

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

LABOR GOVERNMENT, COMMITMENT TO RURAL AND REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr Riebeling): Today I received a letter from the member for Cottesloe seeking to debate as a matter of public interest the following motion -

That this House condemns the Gallop Labor Government for its complete lack of commitment to rural and regional Western Australia and for its centralist approach to the provision of government services.

If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter shall proceed on the usual basis.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.51 pm]: I move the motion.

This Labor Government has shown no interest in rural communities in this State. That was demonstrated during question time when the Labor Government and the Premier tried to get some political mileage from the impending by-election. The Premier was asked two questions about Merredin - by the members for Perth and Innaloo. The Labor Government cannot produce a real country member from a country town or rural area. That is the clear reality.

Mrs Roberts: We have the members for Collie, Albany, Kimberley -

Mr BARNETT: Why did they not ask the questions? Why did the members for Perth and Innaloo ask the questions? What happened to the Country Labor Alliance? It is a non-event. The Premier had to get the members for Perth and Innaloo to ask questions about Merredin.

The Minister for Police boasted that she will open a State Emergency Services facility in Merredin on Saturday. That is a good thing. However, she might consider whether it is appropriate to do that during a by-election campaign. She might also give some consideration to caretaker protocols. Did the minister inquire about the caretaker protocols? One of the protocols for a by-election is that the office of the outgoing member - in this case, Hendy Cowan - cannot be used by any political party. Various protocols relate to by-elections. Did the minister inquire about them? The opening of the service should take place, but I will pursue whether -

Mrs Roberts: Hendy Cowan congratulated me on the service.

Mr BARNETT: He is no longer the member. He walked out on that electorate. We now have a by-election.

Dr Gallop: How will you get to Merredin?

Mr BARNETT: I will drive; as I am entitled to as the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr Gallop: How will you pay for the petrol?

Mr BARNETT: The question is whether a government-funded function can take place during a by-election. I do not know the answer. Did the Minister for Police ask the question?

Mrs Roberts: Richard Court came to my electorate during the 1996 campaign and held functions. You should look at what Richard Court did in every electorate in which an election was held.

Mr BARNETT: Did the minister contact the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and ask about the protocols for by-elections and about holding that function? I do not know the answer, but did the minister ask the question? She did not. She did not inquire into whether it is appropriate to hold a publicly funded event in a town in which a by-election is to be held. We will ask the question. However, the opening should go ahead. The service is a wonderful thing, and we support it. If members traced its history, they would find it goes back to the term of the coalition Government. The service should open, and the volunteers should celebrate their new facilities. However, the minister should have inquired about the appropriateness of opening it at this time.

Mrs Roberts: I know the protocols. Unlike you, I know what is right.

Mr BARNETT: I am glad she knows. That is great.

I want to allow a number of members the opportunity to speak. The Liberal Party has country members, and they would like to contribute to this debate and raise a range of issues. We will skate across a range of issues to show what has happened under this Government.

Electoral change is an issue. Generally, no-one minds engaging in a process of electoral change, but the Government's model means that in this House, in which Governments are formed and financial decisions made,

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

42 members will represent Perth and 15 will represent the remainder of the State. That would be a dysfunctional Parliament for a State like Western Australia. The couple of country government members who had thought about the change and were concerned by it simply wimped out and did not express a view. They do that on every issue.

The member for Murdoch will speak about health. The Minister for Health is effectively getting rid of five health boards in the south west. The members of those boards are community people who work for and contribute to health administration in the area. They read and heard about the closures in the newspaper and on the radio. The Minister for Health in this Parliament attacked opposition backbench members for not reading the report; he did not even have the courtesy to inform the people affected. Did he take that decision to Cabinet? I do not think he did. Again, the Government is displaying absolute arrogance and is mistreating the decent, hardworking people who contribute to their communities.

Dr Gallop: Rubbish.

Mr BARNETT: Did he take it to Cabinet?

Dr Gallop: He is the Minister for Health. I have given him a job: to change the health system. That is why he is the minister.

Mr BARNETT: He must not have taken the decision to Cabinet because the Premier will not say.

The forest policy is another issue. The Labor Party campaigned on a policy of stopping old-growth logging, and there is no doubt it now has a mandate to do that. The Government talks about restructuring the industry. One hundred jobs were lost from the south west a couple of weeks ago. People are leaving those communities with redundancy cheques in their hands. The Government talks about restructuring, but its only policy for spending money in regional areas is to fund redundancy packages for timber workers. The Government is paying people to leave their jobs and communities. Its employment strategy is to encourage redundancy.

Salinity is probably one of the greatest environmental issues facing Australia. There is opportunity for a collaborative program. Nine months after the election, the Minister for the Environment has not responded to or dealt with the issue. She is uninterested in the salinity issue. It will not be solved in five, 10 or even 20 years. The Government has an absolute inability to engage in that issue.

The Government did not even have a minister for tourism when it formed its Cabinet.

Dr Gallop: Rubbish. Of course he was there.

Mr BARNETT: It did not have one. That is a fact. There was no minister with "tourism" in his title. The Government had to go back to the Governor in Executive Council and rename its Cabinet to create a minister for tourism.

Dr Gallop: Rubbish.

Mr BARNETT: It did not have one. A minister for tourism was not included in the Cabinet. The Premier should read his silly press release. It did not mention a minister for tourism. It was pointed out to him and, two weeks after coming into power, he created one.

Dr Gallop: Let us debate substance.

Mr BARNETT: The Government's first tourism crisis was the collapse of Ansett Australia and, therefore, Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd, which was a profitable airline. It had about 40 000 advance bookings. Its collapse affected charters and commercial tourism operators. The Liberal Party offered bipartisan support to provide assistance through a line of credit to get Skywest back in the air, and the Premier criticised me for it.

Dr Gallop: That's right.

Mr BARNETT: A rally was held outside this place. Mr Speaker, something remarkable happened that day. This issue probably affects some of your constituents. As the Leader of the Opposition, I walked out in front of 4 000 people and announced to them that Skywest was getting back in the air. The Premier did not have a clue. He was out of the loop. I made the announcement.

Dr Gallop: Not true.

Mr BARNETT: He did not know about it. He had made his speech. He did not know that Skywest was going to fly again. He had no idea.

Another example that typifies his attitude is the opening in Onslow - close to the Speaker's electorate - of a \$100-odd million salt project.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Dr Gallop: I was with the proponents the day before the opening.

Mr BARNETT: Members should listen to this story. I hope I do not embarrass ExxonMobil Australia Pty Ltd, because it is a fine company. I know the project; I helped negotiate it. Six months ago, after the change of government, the company invited the Premier to open the project. That was appropriate. The Premier accepted, but a couple of weeks before the opening he pulled out, and said that the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development would open the project. About two days before the opening, he too pulled out. I received a phone call from the Netherlands saying that the company had had enough of this Government, and asked if I would open the project. I did.

Dr Gallop: Did it say that?

Mr BARNETT: Yes; it had had enough. It was disappointed that the Premier pulled out, but it was even more disappointed when the replacement minister pulled out 48 hours before the event -

Dr Gallop: You come into this Parliament and say such a thing!

Mr BARNETT: - as were the people of Onslow. This Premier and his minister embarrassed the State among the investors and customers of the Asia-Pacific region by not being there, and then asked the organisers to have an event in Perth because they could not attend the opening in Onslow, having pulled out to go to Kim Beazley's policy launch. What an embarrassment to the State! Then the Premier comes in here today and boasts about going to Brisbane. The examples go on and on, but they typify a Labor Government that is absolutely city-centric, with no real country members, with one or two exceptions - the member for Collie and you, Mr Speaker. The others represent major regional centres and Perth. The Government has a project for making this Parliament completely city-dominated.

Mr McGowan: Has the Leader of the Opposition ever lived in the country?

Mr BARNETT: I have lived in rural England.

Several members interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I know it is not country Western Australia. I do not pretend to be a country person. However, since I have been Leader of the Opposition, I have visited about 50 country towns in this State. That is why I needed the spotlights on my car, because I drive. I do not jet in and out like government members do. There was one exception - I flew to Onslow.

Mr Watson: Did you drive to Albany?

Mr BARNETT: Yes, I did. The only flight I have taken has been to Onslow. I drive from town to town, and I will continue to do that. The attitude of country people to this Government -

Mr Hyde: You never drove when you were a minister, did you?

Mr BARNETT: This idiot, who represents the city of Perth -

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr BARNETT: I withdraw that remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr BARNETT: Instead of sitting up there as the bully he attempts to be, if the member for Perth inquired, he would find that, as a minister, even though I had responsibility for regional development, the resource industry, the energy sector and schools throughout the State, I rarely flew.

MR BOARD (Murdoch) [3.02 pm]: I want particularly to focus on the health issues that face country members. Over the past few months, particularly since February, I have spent a lot of time visiting country hospitals. I have been getting to know the health portfolio, and what happens in smaller and remote hospitals.

Dr Gallop: Where have you been for the past eight years, while you were a minister in the previous Government?

Mr BOARD: I have been in government, and I have been out in country towns. The Premier should talk to people in country towns and find out how often I was there as the Minister for Training and Youth. He should ask his own members how often I was in their towns. They will tell him.

I have spent much time in hospitals since February, particularly in country hospitals. I cannot believe that today this minister has adopted a recommendation of an interim report brought down by the member for Bunbury and

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

dismissed five country hospital boards. The boards found out by hearing the news on the radio and through word of mouth, but not from the committee members. The minister has summarily dismissed those people, who have been the engine room for those hospitals and for the provision of health services in their towns. This will reverberate around Western Australia. All country towns are very concerned about the future of the delivery of health services and about the support for their boards. This minister started this exercise by putting two Labor members of Parliament on the committee. The very reason it went to Bunbury was that it was driven by the member for Bunbury, and I suggest that none of the surrounding areas will be listened to on health issues. The minister has stood in this House today and summarily dismissed those boards.

If the minister had the courage to talk face-to-face with country hospital boards, he would find that, to a person, they are against the decision made today. One needs only to spend a short time in a country town to realise that the hospital is the focal point for many of the activities of the town. It is a Mecca for voluntarism, and the people who sit on those hospital boards are the movers and shakers. Often they are the chief executive officers from the local government authority, long-term residents and people who are absolutely committed to the growth of those towns. Apart from the very important work of driving the health services, they do much volunteer work and fundraising. The move to multipurpose services, with aged care facilities attached to hospitals, is promoted by the hospital boards, which provide the volunteers to run the MPS. These people also do fundraising for building houses to attract doctors to their towns, and building clinics, for which the money is only seldom provided by the Department of Health. The money for these projects is generated by the local community. In Bruce Rock, which I visited last week, \$500 000 was raised by the local community for a clinic that now, because of the cutbacks to the health service, will be struggling to deliver services. The \$500 000 raised to build the clinic may be wasted.

Every health service in regional Western Australia is considering its options for dealing with the threat to services in their towns and the cutbacks to their budget and, most importantly and tragically for growth and pride of their town, how they will deal with the sacking of their hospital boards. These people have given up their time, energy and commitment to build something, to take some pride in their towns and to attract services, resources and doctors to their towns. These boards are being sacked because of a centralist policy aimed at scaling down the services in some of those remote country towns and centralising them into major regional towns. That is why the member for Bunbury chaired that committee. He was on a mission to achieve a scaling down of services in towns around Bunbury. That will be on his head, because the people in those towns, desperate for the continuation of their services, jobs and what hospitals provide far beyond the medical services, have been summarily dismissed.

The minister can say that the chairmen of those boards can trot off to some regional centre and have a say. This is about budgetary constraints and controlling the budget from Bunbury. The same will happen around Western Australia, whether it be Northam, Geraldton, Albany or other places. The pride, the employment and the development of professional activity through the nurses and doctors in those hospitals will be scaled down. We have seen this in the cutting back of the fly-in services for specialists and of obstetrics in these smaller towns. This is a continuation of forced regionalisation; that is, moving these services to major country towns. How many voices from the Labor Party are speaking for the smaller country towns? Zero, absolute zero!

[Quorum formed.]

Mr BOARD: In question time today the Premier had the temerity to talk about the by-election in Merredin. Does the Premier know that over 100 people representing the wheatbelt and surrounding areas - deliverers of health services, board members, chief executive officers of hospitals and so forth - met in York this week to discuss hospital cuts and how they will survive in delivering health services to their towns? This health minister has made them paranoid. What he has done today is an absolute disgrace.

MR SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [3.11 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition has already referred to the Government's approach to an essential service that was being provided to regional Western Australia. I refer to Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd and Ansett Australia and the part this Government did not play in trying to facilitate a resolution to the crisis in regional Western Australia. It is interesting to note the Government's position on this.

Dr Gallop: It is a good position.

Mr SWEETMAN: No, it is not a good position. This is a contradiction. It is interesting to note that whenever a minister goes to regional Western Australia, he or she gets into a Cessna Citation. It is the most expensive aircraft available to -

Mr Watson: He is driving.

Mr SWEETMAN: Driving the Citation.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Dr Gallop: That is a contract your Government entered into.

Mr SWEETMAN: I know it is a contract, but there is a schedule of fees for the King Air Aircraft and another for the Citation. The irony is that the Government has told all of its agencies, and it has been particularly hard on agencies in regional Western Australia, that it wants as a priority the assurance dividend and a cut of eight or 10 per cent, or whatever. The agencies are cut to the bone and are told to cut their travel arrangements, and the next thing, the minister flies in the Citation. If he had flown in the King Air, he would have had some credibility. The Premier is telling the agencies to save money on the one hand and then, on the other hand, uses the most expensive mode of transport available.

Let us consider the example of Cue parliament the other day. Ministers Chance and Stephens flew into Cue, as they should have, and it was appropriate that they took the Citation. It was then strange that they parted company somewhere on the journey and another aircraft was chartered to take one of the ministers in a different direction.

Mr Barnett: Two aircraft.

Mr SWEETMAN: Yes, because the two ministers showed up at the one place and ended up at different destinations. That is strange. The Premier might want to make some inquiries. It was legitimate for Hon Tom Stephens, a minister of the Crown, to be involved in the opening of the memorial to HMAS *Sydney* in Carnarvon on Saturday morning. However, the Premier should check what his activities were for the rest of the day. The Premier should check with the Department of Premier and Cabinet whether that department is picking up the tab for the hire car. That would not be appropriate. I will tell members what the hire car was used for on Saturday. There was no polling booth at Mungullah village for those wishing to vote in the federal election. I suppose it was appropriate for the minister to provide a community service and pick up the Aboriginal people from Mungullah village and bring them to the booth where the previous member -

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr SWEETMAN: The previous member could then take charge and escort them into the polling booth and have them cast their vote. If the Premier reckons that that is appropriate conduct on the part of one of his ministers, perhaps he had better read his code of ministerial conduct. That is not right or acceptable.

I return to Skywest and the position the Premier took regarding that issue. All it wanted was \$3.2 million -

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I draw members' attention to the conversation that is ensuing across the Chamber. Members should show respect to the speaker who has the call, and I ask for that conversation to cease.

Mr SWEETMAN: I was enjoying the discussion I was having, Madam Deputy Speaker, regardless of whatever discussions were taking place in the Chamber.

Dr Gallop: What about the substance of the debate about regional WA?

Mr SWEETMAN: That is right; we are talking about regional WA. Let us get back to the heart of the debate. We can talk about the Onslow issue. I would love to have more time to explain to the Premier what he missed by not being in Onslow. How many countries were represented as the purchasers of -

Mr Barnett: Five countries.

Mr SWEETMAN: Does the Premier know one of the reasons that they came to Western Australia? Because the Premier of the State was supposed to have been opening the project there. It was a chance to network and share information and for the Premier, and perhaps the Minister for State Development, to make some impression on those people. They are well resourced and the reception they get may determine how they look at other services in regional Western Australia.

It is a contradiction that the Premier has one set of standards when it comes to his Government and ministers, another set of standards when it comes to government agencies, and yet another set of standards when it comes to regional Western Australia.

MR WALDRON (Wagin) [3.16 pm]: The Government's lack of commitment to rural Western Australia and its centralised nature is pretty obvious. I asked a question in the House recently about the reduction in the number of Department of Agriculture staff in country offices and the movement of staff to Perth. The number of staff in Perth has been increased by more than 50. That is one example of the centralisation policy of this Government. It shows that the Government does not recognise Skywest as an essential service to country WA, which it is. It

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

puts the health of people in country areas at risk and also damages country business. The rural surgical service, which was talked about in this House last week, treats over 800 people -

Dr Gallop: Do you want to talk about the patient assisted travel scheme and how your coalition Government slashed it?

Mr WALDRON: The PAT scheme is a good scheme. I have been to the forums and we will see what happens. Only \$1 million a year has been provided in the budget for PATS. However, the rural surgical service treats over 800 country people and costs just \$320 000 out of a \$2.3 million budget, which is a saving of \$90 000 a year. I cannot understand that one. The Government has attempted to centralise political representation, which is the biggest issue of all, by taking eight seats out of country WA and putting them into the metropolitan area. There are more examples. The Minister for Agriculture is dealing with some projects in country Western Australia at the moment. There are some excellent projects such as the Centre of Soil Excellence project at Kojonup and the Facey Group officer at Wickiepin, which we have been dealing with but about which nothing has happened. Priority was obviously given to other events. The new health centre proposed for Katanning involves a building, which belonged to the Department of Agriculture, that can be renovated to form a new centre. That would save a lot of money. The old Department of Agriculture building was left empty as a result of the last Government's building a new one.

There is plenty of rhetoric from the Labor Government that supports the country regions. It talks about holding cabinet meetings in country centres, the establishment of a regional subcommittee in the Cabinet and, of course, the Country Labor Alliance. It is all right to talk about these things but, in my short time as a member, nothing has happened. I have no doubt that this Government will support this -

Dr Gallop: I will tell you all about it. You can sit down and listen in a moment.

Mr WALDRON: I will listen.

MR McNEE (Moore) [3.18 pm]: I will touch briefly on the issue of what is not happening in the country. This Government came to office on promises of what it would do. One of the problems it said it would move on is salinity. It has done nothing in that area. This Government has had another review and produced a report, which was pretty good, but nothing has happened. This Government referred to Merredin. It just happens that I live in the electorate of Merredin. I was on a farm the other day that is run by some very progressive young farmers who are dealing with the salinity problem. This Government does not know much about drainage and I do not suppose it has an opinion. However, I was on this farm, not far from my own farm -

Mr Kobelke: We are not in the gutter.

Mr McNEE: Members might learn something. If they all went to Merredin on the weekend, they would not have had any votes. They would have had fewer than they got last Saturday, their worst performance in 70 years. I would not be proud of that. I do not care if the whole damn team goes to Merredin, because the Labor Party will still be beaten.

About 80 hectares have been drained on that property at a cost of about \$35 000 or \$38 000. About 400 tonnes of water is being taken from that 80-hectare property each day. I have farmed in that area all my life. If people had asked me whether that would work, I would have said no, because experts have always told me that heavy land cannot be drained. These people are doing it. This is top country. Salinity always takes out the best country. A little way from where this land is being drained, another property has about a three tonne crop on it.

Dr Gallop: When are we going to get a decent debate?

Mr McNEE: I will debate with the Premier any day on his principles, because he does not have any. He is bankrupt when it comes to principles or morality. He is absolutely hopeless.

Mrs Roberts: You looked pretty happy on Friday at the opening of the new facility and the provision of three more fire appliances. You looked pretty happy at Ledge Point.

Mr McNEE: The Government is running pretty late in that area. My electorate did so well under the Court Government that I was flat out trying to fit in all the invitations to openings of fire stations in my electorate. Make no mistake about that. I bet that the budget money for Ledge Point came from the Court Government and not from this Government. What is this Government doing about the hospital in Merredin and the salinity agreement? An amount of \$150 million is available. All the Government needs to do is tap into it, but it will not. What sort of dopey reason is the Government putting up? It wants the money provided by the Court Government to be used as its contribution. That is dopey and it will not happen. If the Government does not get its . . . into gear, that \$150 million will disappear and people such as those in the electorate of Merredin will miss

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

out. They are good farmers and they are coping well. All they need is a bit of advice and some guidance. The Government should be out there. I asked those fellows if anyone was doing any monitoring with them and they said that nobody had bothered about them.

Mr Barnett: No-one is interested because it is in the country.

Mr McNEE: The Government is not interested. The Government should be out there working with those young people, who know what they are doing. They are prepared to put up their money. The Government should join that commonwealth scheme. South Australia and the Labor Governments in the other States have joined it, but not this crowd. It will not.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [3.22 pm]: It is a sad reflection on the Opposition, and particularly on the Leader of the Opposition, that he would come into this Parliament, pretend to be some sort of rural populist and criticise the current Government about rural, regional and outback Western Australia. People should be judged on their performance. When the Leader of the Opposition was a minister, his performance was there to be seen by every rural and regional voter in Western Australia. Economic rationalism, user-pays and privatisation are part of his philosophy. Any attempt to come into the Parliament today to cover it up will not work. He has been exposed by the National Party, which had to work with him in government and which saw his real philosophy and prejudices. I will put this in context.

The first decision made by the Court Government when it was elected in 1993 was to abolish the maximum retail price of petrol in regional Western Australia. That told regional Western Australia where that Government was going to take the State over the next four years and, as it turned out, the next eight years. That was the beginning. The privatisation process undermined that great institution known as the Main Roads Department. The Labor Party went to community after community and saw what that Government's policy represented. The previous Minister for Energy abandoned the uniform electricity tariff. That was the beginning of the end of the uniform electricity tariff. The previous Minister for Health slashed the patient assisted travel scheme. At the end of that term of government we saw a symbolic act - the privatisation of the Westrail freight system. The Labor Party said what would happen if the system were privatised and it is happening; prices are going up for the consumers of Westrail services in the wheatbelt areas of Western Australia. The Labor Party took a stand on those issues over the past eight years, not the Liberal Party. The National Party is making sure that the truth comes out about what happened in the Cabinet and the role the Leader of the Opposition played as the then Minister for Energy. The Leader of the Opposition should not come into this Parliament and pretend that he is some sort of rural populist. We know that he must do that because he does not have the numbers in his party. He has to maintain that line just to keep that support.

I will treat this issue seriously. A Government can influence rural and regional Western Australia in two ways. The first is through the processes by which it governs. The question is whether it involves rural and regional Western Australia in the decision-making process. The second concerns the outcomes from the Government and how they relate to rural and regional Western Australia. The two messages that come through are, first, that rural and regional Western Australia wants to be involved in the decision-making process and, secondly, that it wants a fair share of government expenditure and priorities.

I will go through the two issues. First, I will go through the processes. Are rural and regional communities properly involved in decision making? Are they taken seriously and is an effort being made to make a difference through a proper analysis of the social, economic and environmental issues in the regions? One thing about our Government is clear to everyone: the regions are being taken seriously. There is a clear demarcation between the previous Government and this Government. I will remind the House of where those differences lie. First, we are upgrading the role of the regional development commissions.

Mr Barnett: That's really beaut.

Dr GALLOP: Does the Leader of the Opposition not take them seriously? That was the case when the Liberal Party was in government. What has this Government done for those regional development commissions? Each one has a minister. Make no mistake; that makes a real difference. Every issue that relates to those regions has a direct voice in the Cabinet and in the regional subcommittee of Cabinet.

Secondly, those regional development commissions have been given real power. They have been given \$400 000 each a year to spend on the development of their regions. That is empowerment. That gives those regions the opportunity to develop real job-creating potential on the basis of real money.

Thirdly, the Cabinet regularly goes to the regions. This is not a one-off situation that occurs as an afterthought, as was the situation with the previous Government. It is regular and consistent. During those two-day visits to the regions, the Cabinet meets all the local organisations and groups and talks to the community about the issues.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

We are taking them seriously. The regional cabinet meetings are warmly applauded by regional Western Australia.

Fourthly, the Government will take the investment houses to the regions. That program was started in Geraldton and the mid west. It will be refined as it goes along. One thing the Government must do is make sure that the people who invest know the potential of the regions. How is that done? It is done by taking the investment houses to the regions, so that they get to know what creativity and potential is there.

Fifthly, the State Government will form new partnerships with local government. Some of that will occur through our regional investment fund and some through the \$5 million in extra funding that has been given to the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. I have taken a lot of interest in that fund over the years. An extra \$5 million has been allocated so that partnerships between the State Government and local governments can be developed to create real facilities for the people in those districts.

There is a new environment in Western Australia today. Rural and regional communities are involved in the decision-making process; they are in partnership with the Government and real dollars are being spent to support that approach. That is the first part of the discussion of this issue. I shall now move on to the outcomes of government.

This Government knows the importance of the regions for the future of our State. Three great challenges in the regions must be addressed by the Government. The first is an environmental challenge that relates to the land and water systems, the forests, the coastal regions and the river systems. The challenge to our regional environments must be taken seriously by the Government. Secondly, there is a social challenge. The opposition party in this Parliament talked about rural and regional Western Australia but did not mention indigenous people. Is that not interesting? A report tabled this morning indicated that regional Western Australia has a major problem with the criminal behaviour of young Aboriginal people. That is a challenge that we must accept and address. Not one of the so-called representatives of regional Western Australia mentioned the indigenous people of this State.

Thirdly, we have a major economic challenge; that is, to overcome the tyranny of distance to ensure that our assets are properly developed. We recognise that these environmental, social and economic challenges require support from the State Government. We accept also that there is a big environmental, social and economic challenge for metropolitan Perth and for regional and rural Western Australia.

Let us consider economic infrastructure. In the budget brought into this Parliament by the Treasurer, 43 per cent of the money allocated in the Main Roads budget will go to rural and regional Western Australia. That is a significant commitment and indicates a recognition of the needs in that area.

Let us now consider the south west of Western Australia.

Mr Barnett: Can I ask you a question? You made a good point about indigenous people. Is it true that your Government is closing eight offices of indigenous affairs, including the one in Merredin?

Dr GALLOP: Do members know what we are interested in? We are not interested in bureaucracy, we are interested in service delivery and performance. That is why we have two projects relating to indigenous affairs that the Opposition could never do. First, we have a real partnership put together by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, his department and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission to get some accountability in the way we spend money. Secondly, we are starting to make progress with the native title issue, something the former Government could never do. Do members know why? It is because we do not have ingrained prejudice on that issue.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: We have a unique asset in the old-growth forests in the south west of Western Australia and we have saved them. We will spend \$123 million to ensure that the transition works well for all those affected and creates new jobs in the south west of the State. One cannot underestimate the importance of that policy for the future of the south west of Western Australia. We can now tell the world about what is unique about Western Australia; that is, not one old-growth forest in Western Australia is being logged. That is significant to the way in which this State can present itself to the rest of the world and to the rest of our nation. We are spending money to ensure that it happens properly.

I know the member for Eyre would be interested to know that we have committed \$20 million to the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources to assist the Geological Survey of Western Australia, and to ensure that we have all the information that we need to further develop mineral resources in this State. The \$20 million has

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

been allocated to that program to ensure that we have the basic information that we need through geological survey.

In tourism we have increased expenditure by allocating \$2 million to market regional and rural Western Australia and \$2 million to support regional tourism bureaus. Significant amounts of the \$5 million that we put aside to address the Ansett crisis will be made available to promote tourism in the regions of Western Australia. I spoke to members of the tourism industry this morning and outlined all the initiatives that this Government has implemented. There is no doubt that the Minister for State Development is doing an outstanding job in getting Western Australia to the cutting edge of tourism marketing and ensuring that the proper infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of that wonderful industry. These are some of the broad commitments that we have made to economic infrastructure.

However, we did more than that during the election campaign. Because of the work members of the Labor Party had done while in opposition by constantly visiting regional, rural and outback communities throughout Western Australia, we were able to enter the election campaign with specific commitments for the Kimberley. I mentioned the Broome cultural centre, which will play a major role in further projecting the wonderful performing and visual arts industry in the Kimberley. I saw that potential and we have committed to that infrastructure. I note that the member for Kimberley is in the Chamber now. We will enter into a partnership with the local council in the Kimberley. The cultural centre will become a real tourist attraction and will create new jobs. We put money aside in the election campaign to create the Shark Bay interpretive centre in a wonderful heritage area that needs support. That will get jobs into the electorate of the member for Ningaloo.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition what his attitude is to the Geraldton southern transport corridor. Silence -

Mr Barnett: No, if you are quiet for a minute I will answer the question.

Dr GALLOP: - because it has been revealed by the National Party that he is opposed to it.

Several members interjected.

Points of Order

Mr BARNETT: I have a point of order.

Dr GALLOP: There is no point of order.

Mr BARNETT: The point of order is that the Premier invited me to answer. He pulls this little stunt and then does not let me answer. I am happy to answer and, if he will be quiet, I will talk about the southern transport corridor.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr KOBELKE: Madam Deputy Speaker, you and other members who hold the office of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Acting Speaker have a difficult job at times and points of order are matters that correctly must be taken when someone believes that the proceedings in the House are not being conducted in a proper way under our standing orders. There are times when members have taken points of order for other purposes, as happened earlier today, when there was agreement on both sides. However, there is an issue when members frivolously use a point of order to disrupt debate; that is a difficult issue for whoever might be in the Chair at the time. I suggest to you that the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition brings this House into disrepute in that he has interjected time and again expecting a member to answer. When the Premier simply asked him if he would respond, he jumped to his feet and did nothing but seek the protection of the Chair, because he does not want to answer the question, and sought to disrupt the proceedings of the House.

Mr Barnett: I am happy to answer the question right now.

Mr KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition does not have a point of order and such behaviour is disruptive to the proper proceedings of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. There was an interjection and the speech continued.

Debate Resumed

Dr GALLOP: I can only quote the Leader of the National Party, who said that the Leader of the Opposition is opposed to the Geraldton southern transport corridor. Is he?

Mr Barnett: I support moving the railway between the City of Geraldton and the foreshore. The southern transport corridor, to the extent it does that, is good. However, my concern about the southern transport corridor is that it has been promoted as a way of taking minerals and other large commodity exports out through

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Geraldton, which is not viable because there is no space for stockpiles. It will turn Geraldton into an industrial port. I am also concerned about the Government's spending \$100 million to deepen Geraldton harbour, which will still not be able to accommodate capesize vessels.

Dr GALLOP: The member for Geraldton has a bit of useful material there that he can take to his electorate. The Government is committed to building a heritage museum in Bunbury, the Kalgoorlie-Boulder loop line and the prospectors' museum.

Mr Barnett: Prospectors' museum?

Dr GALLOP: The Government has given significant support to the new museum in Kalgoorlie.

Mr Barnett: Who did?

Dr GALLOP: The State Government. My Government!

Mr Barnett: You?

Dr GALLOP: Yes I did! Significant support.

Mr Barnett: What support?

Dr GALLOP: Significant support, as did your Government.

Mr Barnett: What did the Government contribute?

Dr GALLOP: Money!

Mr Barnett: How much?

Dr GALLOP: Money, money, money!

Mr Barnett: No, you did not!

Dr GALLOP: I went to Kalgoorlie with my good friend the member for Eyre. We handed over a cheque.

Mr Barnett: The Premier is a joke!

Dr GALLOP: Does the member think that we did not? We gave them a significant cheque.

Mr Barnett: Hand over a cheque, did you? Well done! We have such a good Premier. He has handed over a cheque from AlintaGas.

Dr GALLOP: The town centre of Manjimup will be redeveloped. The karri-tingle discovery -

Mr Barnett interjected.

Dr GALLOP: These are specific commitments that the Government entered into during the election. They will improve the economic base of regional Western Australia. It is one of the reasons the Government won the election.

Let us look at the social side of the equation. There are three big issues: first, ensuring that the health system works properly for all Western Australians; and, secondly, dealing with the scandal in education in rural and regional Western Australia - which we inherited from the previous Government. It is a scandal that so many of our young people are not finishing school. The previous Government was complacent. The Opposition talks about its support for the regions. We inherited a scandal. The third issue is police and law and order. The Government will deal with those issues.

Mr Barnett: Rural education has lots of problems, but the one thing members should not do is walk into Parliament or public arenas and criticise government schools. The Government led a public campaign to criticise public education; it was a shameful campaign. Government schools are very good.

Dr GALLOP: A very big difference on public schools exists between my side of the House and the Leader of the Opposition's side. Our side of Parliament sets the standard we expect for public schools very high, and the Opposition sets it very low. That is the difference: we believe in them. Public schools provide the cement that holds our community together.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Order, member for Willagee!

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Dr GALLOP: Twenty-six per cent of the health capital works budget is going into regional Western Australia. Given the needs of the metropolitan area due to the rundown state of our major hospitals, that figure is a significant percentage. The regions of Western Australia will receive 42 per cent of the education capital works budget. The Government has implemented an improved incentive program for country police officers to ensure that quality officers serve throughout Western Australia. That is just the beginning of what the Government will do to upgrade the economic, social and environment factors of regional and rural Western Australia. This Government is serious and is taking the regions seriously. It does not come into the Parliament with the rhetoric of rural populism. Not one opposition argument presented in this debate can be taken seriously. The Government has indicated what it is doing to improve the processes and to ensure that the infrastructure is in place for the regions to meet their challenges. This motion is not concerned with the current Government; it is about the credibility of the Leader of the Opposition.

Amendment to Motion

Dr GALLOP: I move -

To delete all words after "House" with a view to substituting the following -

supports the comments by the Leader of the National Party when he said that -

the Leader of the Opposition had publicly opposed road building programs for country areas such as the \$100 million southern transport corridor at Geraldton;

the Leader of the Opposition is an absolute joke by suddenly trying to be a friend of the bush when he hardly ever went near country areas as a minister in the former Government;

the Leader of the Opposition has always put the interests of the city and economic rationalism above the needs of country people; and

the Leader of the Opposition's Johnny-come-lately act will not wash with the people of Merredin.

Mr Barnett: That is unparliamentary.

Dr GALLOP: It is parliamentary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have taken the time to look at the amendment and I believe it is in the context of the debate with regard to rural services in general terms. I suggest that in phrasing amendments, consideration be given to the language used. For the ensuing debate, that should be taken into consideration.

Points of Order

Mr DAY: When amendments are moved by any member there is an obligation for it to have some relationship to the original motion. The original motion related to the Government's lack of commitment to rural and regional areas. Although the Opposition disagrees with the substance of the amendment, it would be acceptable for the Government to move an amendment that refers to its record in rural and regional areas or something to that effect. It is not possible to move an amendment that has the effect of completely negating the intention of the original motion. The amendment moved by the Premier has no relationship to the original motion. It introduces new material. I submit that it is out of order.

Mr BARNETT: The matter of public interest makes a political point in condemning the Labor Government for what the Opposition regards as its lack of commitment to rural areas. The Premier has moved an amendment quoting comments made - I presume - by the Leader of the National Party about me. The original motion was a criticism of the Government; it has now turned into a personal criticism of me. I respectfully ask you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to give careful thought to this. Should you require an opportunity to leave the Chair to consult with the Clerks, that would be appropriate. The alternative would be for the Premier to do the decent thing and withdraw this amendment, and outvote us when the motion goes to a vote.

Mr KOBELKE: What may be fact and embarrassing to the Leader of the Opposition does not necessarily come into what is decent. Madam Deputy Speaker, your ruling, which I believe to be correct, has two key components. One is that the amendment must fit within the same area of policy or issues as that contained within the original motion. The last part of the motion reads -

... for its complete lack of commitment to rural and regional Western Australia and for its centralist approach to the provision of government services

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

That is three-quarters of the wording in the original motion. Practically all of the amendment relates to those issues. There can be no argument with the fact that the amendment sits squarely with the subject matter of the motion.

The second point relates -

Several opposition members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I want to listen to the Leader of the House as he continues his point of order. Unless I get some general consensus that the behaviour in the House will improve, I will leave the Chair.

Mr KOBELKE: The first point I made was that the amendment must be relevant to the central theme of the motion, which it is. The second point is whether it fits in with the general approach of the motion - the first part of which is to condemn the Gallop Labor Government - which this amendment also does, in that right from the start it supports the comments of the Leader of the National Party, who is well known and has been on the record many times attacking the current Government. Therefore, simply taking away the words "condemn the Gallop Labor Government" and taking a quote that broadens the issue and also brings in the Leader of the Opposition is in keeping with the general thrust of the motion before the House. On both grounds, Madam Deputy Speaker, I put to you the contention that the motion is in keeping with standing orders and we should be able to proceed with it.

Deputy Speaker's Ruling

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: My consideration of this motion and the amendment is along the lines of my understanding of the standing orders. Unless an amendment is a direct negation of the motion, it is allowable. There may not be a general agreement with the wording, but nothing in standing orders prevents an amendment such as this as long as it is in the general context of the subject, which is rural services. On those grounds, I am prepared to allow it. I have, however, expressed my disappointment about the language contained within the amendment. I urge members to consider that in the debate on the amendment that is about to ensue.

Mr Barnett: What is your ruling?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: My ruling is to allow the amendment.

Dissent from Deputy Speaker's Ruling

Mr DAY: It is with great reluctance that I move -

That the House dissent from the Deputy Speaker's ruling.

This is not a motion of dissent against you personally, Madam Deputy Speaker; it is a dissent against your ruling. Unfortunately, you have been put in a difficult position by the Government and the Premier in moving this amendment, which has no relationship to the original motion that was moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has moved a motion, quite appropriately, referring to the lack of government commitment to rural and regional services. Generally speaking, the debate on both sides has been about that topic. The Premier made a response and at the end of his comments he has chosen to move an amendment which, as I said, unfortunately puts you in a difficult position and which has no relationship to the original wording of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Any amendment moved by the Government should refer, perhaps, to the Government's commitments or to its record in rural areas - or something to that effect. No doubt we would disagree with the substance put forward by the Government, but we would not disagree that the Government had a right to move such a motion. We do not believe the Government has a right to move a motion that refers to comments about the Leader of the Opposition supposedly made by the Leader of the National Party, and at best has an extremely tenuous relationship to the original motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Deputy Speaker, only a couple of minutes ago, you expressed disappointment in the wording of the amendment moved by the Premier. That indicates you are in a difficult position. It seems that you do not want to rule out the amendment, but on the other hand you are at least going as far as to say you are disappointed in the wording. The decent thing and withdraw or reword the amendment in an appropriate way, so that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, are not forced to deal with this difficult situation.

Mr Speaker, now that you are in the Chair, I trust you have heard the debate during the past 10 minutes. The Opposition is clearly of the view that the ruling has not been appropriate, given the substantial difference

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 15 November 2001]
p5678b-5693a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

between the wording of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and the wording and intent of the amendment that has been moved by the Premier.

Question to be put

Mr KOBELKE: I move -

That the question be now put.

Ayes (27)

Mr Andrews	Ms Guise	Ms McHale	Mr Ripper
Mr Bowler	Mr Hyde	Mr McRae	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Kobelke	Mrs Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kucera	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Ms MacTiernan	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan	Ms Radisich	

Noes (16)

Mr Barnett	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Pandal	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Birney	Mr Johnson	Mr Sweetman	
Mr Board	Mr McNee	Mr Waldron	
Mr Day	Mr Marshall	Ms Sue Walker	
Mr Edwards	Mr Masters	Dr Woollard	

Pair

Mr Logan

Mr Ainsworth

Dissent from Deputy Speaker’s Ruling Resumed

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (17)

Mr Barnett	Mr Edwards	Mr Masters	Dr Woollard
Mr Birney	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Pandal	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Board	Mr Johnson	Mr Sweetman	
Dr Constable	Mr McNee	Mr Waldron	
Mr Day	Mr Marshall	Ms Sue Walker	

Noes (27)

Mr Andrews	Mrs Guise	Ms McHale	Mr Ripper
Mr Bowler	Mr Hyde	Mr McRae	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Kobelke	Mrs Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kucera	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Ms MacTiernan	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan	Ms Radisich	

Pairs

Mr Ainsworth
Mr House

Mr D’Orazio
Mr Hill

Question thus negatived.

Amendment to Motion Resumed

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

MR DEAN (Bunbury) [4.05 pm]: It is a shocking indictment of the Opposition that such a motion was brought to this House today. There must be an election somewhere. I will refer to a few points raised by members opposite. The two lead speakers for the Opposition were the members for Cottesloe and Murdoch, of Booragoon. They sought to bring into disrepute the country credentials of members on this side. I will remind members opposite of the credentials of members of the Labor Party's front bench.

Points of Order

Mr BARNETT: We are discussing the amendment to the motion, which states -

To delete all the words after "House" with the view to substituting the following -

supports the comments by the Leader of the National Party when he said that -

the Leader of the Opposition had publicly opposed road building programs for country areas such as the \$100 million southern transport corridor at Geraldton;

the Leader of the Opposition is an absolute joke by suddenly trying to be a friend of the bush when he hardly ever went near country areas as a minister in the former Government;

the Leader of the Opposition has always put the interests of the city and economic rationalism above the needs of country people; and

the Leader of the Opposition's Johnny-come-lately act will not wash with the people of Merredin.

I ask the members opposite to specifically address the content of that amendment to the motion, and we will then seek to continue the debate.

Mr KOBELKE: This is the second time in an hour that the Leader of the Opposition has taken a frivolous point of order that has no basis. The member for Bunbury got to his feet when he had nine minutes left on the clock in which to debate the motion. There are still nine minutes on the clock and he was speaking to the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The only part of the speech I have heard from the member for Bunbury was the last couple of minutes. I am sure the member for Bunbury will address the amendment as required.

Debate Resumed

Mr DEAN: In the next three or four minutes of my speech, I hope to prove the second point of the motion; that is, that the Leader of the Opposition is an absolute joke. If members opposite care to listen, I will tell them the credentials of the country members on the front bench. I will not dwell on this issue for long. The Premier is from Geraldton, the Treasurer is from Nyabing and the family of the Minister for the Environment and Heritage is one of the main pioneering families of the Beverley district, the Edwards family. The member for Fremantle is from Kalgoorlie and Bunbury, the member for Willagee is from Albany and Hon Kim Chance is from Merredin-Doodlakine. The country credentials of this Labor Government are first rate. We have never forgotten our roots in the country; we are not the blue rinse set from Cottesloe.

I refer to the amendment to the motion, which states -

the Leader of the Opposition has always put the interests of the city and economic rationalism above the needs of country people.

A while ago, the member for Murdoch referred to the Bunbury health task force that delivered an interim report this morning. The member had the temerity to say that it was stacked with two Labor members. I was one and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich was the other. However, there were six members on that committee.

Several members interjected.

Mr DEAN: I am attempting to show that the Leader of the Opposition is an absolute joke. Other members of the board included Dr Manea, Gerry Riordan, Judy Jones and Rob Prestage. I do not know what their politics are; however, in my book, two Labor members do not overrule four non-partisan members.

Points of Order

Mr BARNETT: The member for Bunbury is required to speak to the amendments moved by the Premier, but he is addressing south west health. That does not relate to the amendment. He must refer to the amendment.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Mr KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition does not have a point of order. The member for Bunbury had nine minutes left to speak to the motion when he began to speak. He has been speaking for two minutes on the second point of the motion. All of his contribution has been relevant to that. The member is within the standing orders. The Leader of the Opposition is being frivolous and wishes to disrupt the proceedings of the House by attempting to make a point of order.

Mr DAY: As stated by the Leader of the Opposition, there is a requirement to address the motion before the Chair. That motion is the amendment. It is the Government's amendment. The original motion moved by the Opposition referred to rural and regional services of government generally. The Government has constrained the debate by moving this amendment. Therefore, there is an obligation for government members to follow their leader and talk to his amendment.

Mr JOHNSON: The Leader of the House said that there was no point of order because the member for Bunbury was talking to the second dot point. Nothing in that dot point refers to regional hospitals in Bunbury. The dot point is very different from that. It is this Government's grubby amendment, which the Premier moved. It is the most disgraceful amendment I have seen in this place.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr Barnett: You moved it.

Dr Gallop: Ask the National Party.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McRae): Order! We are debating a point of order. It is a procedural matter. I would appreciate it if members would allow the debate to be heard without interjection.

Mr JOHNSON: I would appreciate not having interjections while talking to a point of order. The member for Bunbury was not referring to the second dot point in the amendment. He was talking about something completely different. As I pointed out, this grubby amendment is quite specific. The member for Bunbury is obviously not aware of the amendment put forward by the Premier. If he does not have a clue about it, he should sit down and keep his mouth shut.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr DEAN: The Leader of the Opposition is suddenly trying to be a friend of the bush. That does not wash. He is not a friend of the bush. Bunbury is part of the bush. It is a country electorate. The Leader of the Opposition in government decimated Westrail and Main Roads. He gave away the intellectual property and regional concept of Main Roads. Those things make him an enemy of the bush.

Ms Sue Walker: You do not even know what the bush is.

Mr DEAN: I am a person of the bush and have witnessed these proceedings over the past eight years. It tore the guts out of the bush. What the previous Government did was disgraceful. Its support of its local member was appalling. That member would probably be here today if the coalition Government had supported the bush. It provided no support for policing, Main Roads or any of the other services required by regional Western Australia. It left the bush for dead.

I have kept my comments away from the Bunbury Health Task Force, but I will come back to it because it is important. Members opposite should communicate with their people in the bush about this issue.

Mr Bradshaw: You communicate so well that you sack all your people and do not tell them.

Mr DEAN: We did not sack them.

Mr Barnett: The minister didn't have the guts, the backbone or the courage to tell them about it.

Mr DEAN: The Opposition should talk to people like Dr Steve Thomas and Jamie Morley; the people who are on the ground at these places and who understand the bush entirely.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DEAN: It is pointless talking to people who are too blind to see and too deaf to listen. The writing is on the wall for members opposite. The original motion is short-sighted and designed with next weekend's Merredin by-election in mind. I wish the National Party well in its future.

Extract from Hansard
[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 15 November 2001]
p5678b-5693a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

MR MURRAY (Collie) [4.13 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition surprises me.

Mr Barnett: I, too, am surprised at the Premier. I thought he was a decent person.

Mr MURRAY: I am surprised by this motion. I heard the member for Nedlands say in this place a couple of weeks ago that 20 jobs in the bush did not matter and that the proposed chip-mill should be located elsewhere.

Ms Sue Walker: Rubbish.

Mr MURRAY: She said that 20 jobs in the bush did not matter.

Mr Barnett: Where were you during the energy debate? You sat there and did not open your mouth.

Mr MURRAY: This is what surprised me: they said that those jobs did not matter. They sit on their high horses. They do not care about the bush. We would die for 20 jobs in the bush, but members opposite brush them off. It wants to leave it as it is.

I received a letter through the mail - it was not leaked like some of the ones members opposite get. It was also sent to the Leader of the Opposition. It was written by strong Liberal Party supporters. The letter thanked the members on this side of the House for listening; something the Liberal Party has not done. It was written by one of the staunch Liberal families in Donnybrook. That is what this debate is about. It is about time those on the other side of the House listened to the people from the country, because they did not do a good job over the past eight years.

Amendment (words to be deleted) put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (26)

Mr Andrews	Ms Guise	Ms McHale	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Hyde	Mrs Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Mr Kucera	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Mr D’Orazio	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Ms Radisich	
Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan	Mr Ripper	

Noes (16)

Mr Barnett	Mr Day	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman
Mr Birney	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Marshall	Ms Sue Walker
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Masters	Dr Woollard
Dr Constable	Mr Johnson	Mr Pandal	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Bowler	Mr House
Mr Marlborough	Mr Trenorden

Amendment thus passed.

Mr Barnett interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McRae): I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Amendment (words to be substituted) put and a division taken with the following result -

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 15 November 2001]
p5678b-5693a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Mike Board; Mr Rod Sweetman; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Bill McNee; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Day; Mr Tony Dean; Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray

Ayes (27)

Mr Andrews	Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan	Mr Ripper
Mr Bowler	Ms Guise	Ms McHale	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Hyde	Mrs Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Mr Kucera	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Mr D’Orazio	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Ms Radisich	

Noes (16)

Mr Barnett	Mr Day	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman
Mr Birney	Mr Edwards	Mr Marshall	Ms Sue Walker
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Masters	Dr Woollard
Dr Constable	Mr Johnson	Mr Pental	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Logan	Mr House
Mr Marlborough	Mr Trenorden

Amendment thus passed.

Mr Barnett interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McRae): I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Motion, as Amended

Motion, as amended, put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (27)

Mr Andrews	Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan	Mr Ripper
Mr Bowler	Ms Guise	Ms McHale	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Hyde	Mrs Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Mr Kucera	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Mr D’Orazio	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Ms Radisich	

Noes (16)

Mr Barnett	Mr Day	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman
Mr Birney	Mr Edwards	Mr Marshall	Ms Sue Walker
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Masters	Dr Woollard
Dr Constable	Mr Johnson	Mr Pental	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Logan	Mr Trenorden
Mr Hill	Mr House

Question thus passed.