dams such as Wellington Dam, which is not a drinking water dam, would provide significant economic benefit to the community and state and local governments. I strongly disagree with the premise that recreational activities in water source areas provide an unacceptable risk to drinking water quality. Recfishwest strongly supports improved access to drinking water sources within the Perth hills and south west for the purpose of recreation. Recfishwest is concerned that many water-based recreational opportunities in the south west of WA are becoming increasingly limited as reduced rainfall is making previously fished areas less suitable for fishing, and freshwater dams are being progressively closed to recreational fishing and brought online as drinking water sources.

We are disappointed that the co-existence of recreational fishing with negotiated restrictions has been actively discriminated against as a policy despite numerous social, economic and environmental benefits. We could learn a great deal from the economic success of Lake Eildon National Park, which is located in the northern foothills of Victoria's central highlands. Local recreation and tourism industries have developed around Lake Eildon, and the significant economic and social benefits to the local regions can and should be replicated in Western Australia. As an example, the Victorian government, to its credit, recognises the benefits resulting from the well-managed trout fisheries. Inland anglers spend more than \$170 million a year pursuing trout, redbfin and native inland species such as Murray cod and golden perch. Western Australia could capitalise on similar programs and build on the many recreational opportunities and benefits.

I would like to briefly discuss the inclusion of fish frames and wings in the finfish possession limits under the Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995. Recfishwest supports the omission of fish heads, tails and wings from the fillet weight possession limit. This will encourage people to use all the fish and reduce wastage. I would like to see the government exclude frames from which fillets are taken in the 20-kilogram possession limit. I argue strongly that the exclusion of frames and wings has no negative impact on the environment or on fish numbers, and the positives are that some fishers may be satisfied with less than the limit of fillets if the fish frames and wings were excluded from the possession limits. Once the esky is full, a person may stop fishing rather than keep fishing until the esky is full of fillets. This change negates the waste of throwing away secondary cuts, which could have a positive effect on fish stocks. I am certain that members in this chamber are well aware of the health, nutritional and cultural value of this valuable food source.

I am encouraged by the current fisheries minister and his attitude to his portfolio; I will discuss this issue with him soon. Australia has one of the largest marine estates in the world; it represents a greater proportion of our territory than the land mass of our continent. This situation is the result of successive state and federal government policy being dictated by fear and grossly exaggerated narratives based on the so-called scary problem of recreational and commercial fishers. Many of the decisions are made by politicians and bureaucrats behind closed doors; they are highly political and rarely involve stakeholder consultation. The designation of some areas as off limits has created a debate that continues to divide Australians to the extent that we are now. The level to which marine environments should be protected is a major issue in Australian politics. Many see the closure to fishing as an infringement on the rights of Australians. No-one would argue that marine environments should not be protected by sound management initiatives, but I would argue that potentially conflicting sets of expectations and motivations can lie behind these apparent common tendencies.

Much of the controversy surrounding marine protected areas stems from the confusion about their primary role. What is their purpose towards conserving biodiversity? I place on record my view that marine parks are a feel-good move by governments that make people feel like the environment is being protected, but at what cost to the taxpayer? Governments are entrusted to manage and protect marine environments in ways that will address these diverse expectations and interpretations of value, but again at what cost and what benefit to the taxpayers of Western Australia?

Earlier this year, the environment minister, Bill Marmion, announced that he had finalised plans for a 200 000-hectare marine park at Eighty Mile Beach, south of Broome. The marine park extends for about 30 kilometres west of Cape Keraudren in the south to 10 kilometres south of Cape Missiessy in the north east. The park is the first of six planned Kimberley marine parks to be formally gazetted. The minister stated in a press release, dated 29 January 2013, that \$5.3 million across four years has been committed to the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Fisheries for establishing and managing the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, with ongoing funding of \$1.4 million a year from 2014–15. The government has allocated \$720 000 in its 2013–14 budget for the new works proposed for Camden Sound and Eighty Mile Beach Marine Parks and nothing in the forward estimates. On 14 August, I asked the relevant minister in this house a question on the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park. I asked for the number of full-time equivalent positions for staff employed in the marine park, the annual cost of accommodation for staff in relation to the marine park, the annual cost for the provision of marine craft and vehicles, and for key performance indicators. I was advised that the allocation of the budget and associated staff arrangements for Eighty Mile Beach had not been finalised for this financial year and were the subject of current negotiations with traditional owners for the development of Indigenous land-use agreements for the marine park. The minister advised that the key performance indicators for Eighty Mile Beach will be contained within the management plan for the park, which is currently being finalised.

I am astounded, but I probably should not be, that the government would announce the establishment of a marine park without a management plan or indicative costs. My view is that the taxpayers of Western Australia have a right to know not only the cost of the marine park, but what they are getting for their money. In 2012, the South Australian Marine Parks Management Alliance commissioned independent costings of its government's plan to set up and manage 19 marine marks and found that it cost over \$100 million over five years. In 2010, the University of Canberra's Emeritus Professor, Robert Kearney, stated that \$30 million spent over three years by the New South Wales government on marine parks would have been better used addressing the real issues impacting on fish stocks, in light of the fact that it had failed to conserve fish numbers. As I mentioned earlier, the Western Australian Department of Fisheries is among the world's best-practice managers of fish stocks and the marine environment. Taxpayers' dollars would be far better spent on developing research and management of our fisheries rather than being wasted in bloated bureaucratic marine park management.

I would be doing my loyal supporters a disservice if I did not again place on record my strong opposition to the recent increases in firearms licensing fees, with charges up to 134 per cent higher. Since the fee rises were announced, my office has been inundated, as I am sure other members' offices have been, with complaints from disgruntled and despairing gun owners. These increases have angered and outraged gun owners, farmers, dealers

and club officials, who probably would not mind a fee increase if they were given anything like a decent and efficient service. Legitimate and law-abiding gun owners understand the need to increase fees and charges in line with the consumer price index, but this is clearly a government cash grab. Gun owners understand the concept of cost recovery and the importance of maintaining a reliable register, but we do not have value for money. It is appalling that the increases in charges coincide with the release of a report by the Auditor General that identified numerous weaknesses in the register and stated, “We have no confidence in the accuracy of basic information.” The system is broken and now the public is expected to pay top dollar for a substandard service.

In light of this damning report by the Auditor General, legitimate firearms owners are entitled to an explanation of this incredible price hike because they are bearing the costs of an unreliable and inaccurate register. The firearms register is totally unreliable and has been for half a decade now. There is still no commitment, either from state government or police, about when this problem will be rectified. The highest increase in charges relates to the licensing of additional firearms on existing licenses. That fee has increased from \$72.50 to \$169.50, plus the requirement for a serviceability certificate for which dealers, at commercial rates, could charge anywhere from \$30 to \$100. In contrast, New South Wales and Victoria’s fees are \$40 and \$9.20 respectively for the same service.

Because shooting is largely a social activity, gun owners are among the keenest to ensure that only responsible persons are licensed. Once applicants have met the initial requirements for a licence, applications for additions should be scrutinised only for subsequent criminal behaviour or violence restraining orders. The only response the police could come up with in light of the Auditor General’s damning findings was a firearms amnesty. In my mind, that would be a Clayton’s amnesty. An article published in the official police newsletter states that the person handing in the item can do so without fear of prosecution provided the items have not been used in the commission of an offence. I am not quite sure what would constitute an offence—maybe even firing that particular unlicensed firearm could be an offence or the firearm is not recorded as lost or stolen and the person handing it in can give a reasonable account of how they came to be in possession of it. Our big concern with this is that it will discourage many people from handing in the firearm for fear of prosecution. These conditions are not unlike police policy at any time outside the amnesty period. We really should consider whether the amnesty announcement will improve public safety, remove illegal firearms from the community or improve the integrity of the WA firearms registry.

How much will the amnesty cost? We do not know. A cynic could say that the amnesty is simply a public relations exercise or a smokescreen to distract attention from the adverse Auditor General’s report, and the fee hike. A side effect of these excessive fees and an inefficient system is the impact on the many small businesses that rely on firearms sales. No-one ever really thinks about those small businesses. They are small businesses like any other small business that rely on sales and cash flow. They are hardworking small business owners who probably have their house mortgaged to the bank through business loans. When there are changes such as these fee hikes or procedures, it is often small business people who suffer immeasurable damage to their business. Not very many businesses can have their cash flow choked off for many months while people wait for their additional firearms application to go through. Not many people spare a thought for them, but there are lots of those small businesses throughout Western Australia.

The final issue I would like to voice my opposition to, in light of the Minister for Police’s announcement of a review of the Firearms Act by the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, is the axing of funding to the commission. Funding to the commission will be axed next year. That key research body will be obliged to rely on the resources of the Department of the Attorney General. The commission is set to lose annual funding of \$833 000, which will undoubtedly affect its independence and research capability. I hope the government does not decide to postpone or reverse its decision to review the Firearms Act in a fair and equitable manner.

I am a strong advocate for feral animal control for both environmental and agricultural management. I have discussed, and will continue to discuss this issue, with the Minister for Agriculture and Food and support him in his quest to introduce bounties. I am on the public record calling on the Barnett government to introduce a fox and wild dog bounty in Western Australia, similar to the system in Victoria. Foxes and wild dogs are particularly vicious. They prey on vulnerable livestock such as newborn lambs and calves, and consume large quantities of our native wildlife. We should follow the lead of Victoria and recognise the destructive impact foxes and wild dogs have on livestock and native wildlife in Western Australia by introducing a bounty. The Barnett government can immediately act to reduce not only the financial burden on farmers but also the distress caused by finding animals suffering or dead after being mauled by wild dogs. Early this year, the Victorian government doubled its bounty on wild dog scalps from \$50 to \$100. The bounty on foxes remains at \$10. That provided an additional incentive for hunters of all ages to assist in eradicating these destructive pests.

I was pleased to read an article in *The Weekly Times* dated 31 July 2013 titled “Wild dog scalps doubled”. The article declares that the number of wild dog pelts handed in to the Victorian government has almost doubled

since January. Since dog bounty increases, the number of fox scalps has jumped by 50 000 since April to 200 064. Ballarat and Bendigo in Victoria remain the areas where most fox scalps were handed in, with 27 317 and 29 652 respectively. The section of the article that I was most impressed with was Broadford teenager Alicia Kurtz who presented 1 165 fox scalps for a reward of \$11 650. The 16-year-old is saving for her first car.

A recent article published in the *Australian Veterinary Journal* examined the influence of wild dogs on sheep distribution in Australia and found that production of wool and sheep meat was predicted to disappear within 30 to 40 years.

Hon Col Holt: Does the member have any statistics on whether the taking of that number of foxes has an environmental effect on native animals or sheep numbers, or anything like that?

Hon RICK MAZZA: I do not have that information to hand.

The Victorian government's \$4 million bounty scheme was introduced in October 2011. So far, it has resulted in over 700 wild dog scalps and more than 200 000 fox scalps. The bounty would complement the culling programs already undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and Food, which includes the employment of doggers, the upgrade and extension of the state barrier fence, and working in partnership with community groups to adopt best-on-ground practices in eradicating these pests.

Finally, I commend the government for the Department of Agriculture and Food's budget in 2013–14, which includes royalties for regions funding of \$297 million over four years for "Seizing the opportunity", which is the National's policy for agriculture. It has identified building on export market opportunities, such as the Brand WA initiative and facilitating Asian marketing research and access, which includes the live export market, as a priority. This has a direct benefit for farmers who take up export market opportunities.

Prior to concluding my speech today, I place on record my support for the expansion of the live export trade and my support for those farmers doing it tough as a result of the federal government's knee-jerk reaction to the disturbing images emanating from other countries. The live export industry is a significant component of Australia's growing and vital livestock industry. Our farmers, particularly our Western Australian farmers, are some of the world's best practice people in animal welfare and management. There have been issues at ports of destination, but we have to understand that restricting export of livestock to those countries will do very, very little for the welfare of those animals. Those countries still need protein and if we do not supply livestock to them, there are another 109 countries that will. It behoves Western Australia and Australia to develop those markets. As a nation we can influence and improve animal welfare in other countries, rather than cut our nose off to spite our face through restricting export to those countries.

The live export industry is a significant component of Australia's vital livestock industry. In 2009, the live export sector earned \$996.5 million, nearly \$1 billion, and contributed to the employment of 10 000 people. I support the investment in overseas trade. The future of the sector in Western Australia is reliant on the success of the export market. I support the development of a strategy that targets new and existing markets in Asia and the Gulf states over this government's term to increase investment in Western Australian agriculture and export sales of local produce—an example is the expansion of new supply chains for live cattle outside of Indonesia. I thank you, Mr President, and fellow members for the opportunity to speak and for your patience during my first speech in response to a budget.

HON ALYSSA HAYDEN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.42 pm]: I congratulate Hon Rick Mazza for his speech as it is the second one he has given in this house. In response to the 2013–14 budget, I take this opportunity to talk about what happened a couple of weekends ago at the federal election. I congratulate the coalition on a fantastic win. Nationally, the Liberal Party recorded its highest two-party preferred vote in Western Australia at 57.2 per cent. It is fantastic to see the coalition coming together and performing so well across the country, particularly in WA. It is a 1.26 per cent improvement from the 2010 election. I applaud our new Prime Minister-elect Hon Tony Abbott on the tremendous campaign he and his team led. I believe the big day is tomorrow when they will be sworn in. I look forward to seeing the new cabinet take their places on the front bench in the federal Parliament.

In WA, however, the Labor Party recorded its lowest primary vote of all states and territories at 28.84 per cent. This is the lowest primary vote ever recorded for the Labor Party by percentage share in WA's history. The only election that came anywhere close was in 1977, but even back then Labor's vote was slightly higher at 32.56 per cent. Compared with the rest of the nation, the ALP in WA recorded its lowest two-party preferred vote with the ALP holding only three of the 15 seats in WA.

Congratulations to our coalition team, especially to all our members who have held their seats, and for getting one back in O'Connor. It was wonderful to see a great result a couple of Saturdays ago. It certainly made getting up on a wet and windy day very worthwhile.

I will stay on the federal election for a couple more moments to congratulate personally the members whom I work with in the East Metropolitan Region. Ken Wyatt, the member for Hasluck, has made history twice. The first time was when he became the first Aboriginal elected to the federal Parliament —

Hon Peter Katsambanis: House of Representatives.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Sorry, he was the first Aboriginal elected to the House of Representatives. The second time he made history was when he became the first member to ever hold the seat of Hasluck back to back. Since its inception in 2001, we have never had the same member, no matter what party they are from, able to hold that seat back to back.

Hon Jim Chown: Did his margin improve?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Yes, it did. I am glad Hon Jim Chown asked. His margin improved to four per cent.

Hon Jim Chown: So it is no longer marginal.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: It is no longer the most marginal seat in the country because Ken is such a hardworking and grassroots member of Parliament.

Hon Jim Chown: He is an outstanding member of Parliament.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: He is. He gets out there and takes the time to meet everyone in his community. He has set up many community groups and meets with them regularly. He has set up groups to clean up the creeks and keep the national parks clean, friendship groups and groups of all kinds on all different issues across his electorate. He is the man of the people for the people. They rewarded him for his hard work and dedication to his community with a fantastic swing by re-electing him to the seat of Hasluck back to back.

It is a great honour to work with Ken. The biggest thing that I personally got out of the federal election was when Tony Abbott and Ken Wyatt decided to back my number one project—I am sure someone else thinks they are more important about this project, but as far as I am concerned, it is my project—that is, the Perth–Darwin highway. The federal government announced that of the \$1.3 billion that it will spend on major road projects in Perth, \$615 million will be put towards the Perth–Darwin highway project. For those who have had to sit here and listen to me time and again, I will never apologise for repeating my story on the Perth–Darwin highway. It is a vital link between the metropolitan and regional areas. It is vital to our fantastic tourism destination of the Swan Valley that we get more trucks out of the Swan Valley and on to a safer route. It is important for not only the people who use the Great Northern Highway and visit the Swan Valley, but also the truck drivers. They deserve to have a safer route to get out of town and the hustle and bustle of the metropolitan traffic. Coming off the Tonkin Highway and going through the back of Ellenbrook through to Muchea, the Perth–Darwin highway will give truck drivers a safe route. To have Tony Abbott and Ken Wyatt give us \$615 million is absolutely tremendous. I am not the Treasurer, but I believe it will fully cover the cost of that part going through to Muchea and, hopefully, it will put more pressure on our Minister for Transport. We have the money, so let us get on with it and get going. I know the people of the East Metropolitan Region want to see it started. Ken and our newly elected member for Pearce, Hon Christian Porter, will make sure that we get that \$615 million sent to WA so that we can get —

Hon Ken Travers: They cut road funding in the member for Pearce's electorate.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: They have not cut the \$615 million for the Perth–Darwin highway.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Has Hon Ken Travers given his speech on the budget? I think he has. It was not memorable, but I will continue with mine. Ken Wyatt and new federal member Hon Christian Porter will make sure that we get that \$615 million allocated for the Perth–Darwin highway. I was delighted to see Hon Christian Porter take his seat as the new member for Pearce.

Hon Darren West: He had a 0.8 per cent swing against him!

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Would Hon Darren West like me to talk about swings? I am more than happy to!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! One at a time!

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: In case the honourable member missed what I said earlier, I will go back to the beginning of my speech. I congratulated the coalition on its fantastic win at the federal election with the highest two-party preferred percentage on record of 57.2 per cent. At the same time, the Labor Party in WA recorded the lowest ever two-party preferred percentage for states and territories, at only 28.84 per cent. For the member's

information, the Labor Party had not scored that low since 1977, and even then the percentage was a lot higher, at 32.56 per cent. If the member wants to talk about who lost what percentage, I am sure all members on this side of the chamber will be happy to stand up and let him know how the Labor Party went!

Point of Order

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Mr President, I draw your attention to standing order 47 which relates to irrelevant or repetitious debate. I believe I have heard the member quote these figures previously.

The PRESIDENT: It is a general debate and in that sense members are entitled to range across a whole range of issues. The member was making some comments about the federal election and they sounded to be in perfect order to me.

Debate Resumed

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Thank you, Mr President, for your intelligent decision on that point of order.

As I was saying, we are debating a motion on the estimates of revenue and expenditure, which links to money. I was talking about how the coalition gave a commitment of \$615 million to roads during the election campaign.

Hon Stephen Dawson: I was talking about you repeating yourself!

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: That was for the benefit of members opposite, because they had obviously forgotten or had not heard what I said, or they had just walked into the chamber. Anyway, I did say that I would repeat myself, so I suggest that the member sits in this place for a little longer so he can learn.

Hon Christian Porter is a fantastic member and I welcome him to the East Metropolitan Region. As we all know from his time in the WA Parliament, he was an excellent Attorney General and Treasurer. He threw his hat in for federal preselection, wanting to follow a dream to enter the federal arena. I am so pleased and glad that he was able to fulfil his dream. I am very pleased to have him represent the east metropolitan area in the federal Parliament.

Hon Jim Chown: What an asset he will be too!

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: He will be a fantastic asset for the people out there. He will make sure their voices are heard in Canberra, along with the other 14 coalition members who were elected to represent Western Australia. WA will have its fair share of representation in Canberra. I know that Ken Wyatt and Christian Porter, along with a few others members from the East Metropolitan Region who were re-elected to the federal Parliament will also look after electors in the East Metropolitan Region. They are, of course, Luke Simpkins, Steve Irons, Don Randall and Michael Keenan. We have a great federal team in the East Metropolitan Region.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge three personal friends who retired at the federal election. These people put their hearts and souls into their roles as federal members. The first one is Senator Alan Eggleston or as everyone calls him, “Eggie”. He is a legend in rural WA. In the north, Eggie cannot go anywhere without people recognising him, and stopping and pulling him over to have a catch-up. Alan Eggleston provided a fantastic service to people in the north. Most people there know him either because he helped them with their issues or he delivered them or their baby. As either a rural doctor or rural member, he has affected many people’s lives in the north. I know he will be greatly missed. I also know we will not be able to tear the man away from assisting the community. It is in his blood and he will continue to do so.

Also in the north was a larger-than-life personality, Barry Haase. Known for his hat, booming voice and sense of humour, Barry was also highly regarded in the then seat of Kalgoorlie. After boundary changes, it became the seat of Durack. When Barry decided to retire I said, “Why are you leaving now when it is pretty evident the coalition is going to have a win at the election?” His response to me in his typical way was, “You’re better off leaving while they are still asking you to stay!” That is something I will try to keep in the back of my mind if I am lucky enough to be here a little longer—or maybe too long!

Several members interjected.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: When the demand is so high, especially from members on the other side, I know I must do my duty and stay!

What a great attitude to have. Although Barry has left federal politics, I know his famous hat is still hanging on the backdoor waiting for his next trip up north.

Last, but certainly not least, is a very good friend of mine whom I had the opportunity to know well before either of us entered politics—Judi Moylan. I first met Judi Moylan when she became president of the Midland and Districts Chamber of Commerce. That was a long time ago! Judi was a businesswoman, owning and running Judi Moylan Real Estate. I also had an opportunity to work with Judi for a short time in her real estate business. I have never stopped looking up to Judi Moylan. She has never faltered in her aspirations or from standing her

moral ground. She stands up for what she believes, no matter the fallout or the consequences. She stays true to her heart and her beliefs. Regardless of whether people agreed or disagreed with her on issues, they always knew that this woman was very worthy of the position she held and would always do the best for her constituency. I have never met someone who has been as professional and as compassionate, all at the same time. If I can demonstrate any of her qualities during my time in this Parliament, I would be very pleased and proud to know I am living up to the role I am honoured to do in this place. I acknowledge all three of those members and the hard work and dedication they have given to their communities over their many years of service. I wish Alan, Barry and Judi a very rewarding and, I hope, relaxing retirement. But I know none of them will disappear into the ether. They will always continue to work for their community because, as I said about Alan Eggleston, it is in their blood.

Before I wrap up on the federal election, I would also like to thank the many dedicated volunteers across the country who year in, year out turn out to support candidates by manning booths, towing trailers and putting up signage all around electorates. No matter what side of politics we come from, putting up your hand to be a candidate is a very difficult thing to do. However, what makes it that little easier is having so many volunteers behind us. I know all parties have volunteers.

Hon Col Holt interjected.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: The major political parties have a lot of volunteers. I acknowledge all the people who give up their time.

Hon Helen Morton: I believe some of the major parties paid people to be there on polling day.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: That would be a sad occasion, Hon Helen Morton, if that is the case. I would hate to think people are paid to hand out how-to-vote cards. What is wonderful about the volunteers who represent our party is that they do it because it is what they believe in. It is also important to advertise people's choices. I commend those people for standing up for their beliefs and giving up their time to put forward their beliefs and the changes they want to see happen. It is easy for people to sit down and whinge in our ears about politics, but unless they get up and do something about it, it is pointless. On behalf of all the candidates they represented, I thank all the volunteers who turned up and helped throughout the whole election.

Speaking about volunteers leads me to a fantastic organisation—that is, the St John Ambulance. As members of Parliament, we all get the opportunity to deliver and present Lotterywest grants to lucky recipients. Every member of this house would know and appreciate the fantastic work of Lotterywest, which believes in helping the community, and the people who deserve it most receive Lotterywest grants to fulfil whatever be their mantra. Every time I buy a lotto ticket and I lose, I know the money goes to a worthy cause

Hon Jim Chown: Is that the reason you buy them?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: That is the only reason I buy them, Hon Jim Chown! It is my way of donating to the community.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You should claim it as a tax deduction, then.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Yes! I congratulate Lotterywest on the fantastic work it does. When we are due to hand out those cheques, my office normally rings the lucky recipients to tell them we would like to present them and we ask whether the people who are to receive the money could be there, because it is nice to hand over cheques to the people who benefit from them. Normally, between 10 or, on a good day, 30 people turn up. They are often presented in a board room or the foyer of a business organisation, and we stand around having morning tea. However, when my office contacted St John Ambulance and suggested that a few volunteers would benefit from the funding attend, it was a huge surprise when I walked into the Perth Convention Centre to present the cheque to find 600-plus volunteers in attendance. On that day, St John Ambulance was conducting its annual training conference, and thought that a good way to present the cheque would be to have all of the people who were to be the recipients of the money present so that they knew where the money came from.

Hon Jim Chown: How much was the cheque?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: I was going to get to that, but I will jump forward for Hon Jim Chown. The cheque was for just under \$1.23 million. It is a lot of money for St John Ambulance. It was fantastic to present that cheque to over 600 people and it made me feel very humble. We do some amazing and diverse things in this job, but it was the highlight of my week to see so many happy people in that room recognised as a worthy cause receive \$1.23 million. The exact figure of that cheque was \$1 255 979 given as block funding to St John Ambulance.

St John Ambulance has more than 4 500 dedicated volunteers who, it is estimated, do more than three million hours of service each year. Whenever members see a St John Ambulance they should toot their horn or tip their hat because these people are amazing and are dedicated to serving the community. These volunteers do most of their work in regional WA—the area that needs most assistance. The Lotterywest grant will help St John Ambulance buy new ambulances and provide medical and training equipment for Cue, Perenjori, Sandstone, Kondinin, Hyden, Wickepin and Wyalkatchem. It will also be used to upgrade facilities in Wickham, Chapman Valley, Perenjori and Ravensthorpe, and help supply and install 50 mobile data terminals in volunteer ambulances across the state. Mobile data terminals will replace mobile phones, because mobile phone coverage is not always 100 per cent in country WA, and it is wonderful that these ambulances will be able to communicate in mobile phone black spots. As I said, the work of St John Ambulance covers every corner of our state, from Wyndham to Kununurra to Eucla and everywhere in between. Its 4 500 volunteers are heroes in our community and regions, and I congratulate and thank them for everything they have done to help the communities of regional WA.

It is an honour to work with the Minister for Health, Dr Kim Hames, in my role as parliamentary secretary for health. The man is well across his portfolio. As someone who is not a doctor or nurse, it is a task to keep up with him in a lot of meetings. The Department of Health could have its own dictionary just for acronyms. I cannot pretend to know them all because there are way too many. What I do love about the portfolio of health is that a new hospital is being built in Midland. As a member for East Metropolitan Region, that new hospital will be fantastic for Midland and its surrounding suburbs. It has been over 50 years since a new hospital has been built in the region, and the people of the area deserve a brand-new hospital, with new facilities and extra beds. The hospital will provide 307 beds, 114 more than the current Swan District Hospital Campus.

In August, Hon Donna Faragher, the minister and I went to the construction site of the Midland Health Campus to celebrate its first birthday. It was fantastic. We were up on the rooftop of the completed fifth storey southern clinic block, which will be the highest building in Midland. There is a great view from there, and if it were not going to be a hospital, it would be a fantastic site for a bar—but that suggestion is a bit inappropriate! We have fantastic bars on the rooftops of buildings in Perth, and there will be fantastic views of the East Metropolitan Region from that hospital—but being on top of a hospital, a bar is perhaps not that appropriate. However, it was fantastic to see the construction well underway with many cranes in Midland and concrete being poured. The buzz around Midland is amazing. The people of the East Metropolitan Region are looking forward to a brand-new facility, as is the business community of Midland and surrounding areas. They know that with a new hospital, foot and customer traffic will increase. As I have said in this place many times, Midland is the centre of the universe, and it is a growing, redeveloping centre.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It used to be Armadale.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: My constituents in Armadale think Armadale is the centre of the universe, and I have to agree with them also. However, at the moment, Midland is the centre of the universe, with its new Midland hospital. We are also fighting for a new Midland university. It is projects like the new hospital, the new university and upgrades of Governor Stirling High School that are assisting and helping to revitalise Midland. In its heyday, Midland Junction was a fantastic centre. The hustle and bustle is coming back. As I said, the after-five foot traffic has increased, cafes and restaurants are staying open and Midland is the place to watch people. If members have not had a coffee there, I encourage them to do so.

The best part about the hospital, other than assisting with revitalising the area and providing the good people of that region with new facilities, is that the hospital is on track. It is fantastic to see the construction of a facility that size on track.

Hon Jim Chown interjected.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: No, it is on track. At one point St John of God was worried that it may be finished too early and everything would not line up on the time schedule, but it is on track and within its budget of \$362 million, which is jointly funded by the state and federal governments. As I said, it will have 370 beds, which is an increase of a third on top of the current capacity of Swan District Hospital. When opened, this hospital will treat around 29 000 patients, which is a huge volume of people coming through a hospital. Obviously, it will make people's lives a lot easier not having to travel into the city or Joondalup to get to hospital. They will be able to get to a hospital a lot closer to home. The hospital will also bring new services to the region such as chemotherapy, high-dependency care and coronary care. In addition to all of this—my favourite part—on the internet right now images of the construction site of the Midland hospital are updated every 15 minutes. Next time members are on the internet looking for something to do, I encourage them to go to www.midlandhospitals.org.au and see the image of the construction site updated every 15 minutes. The Midland hospital is included in the state government's overall \$7 billion hospital building and refurbishment program, and also included is \$2 billion for the Fiona Stanley Hospital, \$1.2 billion for the new children's hospital project

and money allocated for major expansions to Joondalup Health Campus, Armadale Health Service and facilities across regional WA.

I will quickly touch on Fiona Stanley Hospital. The construction of the \$2 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital is more than 95 per cent complete. Just the other week the helipad was tested. It is an 80-tonne helipad. The helicopter landed on the helipad. It was fantastic that seniors in the hospital said that they could only slightly hear and detect the landing of the helicopter over the hum of the air-conditioner. That just shows that modern technology in new buildings not only offers fantastic facilities and services, but obviously the acoustics are far better to be able to have a helicopter land on the roof of the hospital —

Hon Jim Chown: I think the corridor has been double glazed for that purpose.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: That is right, exactly. That is what I am saying: the modern technology available to build the hospital enables a better facility for the patients—it is not only the facility itself, but also the peace and quiet that patients feel in it. Unfortunately, I was not able to be at the landing of the helicopter, but the minister was. He came back with a big grin on his face because, like all boys and their toys, he likes seeing big machines. It was a great success and I congratulate the builders of Fiona Stanley Hospital. Fiona Stanley Hospital's emergency department will treat about 88 000 patients a year, which is one patient every four minutes. For those of us who do not frequent an emergency department or who have never worked in one, a new patient coming through the door every four minutes amounts to a lot of work and I would like to put on record my congratulations and the fact that I think very highly of the people who work in emergency departments for the work they do. For the first time in WA the general emergency department will be separated from the paediatric area, including the clinical and the public areas, to provide greater comfort and security for children and families. The scale of this hospital is difficult to picture. It will include 6 300 rooms, 4 400 timber doors, 36 000 light fittings and 100 kilometres of power and lighting cables. That is a lot of material to go into a building, so when people discuss hospitals and whether they are being built fast enough, they need to stop and remember how much work is involved and how big that project is.

The new children's hospital is another project being funded and put together by this state government. That project is progressing very well. There has been a great deal of news in the paper about this hospital and I would like to put on record that 70 per cent of the hospital rooms are single rooms and it will have at least 274 beds. It is on track to be completed in 2015 and each room will have a specifically designed couch so parents can sleep in the rooms with their kids. I think everyone in this place understands how important that is. When a child is sick, parents do not want to leave them and have to go elsewhere; they want to stay in the hospital with them.

An allocation for the Southern Inland Health Initiative is also part of this budget, and \$565 million is being invested into regional health care in WA. That is the biggest increase in services of this kind in WA's history. The project is set to improve hospital infrastructure across the region, and has already helped attract 27 new general practitioners to the regional areas of WA.

The Midland public hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, the new children's hospital and the Southern Inland Health Initiative are just the headline acts of the state government's infrastructure investment. There are also a number of allocations for other health projects in the state budget and they include \$224 million for Joondalup Health Campus, \$207 million for Karratha health campus, \$120.3 million for Busselton health campus, \$58.9 million to the Kalgoorlie health campus redevelopment and \$161 million in new funding for the North West Health Initiative.

Moving on from my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, I would like to share with members in the chamber today my account of an event I went to on Friday, 6 September. I was very lucky to go to Middle Swan Primary School, representing the Premier, to launch the ReadLearnSucceed program. The ReadLearnSucceed campaign is when school teachers, year 1 students and representatives from program partners outside the normal school come together to help to improve the teaching of reading, learning, singing and playing to children as young as newborns. The biggest part of it is encouraging parents to get involved in teaching children from the day they are born—knowing that children's brains grow at their fastest rate until they are three years old—to let those children absorb as much as possible and to help parents understand that and start teaching their children right from the very beginning. The program partners assisting in ReadLearnSucceed are United Way WA, Community Links and Networks Midland and the Dyslexia–SPELD Foundation. I believe the success of this campaign is due to the fact that there are so many partnerships involved in it—as I said, teachers, students and the private partners, but more importantly, parents. In a little bushland part of the school a play area has been set up. There are objects hanging from trees and plants with pictures on them, and parents are encouraged to bring their children there, whether they go to the school or not, and to walk with them through the park area and tell them stories. There are cheat sheets for the parents on the plaques in the park. There are pictures of a big person and a little person and children are supposed to spot the difference. On the back of the plaque are dot points so parents can check answers and assist in teaching children, because there are a couple of

curly ones there! It is a wonderful way to get kids outdoors. The park is in Stratton and it is a beautiful little area of natural Australian bushland that was left by developers. It is a fantastic way for kids to be out there learning. We all need to remember that every child learns at a different rate and is inspired by different things. This program enables teachers to tailor it to suit the needs of the children in their classrooms. When I went to school that was not the case; there was a set curriculum that was followed. If a child did not learn that way or did not catch on as quickly, it was too bad, too sad. This program will enable teachers to tailor their lessons. When we teach our children reading basics it makes a huge difference to their future lives. I commend the teachers, the principal and the community partners involved with Middle Swan Primary School for their commitment to the children of their school. If we all get involved in supporting our children to learn how to read and how to play and sing, down the track, our community will be much better for it. Part of the program was Red the Super Reading Roo, which was about a big kangaroo that had an egg. Before the launch the egg was put in different places around the school and the students would have to read or sing to the egg. As they did the egg grew, and at the launch, Red the Super Reading Roo appeared to be reunited with his egg. It was lovely to see the children thrilled and enthusiastic, dressed up in their superhero costumes. We could see the children's engagement as they read to the egg and it grew so that Red the Super Reading Roo would be reunited with his egg. As I said, that sort of activity engages children and stimulates their imagination, and our children have great imaginations. We need to encourage them and help them in that way. As I said, congratulations to Middle Swan Primary School and all those involved in the ReadLearnSucceed campaign.

As well as being parliamentary secretary for health I also have the fantastic honour of being parliamentary secretary for tourism. I wish to share with the house a number of key allocations in this state budget to Tourism WA. There is \$9 million over three years for additional tourism marketing, \$330 000 for the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, \$90 million over two years for regional events programs for 2016–17, \$4 million over four years for the Margaret River Pro and the International Cricket Council World Cup, and \$34.4 million over four years for the WA caravan and camping action plan 2013–18. That is a plan that I became personally involved in and I am happy to share some tales on that.

In 2009, the Economics and Industry Standing Committee held an inquiry and produced a report titled "Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia", which contained 57 recommendations. After that, Tourism WA engaged Brighthouse Strategic Consulting to investigate the tourism-related recommendations in the report. The subsequent report that came from that is called "A Strategic Approach to Caravan and Camping Tourism in Western Australia", which led the agency to develop the Western Australian caravan and camping action plan 2013–18. When I was made parliamentary secretary to Hon Kim Hames, when he was Minister for Tourism, he said, "Go out and learn as much as you can about caravan and camping to make sure this action plan hits the areas we need to address to increase and improve our tourism for caravanning and camping in WA."

The number of people staying in Western Australian caravan parks and camping grounds continues to grow. They account for 14.2 per cent of total trips in our state. From talking to the industry, I know we can tap into a lot more. Over east, campervanning in particular is very popular. Many destinations and diverse areas are on offer in WA and we need to improve, and find ways to tap into more of that market. The more tourists who are driving on our roads, especially in regional WA, the better will be our local towns and communities.

As I said, I was lucky to be involved in the caravan and camping action plan. I think I told the house a few weeks ago that I went on what they call an "RV trip"—I find that very American—but what I call a campervan trip to the south west to see firsthand the issues, the destinations and what is on offer for people who are campervanning down south. I would love to take a trip north, but, obviously, that would take a little longer and I would need a longer break from Parliament to do that. Overall, I travelled just under 2 500 kilometres, starting in York, stopping at Beverley and Wagin, all the way to Albany, back up through Denmark, Manjimup, Bridgetown, Greenbushes and Harvey and back home to the Swan Valley. I went with Bevin Martin, the state representative of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia, who invited me to go out on the road. He showed me what was on offer and what needed to be improved. I have to say that I was very impressed with our south west. Our tourism operators were welcoming and informative. People in the tourism industry do not just operate their businesses; they promote the whole town and everyone else around them. They are the greatest advocates for regional towns and for WA.

There are some amazing, free destinations already on offer in WA for campervans—self-contained vehicles—or even for people who just want to camp in tents. One of the main points highlighted on this trip was that we need to promote them more. We need to compile a list and put them on a map so that we let people know where they can go for a very cheap or free holiday. I am glad to say that this is one of the action plan's recommendations that we need to follow through. While on that trip I was lucky enough to meet quite a few of the local government authorities and some caravan park owners. We need to be very careful how we promote free camping. Caravan park owners run a business and, obviously, free camping is in competition with them. In

carrying out the action plan we need to make sure we are strategic and get a good balance in providing free camping without it impacting on our caravan park owners. I think that will be much easier to achieve in the north than in the south. As I said, quite a few sites are available down south that we can enhance.

One of the other issues raised during my trip was the need for more 24-hour pullover bays, mainly for the sake of road safety, and dumping points for black waste and greywater material. We also need more rubbish bins because there is a lot of littering on our country and regional roads, which can be easily addressed by putting rubbish in the bins. However, I understand that in regional WA or down south the animals like to play in the bins, and that causes a bit of a mess. As a result, the local government authority or Main Roads WA decides to take the bins away and that causes another issue. That is one of the issues that will be addressed in the caravan and camping action plan. Out of the caravan and camping action plan, the minister acknowledges that tourism does not cover just the tourism portfolio. Mr President, I seek an extension, please.

[Member's time extended.]

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Tourism covers more than just the tourism portfolio; it covers many other portfolios within government. I am pleased to see that part of this action plan will include portfolios with parks and roads to make sure the proper destinations are known so that tourism to WA increases and we get more people on our roads enjoying our beautiful state.

Tourism has received \$9 million over three years for additional tourism marketing. People have said that the tourism budget was actually cut, but that is not true. It is additional money over and above the budget.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: The member was so nice before.

Hon Ken Travers: That is because you were saying nice things. Now you're making it up.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: The state government has provided \$9 million over three years in the 2013–14 budget, which is the first instalment of the promised \$24 million over four years for additional marketing. This funding will be directed towards domestic marketing of tourism in Western Australia and will include programs such as “1001 Extraordinary Experiences”. It will also enable the agency to enter into significant new airline agreements covering Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Singapore. It is vital that we are on target and promoting ourselves in these countries. If we do not have marketing going out there, we will not pick up international visitors.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 4111.]