

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS PROMISE

Motion

MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Minister for Regional Development for axing and deferring significant projects and programs across regional Western Australia in defiance of his promise that royalties for regions funding would be over and above existing budget commitments.

I ask members to go back to the formation of this government; to the big bang that occurred. If we go back and look at the agreement that was struck between the National and Liberal Parties, we find a very, very clear commitment. This agreement sets out the essence of the royalties for regions program—how the royalties for regions program was to work. It was to be 25 per cent of royalties—we all know that, and that is not a matter in contest. The agreement states —

The projects and expenditure will be over and above those currently funded in the regions by State Government ...

This is an absolutely essential point that we all need to understand. There was going to be extra money in the budget. Members must be sure that they understand this: it was not just about there being new money; it was also about there being extra money. It was to be over and above what was in the forward estimates.

We suspect that when this agreement was entered into, the National Party was not actually terribly serious about this. Within the first week of the new so-called alliance government we saw a fair amount of backtracking. For a start, the Minister for Regional Development indicated that he would be happy for the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital to be funded out of royalties for regions, even though a substantial amount of money for the Kalgoorlie hospital was already in the state budget. To use the words of the agreement, it was an existing commitment. In the first couple of weeks we took them to task and pointed out that contradiction. There was a period of argy-bargy. Then both the Premier and the Minister for Regional Development came out with a very clear statement: “No, no, no. This money, this 25 per cent of royalties for regions, is on top of all existing commitments.”

The National Party is a little bit self-conscious because it knows that it cannot dress up everything as royalties for regions. It knows that this was an agreement that was going to be very hard, practically, to deliver. What happened as a reality? A media statement went out from the Minister for Regional Development, on the day of the budget, in which he said that \$644 million had been injected into regional Western Australia. Does the minister stand by that statement? Can the *Hansard* note that the minister vigorously nodded his head. It is extremely interesting to go to the budget papers and look at the royalties for regions page.

Mr V.A. Catania: I think he is starting to sweat a little bit.

Mr B.J. Grylls: You’ve got me!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: When we look at the budget papers, there is a list of the royalties for regions programs. They supposedly add up to \$619 million, which is not the same as \$644 million. Then it says “savings”—that is, this is the money it is not spending—“savings of \$25 million”. That comes to \$644 million. In fact there was never \$644 million even on the basis of the budget papers. Does the minister accept that he said \$644 million? Did that sum include the savings?

Mr B.J. Grylls: It is pretty clear what the budget says. It is right there.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Could he explain why —

Mr B.J. Grylls: I will do my explaining when I stand up. You make your argument.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: We have the first fraud. People were expecting \$675 million, but they knew there were going to be some cuts. The budget comes out at \$644 million and people thought, “That is the difference. He has made the cuts. It was going to be \$675 million, and now it is \$644 million.” But it is not \$644 million; it is \$619 million. I have never seen an item of expenditure also include an item of non-expenditure—the items that the government is not going to spend money on actually being included as expenditure. This gives us some idea, just a little taster, of the fraud that is being perpetrated in the name of royalties for regions.

We have gone through the budget. We have not aggregated all the items that were not spent in the 2008-09 year. That will be a very large figure as well. Basically the minister has put his foot on the hose for nine months to

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

give him more freedom to boost things up in the 2009-10 year. We have gone through the budget and done a bit of a calculation of what has come out of the budget in regional Western Australia to see which existing commitments are no longer there. We did not count all of the cuts in services that we know are there. The minister knows, as well as we do, that we are never going to be able to aggregate that because the replies that we have received to questions asked in Parliament are that the minister cannot separate recurrent expenditure for regional and for metropolitan areas. It will only be over a period of time that we find out all the services that have been cut to enable the minister to have his royalties for regions. These are largely capital items and a few very big non-capital items like grants. The figure that we have come to is in the order of \$400 million. A sum of \$400 million of existing commitments has been taken out of the budget—and we are only talking about this coming year. The figure gets much worse as we move across the forward estimates. If we look at this year, of the money that was in the budget that is no longer in the budget —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is that for 2008-09?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No. This is for 2009-10. In theory, had the money not been spent in 2008-09 as well, we could have put that in also. That would be very valid. In due course we will do that. At the moment we are unpacking what we can. Obviously we will find more as we go on. We have been fair. There are things like the projects in agriculture, such as to move their buildings et cetera—we are not counting those. We understand that we cannot really say that that is necessarily regional expenditure. We are looking at things like Caring for Our Country. Across the forward estimates \$86 million comes out; this year \$11 million comes out. The Kalgoorlie courthouse—\$17 million comes out. Carnarvon police complex—\$17 million comes out of there.

Mr B.J. Grylls: How much at Carnarvon?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: For this year, \$17 million.

Mr B.J. Grylls: What was the one before that?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The Kalgoorlie courthouse. We have not counted the Coalfields Highway. That is a separate issue. We recognise that the minister put that in the budget and he has taken it out. That is another style of broken promise and that shows —

Mr B.J. Grylls: Will you table this at the end so that I do not have to write them all down?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I will provide the minister with a list. I will not provide him with the one I have written on, but I am certainly happy to provide him with a list. The minister can get one of his staff to find it in *Hansard*.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: It is in the budget papers.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes. I refer to minor works under Main Roads, which will lose \$19 million this year. We have been generous and said that only 60 per cent of the minor works are in regional areas. Usually it is a lot more than that. We are saying that \$11 million will come out of that area. The very loyal and delightful member for Kalgoorlie is aware that the Wiluna road will lose funding of \$24 million over the forward estimates. This year the Coolgardie-Esperance port access highway will lose money; Albany Regional Hospital will lose \$34 million; Busselton integrated district hospital will lose \$15 million; and Horizon Power's new connections will lose \$2.2 million. A very interesting item here is the regional land and acquisition development. The Labor government did the very important part of the work, and the minister is now taking great credit for all the work we did, particularly in Karratha and Port Hedland.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Do you take credit for the \$2 000 a week rent?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Everything the Minister for Regional Development has announced is a project that was already underway under the Labor government—the bulldozers were in there. When it is all finished, the minister —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: This is extraordinary. There is such concern about land development, yet across the forward estimates, \$131 million will come out of regional land development and acquisition, including \$32 million this financial year. I find that extraordinary. Of course, huge cuts are being made to the Water Corporation's budget. The country infill sewerage program is an example. I think we are being pretty generous in the way we are calculating these cuts. But we estimate—we are basing this on past experience—that about a third of the Water Corporation's programs are in regional areas.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: It is debatable, but we do not want to overstate it. We have calculated that, in this year's budget alone, the Water Corporation will cut \$123 million out of its budget for country Western Australia. That includes the vast list of sewerage infill. The member for Kalgoorlie is trying to get his courthouse back. He keeps going over and chatting to the minister. The Water Corporation budget is particularly interesting because it will totally chop the sewerage infill program. I think the member for Pilbara would be interested to know whether a very important part of the revitalisation of Port Hedland involves the sewerage infill program. I think that in its last budget the Labor government put something in the order of \$7 million into the infill sewerage program —

Mr T.G. Stephens: \$7.2 million.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: — specifically for Port Hedland. It seems to me that if there is no sewerage infill program, if it has been totally deferred—that is what the budget papers suggest to us—an infill sewerage program will not be developed in Port Hedland. Is that a correct assumption?

Mr B.J. Grylls: Keep talking.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The man often so keen on interjecting says, "Keep talking." We of course know that the sewerage infill program is overwhelmingly a regional Western Australian program. Among the country projects—the opposition Whip, who is not here, would love this—Dawesville is counted as country. That aside, these are the areas that will not be funded this year if we take the budget papers as they are, although we learnt from the Premier today that projects such as the nickel project will go ahead. It might not be in the budget but apparently the contracts might have been let. That is pretty amazing. All this stuff can happen, but it does not have to be in the budget!

Mr M. McGowan: The budget doesn't matter.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No. I am looking for a little bit of guidance from the minister. We might find that Bunbury, Nannup, Port Hedland, Falcon, Bridgetown, Pemberton and Mt Barker, all the places listed on this sheet, are supposedly getting infill sewerage this year, but there is no money in the budget for that. Is infill sewerage one of those projects such as Esperance nickel: it can be done even though we do not have the money? Is it like the Oakajee port and can be done, but we do not have the money? Or is it like the Northbridge Link and it can be done, but we do not have the money? I suspect it might involve more magic; that is, the money gets taken out of the Water Corporation budget, slipped around and popped into the Pilbara revitalisation project and then have green and yellow put all around it and—voila!—it is called royalties for regions. This is what is happening.

Mr M.P. Murray: We can get chocolate biscuits when we go in the door.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: He counts the biscuits, the tight bugger. They should have gold chips in them.

Mr M.P. Murray: Don't take too many or you'll be told off.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is right. We can see that these guys focus on the big issues when they go to community meetings. They seem to have attention deficit disorder and are just looking at the biscuit consumption!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is right. Maybe they want to save biscuits for the workers.

We have heard extraordinary statements about Caring for Our Country and "We are taking the money out of this project because the commonwealth does not require us to do matching grants any more." It is not saying that matching grants cannot be done and that we cannot continue to put money into these things. That is not a justification.

Mr V.A. Catania: What about Oakajee?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is right.

That money has gone and we hear, "We'll think of other good things to do later on." The money is not actually being kept in the budget so that there is some there for those other great things the government can do—no; in it just goes.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

We have heard also about the transmission line. Okay, I think there are a lot of very, very good arguments for why we need a transmission line from Pinjar, the “north country”. But the Premier does not like all this modern transmission base. He has a real thing against transmission. He does not like it. He likes gas pipelines and stand-alone power stations. He is not all that interested in alternative power. He does not care that a project will force the prospective solar project out of Perenjori or that it will compromise the wind farm. He has a real thing for pipelines and he wants a gas pipeline. At least we are entitled to think that there is another way of delivering this power, but we should not take all the money out of the budget for it. He is not saying that we do not have to do anything; he is saying, “We haven’t decided exactly what we will do, so there will be no money for it.”

The opposition is deeply concerned about the fraud that is being perpetrated on the people of regional Western Australia, because this slogan “royalties for regions” is being used in a very deceitful way. The minister had the cheek and the temerity to state in his media statement that he is injecting the money that the Treasurer has chopped off the top —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: \$25 million.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes, but the Minister for Regional Development has included that as one of his expenditure amounts. If people want to see the fruits of that \$25 million, where do they go to inspect them? If it is to be injected into the regions, is it like a little statue or something—the antimatter of regional investment?

Mr V.A. Catania: It’s for new deckchairs on the *Titanic*.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is right, with able seaman Grylls at the side.

In the first instance, one can only presume this was a mistake. Is the minister so fraudulent to think he could tell people that the cash injection included money that he was not spending? We go through project after project, and we could quite properly look at what was not spent in 2008-09 and add that in, which would make the figures worse. Current commitments amounting to \$400 million have been taken out of the budget. The royalties for regions net benefit at very best is \$219 million. However, that does not take into account all the cuts to services in hospitals and education resulting from the need for the Treasurer to fund the rest of the project. This is not so much about wanting to invest money into the regions; this is more about spreading slogans and green and gold banners all over regional Western Australia. How can the government advance the interests of the National Party? This is a grave deceit against the community of regional Western Australia. Ultimately, when the hoopla dies down, people will see through it, and the shallowness of the minister’s undertakings will be seen. We will be on the watch.

Mr B.J. Grylls: From Canberra?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: From wherever I am, I will be watching the minister. Every move he makes, every step he takes, I will be watching him. The opposition will be very vigilant about the Pilbara revitalisation program. We support the program—of course more money needs to be injected into the Pilbara; we do not have any difficulty with that. However, we want there to be honesty about how much the government is putting in, and how much of the funding is being rebadged, or is being funded from cuts to critical services. We know the seats that the government has targeted. The National Party says it does not want the police complex in Carnarvon because it cannot put the green and gold on it. Everyone acknowledges that Carnarvon has needed a new police station for some time. Obviously, there was a controversy about where the police station and justice complex was to be located, but it was finally resolved. However, that project is of no interest to the minister because he cannot put green and gold around it. He says that the project should be cut, so that he can get the money and put it into other projects that he can wrap in green and gold. We know what the minister is doing. I do not doubt that he has a genuine interest in regional Western Australia, but he has massively overstated what he has been able to achieve. He has entered into an agreement that has turned out to be a complete and utter fraud. It is not 25 per cent of royalties over and above existing budgetary commitments. That is what the minister promised, and that is what he reaffirmed in the first couple of weeks of government, but the government is definitely not delivering on it.

We have some fabulous regional members—people who have gone in, fought hard and won the battle for the Labor Party in the regions. Each of them has done magnificent things in attracting resources to their communities, and they want to contribute to the debate. The opposition, as a team, is absolutely united. There needs to be far greater honesty about what the government has achieved under the royalties for regions scheme. We will make sure that the projects that have been taken out of the budget are not rebadged as royalties for regions, because that would be a fraud on the community.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West) [4.25 pm]: I support the motion moved by the member for Armadale, who is the shadow spokesperson for regional development in the Labor Party. Of all the regional areas in Western Australia, I have to say that the electorate of North West is probably the biggest loser. If there were a biggest loser competition, North West would win it. I am glad that the Minister for Regional Development is here, and will hopefully make a contribution to this debate. I used to call him the minister for trinkets, but after last week's budget, I cannot even call him that. I have worked out another name for the minister, but I will save it for the end of my speech. I have been looking at the budget, working out what has been taken out of the seat of North West, and it has been growing day by day. So far, I have calculated that up to \$120 million has been taken out, slashed, cut—whatever we might call it—from the previous Labor government's budget. I cannot believe it, but I think in total we are looking at about \$400 million that has been taken out of regional Western Australia, at the moment, as far as we can see. That does not even take into account the three per cent cuts that have happened to regional Western Australia in health and police.

Mr B.J. Grylls: You weren't going to have any three per cent cuts, were you?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I was not, personally. Since the minister is here, can I ask him what the point of royalties for regions is when the health, police and education budgets in regional Western Australia are being cut? I have 15 towns in my electorate, and as I go around from town to town I find they are concerned about the service delivery in these three vital departments that service regional Western Australia. They are concerned that they will not be able to meet the demand, which is already stretching the resources.

I spoke last night about how the Gascoyne has missed out. It is not even on the radar. I cannot even say what the region got. The member for Armadale raised a couple of the projects that have been slashed. I have here the front page of the *Northern Guardian* that came out today. The headline reads "Justice complex scrapped". This is a very important project, as I outlined last night. I do not want to go into the detail of the reasons it was so important to get this project underway. Every other project pales into insignificance, because this is the first piece of the jigsaw puzzle for Carnarvon, to attract private investment to build up the tourism industry. The Liberal-National government—I like saying that—has scrapped the Carnarvon justice complex; that is, the police station and courthouse. The previous government allocated \$38 million for that project. I understand that the amount was increased to \$58 million.

Mr B.J. Grylls: That is typical of one of your projects—cost blow-outs.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister may laugh, but he should get on a plane and go to Carnarvon. I am sure he will be greeted by a lot of people who will be calling for him to deliver the justice complex that we fought so hard for. As the member for Armadale said, we fought so hard for it that I even tested my friendships in this place over the very important issue of relocating the complex. The minister has undone the four years of tough work that the community put into this.

Sometimes it may be possible to justify pushing these things out, but much more importantly, when it comes to health, we have lost the second stage of the Carnarvon Regional Hospital, to which the previous government had allocated \$6.7 million.

Ms R. Saffioti: Shame.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is a great shame. The previous government allocated \$6.7 million towards upgrading the Carnarvon Regional Hospital, which included a public dentist.

Mr B.J. Grylls: What year?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There is no money for the hospital, even in the out years. The minister sits there and laughs. When I was in the other place, a very wise man—a man who has been a member of this Parliament for as long as I have been alive, Hon Norman Moore—would stand and say to our side, "You are looking very arrogant." He also said that, looking back on the Court government years, he had worked out towards the end that they had also become arrogant, and he knew that that would be the end of that government. I will give the minister some advice, because, having sat in the other place, I think that Hon Norman Moore is a very wise man: the Minister for Regional Development is so arrogant. The people of Carnarvon want a justice complex and a hospital. The Howard government closed down the only aged care facility between Geraldton and Port Hedland, and that has clogged the hospital in Carnarvon. It desperately needs an upgrade and more beds. Carnarvon also desperately needs a public dentist, because we do not have one. The minister sits there and laughs and ridicules, but this is serious. This is about people's lives, their wellbeing and about being able to live in regional Western Australia. The minister sits there and smiles. I hope that Hansard can see that the minister is laughing and ridiculing what I have to say. It is just unbelievable.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

The people of Carnarvon and the Gascoyne region know exactly what the National Party is all about; it is all about trying to sell them \$1—if not 50c—and taking \$20. We have seen two major projects disappear. I am tired of standing in this place and telling members—I am sure members will agree with me—about all the projects that have been lost in my electorate.

I turn now to a very important road, which is the Carnarvon-Gascoyne Junction road. I have said this before; I feel as though I am repeating myself, but I will keep doing so, because hopefully it will eventually sink in to the small minds of the government. The Carnarvon-Gascoyne Junction road was not sealed when the previous government came to power. Between 2001 and 2008 the member for Armadale, as Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, delivered \$21.3 million for the sealing of more than 140 kilometres of that road. There are now only 25 kilometres of that road left to be sealed. The previous government had set aside the rest of the money in the budget to finish that sealing. One might think that it is only 25 kilometres of dirt track, but I can tell members that it is a very dangerous section of the road; a lot of cattle are out there. After the Gascoyne Junction Police Station was closed, the now Minister for Police said that its closure was a political decision on the part of the previous government. I have since asked the minister whether he will reopen the Gascoyne Junction Police Station, and he now says that it is an operational issue! It is amazing how many promises have been broken since last September. If the remaining unsealed 25 kilometres of the Carnarvon-Gascoyne Junction road is sealed, it will enable police pursuit cars to travel between Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction. Police currently have to rely on the availability of a four-wheel-drive vehicle to get to Gascoyne Junction. As a matter of safety, that road needs to be sealed, but that has been lost. We are looking at a cost of only \$4 million.

The previous government also had money in the budget to upgrade the irrigation system in Carnarvon, which is vital to the region. The previous state government and the federal government had allocated money to upgrade the irrigation system to assist growers, especially during the heatwaves that are experienced from time to time in Carnarvon. However, that money also seems to have disappeared. I have said in this place before that the current government is running around saying to the growers in Carnarvon, “If you want an irrigation system, we want you to sign on this dotted line to say that you’ll accept up to 800 hectares of expansion in the horticultural district of Carnarvon.” We have all seen what happens in the eastern states when they put pressure on the water supply, and what is done to the land when they allow the big boys to come in. I had hoped that the Minister for Agriculture and Food would be here to listen to my comments. The growers in Carnarvon do not want expansion. If one looks at the horticultural precinct of Carnarvon, there is about 600 hectares of land not being used that could be used if they wanted to increase the amount of production. Why would the government allow the big companies, the faceless people, to come into the community and exploit and severely damage the operations of the smaller growers in Carnarvon? That is the only money allocated in the budget for this area—\$500 000 has been allocated to basically put a gun to the growers’ heads and to say, “Sign this dotted line, and you’ll get your irrigation system.” I will continue to raise this issue in this place, because I think the government is making a grave mistake, and I think this is due to the government’s lack of understanding of the horticultural district of Carnarvon.

As I look around the Gascoyne region, we also had boat pens. I keep pointing to the member for Armadale because when she was Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, she delivered a huge amount to the north west. When the member for Armadale walks around the streets up there, people mob her and say, “Thank you very much.” They congregate around the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure because she has a track record for delivering the projects that are needed by communities. We all know that there is a shortage of boat pens in Western Australia. The previous government had money allocated to expand the number of boat pens in Exmouth harbour. That seems also to have disappeared. Given the need for extra boat pens in Western Australia, let alone Exmouth, I cannot believe that this infrastructure project has disappeared. Similarly, I cannot see where the government is heading—if, indeed, it is heading in any direction—with the expansion of the harbour at Exmouth. Yet again, it was the member for Armadale who commenced the project to expand the harbour, to increase tourism, and to allow the oil and gas industries to have a lay-down area from which to work, yet it does not seem as though any money has been allocated for any of these projects.

As we continue, we can see a theme developing. What has the royalties for regions program delivered? Perhaps the minister can let me know either now or during his speech what he has delivered for the Gascoyne region. What is he delivering? What are his plans? I cannot see any plans for the infrastructure projects for which the community fought so hard. Many of my colleagues in this chamber will know how hard I had to fight for many of these projects to occur. It is a real slap in the face for the minister to take them away within eight months of coming to government. I cannot see what the royalties for regions program has delivered to the north west. As I travel around and visit towns in my electorate, I cannot see anything having been delivered. In Karratha there has been the announcement of a \$300 million fund for the revitalisation of Pilbara towns. That sounds like a lot of

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

money, and it is a lot of money. However, when it is broken down over four years and divided into the amounts that towns actually receive—particularly the towns of Karratha, Dampier, Roebourne, Wickham and Point Samson—it is not a huge amount. There is money for a leisure and learning precinct, which is great; the people of the Shire of Roebourne thank the government for that, but it is only \$23 million. That is the only money that the royalties for regions program has delivered to the electorate of North West. Although the Pilbara region earns probably close to \$2 billion in royalties for this state, Karratha gets only \$23 million! I am sorry, Minister for Regional Development, I should correct myself: plus Karratha is getting a few underground powerlines! I do not understand what royalties for regions is delivering to my electorate.

I turn to the election commitments made under royalties for regions. I have a flyer that was put out by National Party candidate Tom Day. It states —

What we can achieve in regional WA with our share of the royalty flow ...

\$ New houses and free rent for teachers, nurses, police and essential workers

Has the minister delivered that?

Mr B.J. Grylls: No!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Will the minister be delivering that?

Mr B.J. Grylls: Yes!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I would like to see that! Is the minister saying that he will deliver free rent for teachers, nurses, police and essential workers?

Mr B.J. Grylls: I'm telling you we will deliver our commitments under the housing and workforce plan, and that includes rent incentives for those workers.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No, no, no, no—hang on a second!

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: “Free rent for teachers, nurses, police and essential workers”. Would the minister like me to table it so that he can actually see what his commitments were?

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Members, I go on, because there is a lot more to talk about. I think the minister will remember—I do, because I was there—that when we were in Karratha campaigning, the minister stood, after having let all the major parties go first, and in front of probably 100 public service workers, and ridiculed both the Labor Party and Liberal Party for not doing enough for public service employees.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The now Minister for Regional Development stood and said that if the National Party had the balance of power, it would deliver—that he would deliver—the district allowance that they had requested. Am I correct in saying that the now Minister for Regional Development stood up and said that he would support their claim?

Mr B.J. Grylls: No, I said that I thought that the district allowance program had some merit, and I also said —

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Let me finish!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Members, let the minister hang himself!

Mr B.J. Grylls: Let me finish, because you asked for the interjection. I also said that I would like to compare the district allowance to the rent incentive plan that we had and see which one could deliver the best benefit. That is exactly what we're doing as we speak.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: My recollection, and the recollection of 100 other people in that room, was that the minister said that he would support the district allowance requested by the Community and Public Sector Union—am I correct?

Mr B.J. Grylls: I won't do both.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Another broken promise! I am glad that the minister is in the chamber and that Hansard has recorded that. I know that the minister was asked that question on Friday in Karratha at the budget lunch. The former Labor government used to have budget lunches and breakfasts in Carnarvon and Karratha, but this time we did not have one in Carnarvon—I wonder why!

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: What I am really concerned about is the infrastructure projects promised by the Liberal Party, which are now being rebadged as royalties for regions. I have a newspaper advertisement that states —

“A Liberal Government will allocate \$10 million to address the *chronic* underfunding of Pilbara health services

That is for the Nickol Bay Hospital. This was a newspaper advertisement placed by Rod Sweetman, a former Liberal Party member of this place. He was a very good member.

Mr P.B. Watson: He had a very high opinion of the Premier!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: He had a very high opinion of the Premier!

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Anyway, we will save that discussion for another time because there is too much to get through and too many projects have been either forgotten about, cut, slashed—whatever we want to call it.

Suddenly, \$10 million has been rebadged as royalties for regions funding. If I recall correctly, last night, when I raised with the Minister for Health the \$6.7 million cut in funding for the Carnarvon Regional Hospital—it was not even mentioned in the forward estimates, it is not even mentioned in the out years—his comment was —

I’m going to go cap in hand to the Leader of the National Party asking him to save me and give me the money out of his budget.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Isn’t that incredible? There is a classic example. You can only do it if there is some way of wrapping it up in green and gold! I mean, this is a fraud!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I went on to explain how important some of these projects that have been cut are to the community, to which the Minister for Regional Development responded —

I am happy for you to continue making a fool of yourself by not knowing what you are talking about.

That was the response I got! He sits there and he smirks and laughs and giggles—he is an arrogant minister! I can tell him that the public are now starting to see how arrogant he actually is!

Mr B.J. Grylls: That was because you said the power project was scrapped, and it’s not! You won’t answer that, will you? Let Hansard record that: the member for North West said the power project was scrapped!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Order, members! I understand the Minister for Lands’ passion for the regions; however, I would appreciate it if he would save his interjections for when he is on his feet and has the call. The member for North West has the call.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Another very important project that the Gascoyne in general has missed out on, but particularly Carnarvon, is the provision of a boat ramp. Owners of boats in Carnarvon tend to use the coast, be it Shark Bay, Coral Bay or Exmouth. Here we go: this community cried out for a boat ramp, which the previous Labor government committed to building. Would members believe that Carnarvon—a coastal town—does not have a boat ramp that is suitable.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Is that right?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It has got a piece of concrete that is sinking.

Mr T.K. Waldron: You had eight years to fix it!

Mr T.G. Stephens: You’ve been here nine months—get on with it!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I hope the member will come and look at it.

Mr T.K. Waldron: I didn’t know that.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: If not every house, nearly every second house in my electorate has a boat.

Mr T.K. Waldron: So they’re not doing too badly!

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Perhaps this does not come under royalties for regions funding, but I am sure the present government will be asked to provide a boat ramp for Carnarvon.

Mr T.K. Waldron: How much does a boat ramp cost?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We allocated \$3 million.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Allocated?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Absolutely!

Mr B.J. Grylls: There was a lot of allocating and not much building in your time, wasn't there?

Mr P. Papalia: When we put stuff in the budget, we spent it!

Mr T.K. Waldron: No, you didn't!

Mr B.J. Grylls: No, you didn't!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I do not think the public care, as long as they get a boat ramp!

I will quote from a media statement by the Minister for Transport about how boating facilities will benefit from fee increases. I want to be on record in *Hansard* as quoting this, because I know what will happen. I will just read some of the media statement —

Increases to boat registration fees will help provide better facilities for Western Australian boat owners.

Transport Minister Simon O'Brien said increased registration fees were necessary to meet the growing demand for new facilities.

“The number of registered boats and vessels in Western Australia increased by 24.6 per cent to more than 90,000 in the past five years,” Mr O'Brien said.

I want to put on record that I suspect that the money earned through these increased fees will suddenly be rebadged—will the Minister for Regional Development have the boat ramp built and badge it as royalties for regions? I do not think the community cares as long as they get their boat ramp! I do not think I care as long as we get our boat ramp! He can paint the wood green and gold, whatever he wants, but I want to ensure that we get a boat ramp because we have missed out on royalties for regions. The people want a boat ramp! I mentioned two major issues earlier.

Mr T.R. Buswell: How much did the Shire of Carnarvon get from local government funding; from royalties for regions?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is the Treasurer saying they have to build a boat ramp?

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I'm just asking how much they got.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am asking a question.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does the Treasurer want the local government to build projects that the state government should build? That is the biggest problem with royalties for regions. Anyway, I will get back to what I wanted to say.

Two of the biggest issues in town—apart from missing out on the justice complex and the hospital—one is the boat ramp in Carnarvon, which is desperately needed, but the second issue is the construction of an aged care facility. Now that the second stage of the Carnarvon hospital, which would have cost \$6.7 million, has been cancelled, we now desperately need an aged care facility. The Howard government took away an aged care facility from Carnarvon. If the minister can supply some funds for an aged care facility from royalties for regions, that would be greatly appreciated by the community. I am giving the minister some hints, some ideas and some projects so that he can try to redeem himself. I do not think he has a hope in hell of doing so. I have a new nickname for him, which I will not reveal yet as I still have five minutes left.

As the member for Armadale said, a heap of projects have been cut out of the budget, one of which is very important to my electorate. I will keep harping on about Carnarvon because the Gascoyne got absolutely nothing; in fact, its allocation has gone backwards at a rate of knots. The poor old Minister for Agriculture and Food is getting a hard time because he is severely misguided about what the growers in the horticultural district want in Carnarvon. The previous government committed \$125 million, which was potential state matching funding, to the commonwealth's Caring for our Country initiative. What happened to that \$125 million that we had budgeted for? It looks as though \$90 million was slashed from it. The Caring for our Country fund enables research to be undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and Food. We need research, particularly in places

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

such as Carnarvon, when we are talking about importing bananas or other fruits that could harbour diseases. The government slashed \$90 million from that funding. Will that protect the food bowl that the government wants to create at the Ord River? It is trying to promote the food bowl but it is cutting \$90 million from that fund. How can we protect our agricultural community? I could talk all day and all night about projects that have been slashed. I refer to the former government's spending in regional WA in the 2008-09 budget. A media statement states —

“In 2008-09, capital works spending per capita in the metropolitan region will be \$1,459 per person,”

That is what the previous government spent in metropolitan Perth. It continues —

“But across regional Western Australia the Government will spend a \$3,296 per person—that is \$1,837 or 126 per cent per person more.”

I am proud of the track record of the previous Gallop and Carpenter governments, particularly in the north west. The member for Armadale was part of that. She delivered major projects that the previous Court government failed to deliver. Not one doctor was in Karratha prior to 2001; now we have 10 permanent doctors. There was no crossing in Carnarvon but we now have a bridge, the Bickley wharf, stage 1 of the hospital has been built—stage 2 is underway—and there are other projects. All these projects were started by the former government.

I used to call the Minister for Regional Development the minister for trinkets but I have a new name for him.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What's that new name?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I believe we have the *Titanic* on the other side of the chamber. The Premier is the captain of the *Titanic*, the Treasurer is the deckchair boy and the Minister for Regional Development is Leonardo at the front of the bow, shouting, “I'm the king of the world!” We all know what happened in that story. This budget is a classic one-term government budget.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [4.54 pm]: I suppose in some ways boys will be boys. I wish to speak about a very serious issue—royalties for regions. In the early days I was one of the members who certainly welcomed the idea, but it has gone off the rails in a very short time. Once a government starts to double dip, it starts to lose credibility within the community. That is what I am seeing happening on a regular basis. We in Collie have not done too badly in recent times. We have weathered the recession quite well. At the moment it is probably the jobs centre of the south west, with the construction that is going on around the place. I just remind members that the former member for Collie was a member of the National Party. During that time the state was severely depressed, with unemployment rates of 9.7 per cent. There were no investment opportunities. Blocks could be bought for \$1 000. I have told this story before. I bought a block—half the Labor Party got in!—and later sold it for well over \$100 000. That was a case of backing one's own judgement or being a boofhead—I am not quite sure which.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Why didn't you ring me to buy one!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The worst part was that 10 blocks were for sale that day and they all went for the same price. If I had bought the 10 of them, I would not be here!

Things have happened recently. In today's press we read of the collapse of Great Southern, a tree farm group. Its collapse will impact on country areas. I only wish that the royalties for the regions gurus had not thrown money in the air and said, “You can have this, this and this; just put your hand up.” That is what happened in Collie. They said, “If you want it, you can have it; just tell us.” Now we have seen the impact in Bridgetown and Albany, where projects that were in the pipeline may have to be cancelled, or if they go ahead, it will result in unsustainable communities. In the first round the residents of Darkan were quite happy to say, “Yes, we'll have the new multipurpose sports facility cum leisure centre.”

Mr T.K. Waldron: That's a good project.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is a good project but I am talking about paying for it. A fair part of it was funded by royalties for the regions. The population of that area has decreased and some people in that area have gone broke. There are a lot of trees in that area but there is no income. We will have a problem with small communities burdened with debt. The shires that were responsible and put their money away—they were very frugal and looked after their assets—have now found that they also invested in that company, thinking that they would get a return. From what I read, they will get absolutely nothing. There is very little chance that they will get anything back, not even 10c in the dollar. That means that these people are out of pocket. That is where the mistake has been made with royalties for regions. It has not been thought out. I can understand the enthusiasm behind it. If one has enthusiasm, one must use one's brain. I do not think that has happened. There is no doubt that the ratepayers in those shires will find it very difficult to manage their budgets in the future. That is a huge

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

concern of mine. When faced with job losses, people move out of town. Some people who live in small country towns just cut their losses, leave their homes and get jobs somewhere else. No-one moves in because there is no employment. The gross rental value has dropped. The shires feel that a lot. The shops shut. All those things have come from that. I only wish that the government had stood back and thought royalties for regions through a lot more than it did.

It was mentioned that \$20 million has been taken away for the upgrade to the Coalfields Highway. It was even in the forward estimates. It has been reduced back to zero each year. I will speak about that later tonight. There is a major problem there. I can only thank Worsley Alumina and a few of the other companies that have put quite a bit of money into the road safety aspects of the highway. There are now lights at the Raymond Road turnoff, which were drastically needed, with one death that I know of on that corner. I was not able to achieve that outcome, but it is good to see that the private sector understood the problem and picked it up. It is not government money at all. With those sorts of projects being done, I cannot for the life of me understand why the government, and the National Party in particular, did not give its support and push strongly to get \$20 million for one of most important roads in the south west. When driving down there at six o'clock or a quarter to seven in the morning, it is bumper to bumper with people driving up the hill to go to work. The south west region is driven by Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd and Bluewaters power station. Another company is thinking about developing a \$2 billion investment, and shut-down work employs up to 150 people at a time. Each morning, up to 30 buses go up and down that road.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Is that between Collie and Bunbury?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes. Grain trucks also travel on the road and two coal trucks travel to Fremantle within 40 minutes of each other. A million tonnes of coal is transported on the highway. Some 200 000 tonnes of copper concentrate from Boddington will be transported to the bottom road and on the South Western Highway, and some will travel through Collie to split the load. The government is making mistakes about basic infrastructure. The railway line needs a couple more spurs or passing loops. More coal could be put onto rail and taken to the port. Unfortunately, the railway line to the port has been removed and it would require quite a large investment to restore.

It is good to see that the port access road is on its way, but there is a shortfall. We will get half a port access road. It will go only so far and then drop off. The Treasurer is not saying a great deal because it is in his region. I suppose that he is worried about his future because the development of Busselton District Hospital has also been pushed back. When he was in opposition, the Treasurer brought people into the public gallery and a very rude old lady gave me a rude finger sign. That was one of the Treasurer's constituents. I remember that incident well. The Treasurer brought busloads of people into the house —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: She will be giving the Treasurer the finger next, not me. This government is not going to build the hospital by one more brick. The Treasurer has moved to the city and forgotten about his electorate, which includes country people. They will see through the Treasurer. He cannot travel to his electorate just once a month and say that he is representing his constituents at full capacity, which they deserve. They elected the Treasurer to Parliament but he has forgotten them and left them behind. It is untenable that the Treasurer has delayed that project, which was a major plank in his campaign for re-election. There is no doubt that the Treasurer's constituents will judge him in four years' time because the hospital will not have been built.

We have talked about infill sewerage. The money from the royalties for regions program was to be used to encourage people to move to those regions so that they could be expanded and made sustainable, yet the government is taking away the basic infrastructure. Why will people move there? They cannot be expected to go back to using bucket toilets. That is what the government is expecting the people in those places to use. It would be an act of environmental vandalism to expect people to use septic systems. In most cases, the by-laws do not allow that anyway because the blocks are under 2 000 square metres; therefore, that cannot be done. That has forced the shires to subdivide blocks. We have seen the figure of 2 003, which do not have to have sewerage in there, but there is a septic system —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Are you saying that the cuts to the infill sewerage programs will stop subdivisions from happening?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The government is stifling places like Capel, where people cannot subdivide blocks. The funding for water treatment for Donnybrook and Capel has been withdrawn. How does the Treasurer expect those areas to expand? We have talked about the amalgamation of councils. The government wonders why people are working hard to stave off amalgamations. It is so that they can keep their identity in country areas. I

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

am sure that members on both sides of the chamber have heard people say that they want to keep their identity. How can that be done? The government must encourage growth but it has not done that. We have talked about funding being taken away for roads, water treatment plants and sewerage systems. That is really disappointing, in my book. They are the planks of every government, right down to the bottom. We have talked about shires existing to deal with roads, rates and rubbish. I believe that that sort of infrastructure should be at the top of the list of government departments and a government that has a reasonable Treasurer or Premier. We are losing out. It disappoints me that members of the National Party have not come out more strongly in support of the country towns that are missing out on that funding.

I know that other members want to speak. I will make a speech tonight when debating the budget. I will go into more detail about those matters when I talk to that. To my thinking, the budget has not been well thought out. The money has been thrown in the air. I spoke to the shires of Donnybrook and Collie, and it is a case of them having to grab what they can. It is not sustainable, and I stand by that.

MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara) [5.05 pm]: I do not know what is wrong with the Minister for Regional Development. He will not speak when he is invited to speak and when he is not invited to speak, he does speak. We are getting used to him.

I have a few points to make and I hope that we will then hear from the minister because it is important that we do. My points are these: the government is not entitled to perpetrate a fraud upon the people of regional Western Australia, and that is what it is doing. The government is not entitled to misuse taxpayers' funds and resources to advance, in a partisan political way, the interests of the National Party. The government is not entitled to do the regional areas of Western Australia the disservice of taking from them what they need to meet their full potential.

From an answer to a question that was asked of the Minister for Regional Development about the funds being utilised by the royalties for regions program, I have established that there is in fact money being spent that appears to be new money. I asked the Minister for Regional Development question on notice 826 about the total advertising budget for royalties for regions. The answer I received was that the advertising expenditure since 23 September 2008 is \$226 404.90. I will repeat that figure. I asked a question about the total advertising budget for the royalties for regions program but I did not get an answer to what the budget is; I got an answer about what the advertising expenditure is. The Minister for Regional Development might not know the difference, but I suspect that he does. There probably is not a finite budget for advertising; it is an unlimited bucket of money from which he is spending. So far, he has spent from that bucket \$226 404.90. I again ask the minister: what is the budget for advertising? Does he have a budget, or is it in fact a bottomless pit from which the National Party can draw funds to advertise in green and yellow the National Party's policy on royalties for regions? I note also that he said —

Mr B.J. Grylls: It is only green.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: It is green and yellow.

In his answer, the Minister for Regional Development said —

Further advertising is planned for later in the month with a budget of \$35,294.

I will turn now to another point. I went to the budget breakfast in Port Hedland. I asked the minister's office whether it would take me along because Parliament had been sitting the night before. I asked for a lift there, thinking that I could save taxpayers' money by jumping on the minister's plane, but was told that the plane was full. Presumably there were too many advertising consultants on board! I went there anyway and got to the budget breakfast in time but I nearly choked on my breakfast because the first thing I saw was a large black briefcase being marched into the room. On the side of the briefcase was a big National Party sign—not just the green and gold colours, but the full National Party sign. The National Party bag was carried in, as I understand it, by a highly regarded officer of government. That person had worked very hard in the offices of previous coalition ministers. I thought: God, what is in that bag? The bag was placed at the back of the room. The breakfast started and the next minute I saw the bag opened up and out came the TV camera! I would like to be advised at some stage whether that TV camera was paid for from the royalties for regions money or from the campaign expenditure of the National Party prior to the last election.

Mr B.J. Grylls: It is the property of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr P. Papalia: Was it green and yellow?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: No. On the side of the bag was a National Party sticker—not a government sticker. I have never ever heard such a party partisan political speech by a minister representing the government of

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Western Australia at one of those breakfasts. It was not as though it was the first time that I had seen partisan political parading by this minister. At a previous function in the Pilbara, the minister turned to the gathering and said, “You voted for royalties for regions, you voted for us, and we’re going to deliver.” He does not seem to notice that people in the Pilbara did not vote for him. They returned Labor members of Parliament. They are the first people to complain when the minister makes presumptions about them in his arrogant way. It is not National Party money. This is ultimately going to bring this lot down.

Mr V.A. Catania: Like the *Titanic*.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Absolutely. I hope that the Treasurer and others in this coalition are listening to what is going on with their colleagues in the bush. The National Party is simultaneously taking away a range of programs —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Underpinning the commitments to the regions was —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Hello, hello, hello—I am actually delivering a speech here!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carry on, member for Pilbara.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Sorry to interrupt the house!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, please let the member for Pilbara continue. He needs my protection.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Underpinning the agreement between the Liberals and the Nationals was a commitment that the additional funds from royalties for regions would be over and above those that were previously in place. Instead, we see the fraud whereby money is disappearing, both through the efficiency dividends from all the government programs and simultaneously —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Does the member support that or not?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Money disappearing from the regions? No, I do not. I wish to make the point to the Treasurer that he should spend money on areas where there is the capacity to grow the economy of this state and nation. An investment by government in the Pilbara region at this time will produce a dividend. Do not act fraudulently or use the pea and thimble trick and simply take away programs and funding for basic services. The Minister for Regional Development heard a complaint at the budget breakfast in Port Hedland last Friday. The complaint related to a bus service that was withdrawn, which was vital to the operations of the region. Funds will presumably be delivered back to Treasury through efficiency dividends. It will come up with National Party advertising of a quarter of a million bucks to support the political agenda of the National Party. Instead, invest in the region to ensure that the region has the capacity to deliver benefits to this state and nation, as well as a return to the people of the Pilbara.

I notice another criticism raised by the upper house committee about the royalties for regions program. Members might recall that in the pre-election commitments the justification given for this program was that regional Western Australia has a large number of Aboriginal people in acute need of programs to respond to their challenges. A legitimate critique was made of programs. There appears to be nothing in the guidelines for royalties for regions that would guarantee any funds flowing to the needs of the disadvantaged Aboriginal communities of regional Western Australia. There was no evidence led before that standing committee. Absolutely pivotal to the programs of our team, as we were heading towards the election, was an investment strategy aimed at responding to the challenges of all people in regional Western Australia. The critique delivered by the upper house committee sets out that missing from this program is the government’s priorities. Where is the guideline that would guide the administrators of the scheme to the people in greatest need?

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I asked for a reply. I tried to get the Minister for Regional Development up. I think we have a very unwilling Minister for Regional Development when it comes to parliamentary scrutiny. I note that he has a pretty large book in front of him. I bet that book did not cost a quarter of a million dollars of taxpayers’ funds! I bet the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was not running around with a government-funded advertising camera. I bet she did not run around with government officers carrying briefcases displaying party flags. I know she did not run around. I know that she carried herself, in those budget briefings in the regions, with proper respect to the community —

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Mr B.J. Grylls: Do you think the royalties for regions plan is a Nationals —

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The minister is using it that way. It should not be that way. This is the other point I want to make.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Do you think our logo is a Nationals logo?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I do not know whether the minister is serious about the regions—I once thought he was but I am no longer convinced. I do not know what has happened to him. I do not know whether he has been corrupted by the Liberals so quickly in office or whether something else has happened to him.

In the process of looking at the experience of Indigenous affairs funding, one sees the great failure of the bucket that was called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission funds. The experience is that when funds are put in a quarantine bucket, all the other arms and agencies and departments and spheres of government walk away from their responsibility to Aboriginal people and say, “There is work to be done with Aboriginal people. It has to come out of that bucket.” They suddenly walk away from this area of responsibility. The example of what was happening in Indigenous affairs is now happening in regional Western Australia. We see that instead of the orderly rolling out of programs to respond to the challenges of health, education and transport across all arms and agencies of government, the minister has fallen for the two-card trick. The Treasurer has taken the minister as a mug.

The Minister for Regional Development is allowing all those arms and agencies of government to do no planning for the new infrastructure that the regions need. There is nothing in the forward estimates about the Port Hedland Regional Hospital, which is designed for the way Port Hedland once was. There is nothing there to cater for the Port Hedland that is emerging with a very large population. There is nothing that brings it to stages 3 and 4. In my part of the Pilbara, there is not a single new school planned over the four years of the forward estimates, yet South Hedland is in desperate need of a new school. If funds are going to be spent in the region, those arms and departments and portfolios will say that it will have to come out of the green and gold quarantine bucket. They have to become some sort of magic pudding. Like Norman Lindsay’s cartoon story, everything has to come out of this pudding. It should not work that way. The challenges of regional Western Australia are big enough. They require statesmanship, not political posturing and grandstanding, and not someone who is simply interested in the narrow, short-term interests of the National Party.

The other part of this problem is that members opposite will soon be under the scrutiny of a national government that has been prepared to put money into Western Australia on the basis that it thinks that Western Australia is serious about solid investment in the economic needs of this state. The federal government will not be impressed by money being misappropriated from the royalties for regions program to be spent on advertising the National Party, and then being asked to somehow bankroll the other areas of government programs that should be core government responsibility. The federal government will ask why it would partner with a crowd that is preoccupied by the narrow partisan politics of the National Party. The Liberals have long given up on the bush, but we find them in bed with a group that is more interested in its own political advancement than in the best interests of nation building or building the regions. This is an issue that should be well above partisan politics, yet the National Party has dragged us straight back into a preoccupation with the electoral cycle and getting the National Party back into a number of seats in the Parliament so that it can look after its own access to the government chauffeured drivers and planes on which no-one can travel other than card-carrying members of the National Party or public servants prepared to carry around black bags containing National Party flags. I do not approve of it.

I am the recipient of complaints from within government from people who object violently to being government officers and having to administer such a party political program as the National Party is delivering. Let me predict that it is going to be the National Party’s undoing. They do not cop it; they do not like it and they do not vote National; and they do not like being caught in a program coated in green and yellow. They did not cop it when we were in government. They would not be used in a party political way, nor should they be. When the Minister for Regional Development can advertise something that he has actually achieved, I would not mind a copy of the minister’s tabled book.

I wonder whether the Minister for Regional Development is ready to get to his feet. If he is, I will willingly sit down and encourage him to respond to the range of points that have been made. It is extraordinary, is it not? He is being given an opportunity to respond. Maybe he will tell us whether he accepts that some of my apprehensions about his program are real; that is, he is misusing it. He will not even tell us the budget for his advertising. He has told us that the expenditure so far is nearing a quarter of a million dollars. Simultaneously, he is part of a government that is withdrawing programs such as the infill sewerage program for Port Hedland. We

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

seem to have lost \$7.2 million worth of roll-out of the Water Corporation's delivery of the infill sewerage program for Port Hedland. That has gone suddenly, yet the minister is the self-professed prince of the regions.

Mr B.J. Grylls: I think the member for Armadale is a self-professed visionary of the railway.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: She has a story of which we are all proud.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: There is nothing the Minister for Regional Development can do —

Mr P. Papalia: She has done something.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: She has. In the history of Western Australia there will never be another minister who has done as much for Western Australia as the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Can I say by way of interjection —

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Of course the member can; she can interject all she likes.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: The vision of the railway was not done by me; it was largely funded by the private sector.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: It was largely funded by the private sector. At least the member for Armadale has a record to show.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the member for Pilbara sit down.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I would be happy to, so long as you call me again, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would love to. I would hate to miss anything the member had to say. I ask members on the left to let their member be heard.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I hope at this stage the Minister for Regional Development will respond because serious charges have been made against him in this debate. He stands accused by the people of regional Western Australia of perpetrating a fraud. He is taking from them on the one hand by playing that ultimate fraud of a pea and thimble trick. It is disappearing out the door under the programs that are rapidly lost from the bush and re-emerging under a green and gold colouring scheme in a new thimble, and—da da!—the National Party has delivered part of the loot back into the regions. That is not good enough. It is not responding to the grand dream that regional Western Australia has for itself of delivering real job security and opportunities for people to live and prosper in the bush under governments of goodwill—every sphere of government across the political spectrum, not people preoccupied with narrow partisan politics.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [5.25 pm]: I will make a couple of brief comments. It is important that members of the house understand the context in which the government made a number of decisions in the lead-up to the budget. I am sure the Minister for Regional Development will adequately defend the royalties for regions program and adequately explain why regional Western Australia needs a focus on investing and making up for years of neglect. But I do not need to touch on that. I agree; I think the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was an interesting minister. I have said publicly and in this house that I think she has some fine qualities. It is a shame that some members opposite could not convince people like Joe Bullock, Jock Ferguson and Dave Kelly of that fact. But that is their problem, not mine.

One other point I want to make, and the member for Pilbara knows it is true —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have a cold so I cannot speak too loudly. The member for Pilbara commented that the only money being spent in regional Western Australia is that which comes out of the royalties for regions funding stream, if I can put it that way. I will read out the names of some schools in regional Western Australia that were funded, funnily enough, from consolidated revenue, not from royalties for regions.

Mr T.G. Stephens: Are they federal funds?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No. The amount of \$15 million of state money is allocated to Exmouth District High School, \$25 million to the Western Australia College of Agriculture, \$30 million to Dongara District High School, \$12 million to Mt Barker Primary School, \$77 million to Karratha Senior High School, \$26 million to Karratha Primary School, and \$16 million to Yakamia Primary School.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for North West!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is money being sourced from consolidated revenue.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Is the Treasurer suggesting that all those schools he referred to weren't in the forward estimates?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No; I am saying that they are funded from consolidated revenue via the education department.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We are not disputing that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Hold the bus. The member for Pilbara asserted that any expenditure in regional WA would come out of the royalties for regions bucket and be badged up as a National Party project. I am merely making the point that that is completely false.

Moving on Mr Deputy Speaker, it is the case that in the run-up to the budget, the government had to make some tough decisions to protect the underlying integrity of the state's finances and to keep our AAA credit rating, which we did last week. That is a fantastic achievement under the circumstances. That meant that we had to make—I am on the record as saying—\$7.6 billion worth of corrective action across the forward estimates. They are \$7.6 billion worth of difficult decisions to protect the underlying strength of the state's finances and preserve the AAA credit rating. Some of those corrective measures involved almost \$3 billion of reductions in government capital expenditure. Reductions were made in recurrent expenditure through the three per cent efficiency dividend and other measures. The important thing to understand is that \$7.6 billion worth of measures was spread right across government agencies and across regional and metropolitan Western Australia. That is a fact and it is clearly contained in budget paper No 3 and throughout budget paper No 2. We had to make hard decisions. We will not step back from our responsibility as a government to make those tough decisions. I have sat in my office for the past two days because I did not want to infect too many people listening to every member opposite basically refute —

Ms J.M. Freeman: There are some who say you do that all the time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Good point—I accept that!

I have sat here and heard every single member opposite who has spoken reject in one way or another nearly every single dollar of corrective measures the government introduced in the budget. They were saying that we should keep building this, or should not cut that.

Mr P. Papalia: You cancelled Secret Harbour.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We had to cancel Secret Harbour.

Mr V.A. Catania: For the record, I do reject it, because my electorate has missed out.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: All I am saying is that every single opposition member has stood up and said that the government should have kept this or that in, or done this or that. There should not be a wages policy because it is too onerous on people. Those arguments have been made time and again. The classic is that the Leader of the Opposition said this week that debt is unsustainable. On the one hand, the opposition is saying that debt is unsustainable, and on the other hand, it is asking the government to spend another \$7.2 billion.

Point of Order

Mr P.B. WATSON: We are talking about royalties for regions, and I think the Treasurer should get back onto that train of thought.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the Treasurer please return to the point?

Debate Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. The point I am trying to make is that the royalties for regions program is a government program for which every member on this side has responsibility. It is contained in the budget documents. This is a Western Australian government program. It is in the budget papers, it is open to scrutiny and it is delivering positive benefits to the regions.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Can I just ask you to clarify something?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, since the member is being so nice to me.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: The media statement from the Minister for Regional Development said that there was \$644 million in the program, but when we looked at the budget papers we saw that there was only \$619 million,

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

because \$25 million had been savings. Would you normally expect to put the amount that you were not spending in a media release announcing your expenditure?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I think it is important that everybody understands that the cuts that the government is having to make and the readjustments in funding flows are being shared across all programs of government. That is exactly what we did. It is clearly demonstrated in the royalties for regions section of the budget. I do not have any problem with the way these figures have been represented in the budget and publicly since the budget. The simple point I am trying to make is that the government handed down a difficult budget in difficult circumstances. That means that we had to make cuts and rearrange projects across a whole range of areas of government. There are some in Collie, and there are also some in my electorate of Vasse, including the Busselton District Hospital. They were difficult decisions, but within the context of that we are very pleased that our fiscal discipline has meant that the Liberal-National government has been able to deliver the royalties for regions program. We stand by that program; it has been endorsed by the cabinet and it is a Western Australian government program.

MR B.J. GRYLLS (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Regional Development) [5.33 pm]: I thank members for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. The great problem with this debate —

Mr V.A. Catania: Iceberg ahead!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West, you seem to have an unhealthy preoccupation with icebergs and deckchairs. Can you please let the Leader of the National Party continue?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The underlying problem with this debate is that members on the other side suggest that the 2009-10 budget should have been framed in the context of making no savings. This debate has been framed on the belief that no savings should have been made in the capital works program or through the three per cent efficiency dividend. Every member has stood up and said that there should have been no cuts to capital works in their electorates, and that no three per cent efficiency dividend should be applied to their electorates. I ask the member for Albany whether the three per cent efficiency dividend should have been applied across all departments affecting the electorate of Albany. I ask the member for Collie-Preston whether the three per cent efficiency cuts should be applied to all departments in his electorate.

Mr M.P. Murray: I have cuts everywhere.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Should they have applied to the electorate of Collie-Preston?

Mr M.P. Murray: No, never!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Talk about fraud! The other side of the house would have country Western Australia believe —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The members for Armadale, Warnbro and Collie-Preston will allow the Leader of the National Party to continue. This is becoming a screaming match.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Labor opposition is perpetrating the greatest fraud of all time on Western Australia by suggesting that it could have framed this budget without any savings at all. The three per cent efficiency dividend was first committed to by the member for Willagee as Premier, and endorsed by the then Treasurer, now Leader of the Opposition. It was their idea, and they have now scrapped it. We do not need a three per cent efficiency dividend! The opposition now says that it would not have had any of the \$7.6 billion in savings over the forward estimates proposed by the Liberal-National government. The opposition would not have had any of that. Everything would stay in the forward estimates. Then, today in Parliament, the leading question from the Leader of the Opposition stated that the \$19.1 billion debt figure was unsustainable.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, will you stop shouting across the chamber? I will not warn you again.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Leader of the Opposition said that during question time today, after all of these speeches by members opposite that the three per cent efficiency dividend should not apply to their own electorates, and that the savings across the forward estimates on capital works should not have applied to them. That is what they are on the record as saying, and the members for Albany, North West and Collie-Preston have just confirmed it again. However, today in question time, the Leader of the Opposition said —

Several members interjected.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Albany, will you stop shouting across the chamber?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Leader of the Opposition said today that the \$19.1 billion debt at the end of the forward estimates was unsustainable, and the state could not afford to carry it. I would like to see the Leader of the Opposition reconcile that with the speeches made to this Parliament by every single member opposite opposing the three per cent efficiency dividend and the cuts in the recent Liberal-National budget, which has been brought down in such a way to preserve the state's AAA credit rating. Of all the promises made after the election, I committed to ensuring that royalties for regions would not be at the expense of the AAA credit rating. I made the commitment to the member for Willagee and the member for Cottesloe that the royalties for regions plan would not jeopardise the AAA credit rating. Here today we see a farcical attempt by the opposition to suggest that it would have found no savings across the forward estimates. I have already said that \$7.6 billion in savings were found to ensure that the state's finances were properly managed, and to ensure that we maintained the state's AAA credit rating. Members opposite keep wanting to shunt that \$7.6 billion in savings on to the next electorate. They keep standing up and saying that their own electorates should be quarantined from any of those savings measures, and the savings should be shifted to the electorate next door. Unfortunately, it does not work like that. If members opposite want to have any credibility in this debate and put me under any pressure, they should outline where the \$7.6 billion in savings found by the Liberal-National government will come from. Is anyone from the opposition side of the house prepared by interjection to say where they will find that \$7.6 billion?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Minister, you have ignored the actual argument. The argument is that you've said that royalties for regions was going to be on top of existing commitments, but you've taken out the existing commitments, so it is not on top of that. We would like to advocate that you give Port Hedland its sewerage back.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Things are getting out of hand. Leader of the National Party, please continue.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: This argument defies all logic, if opposition members are not prepared to say how they would have brought down the budget last week. It is as simple as that. Members have to stand and say which cuts they would have made. The government had to find \$7.6 billion in cuts, and I refute what was put forward by the member for Armadale. The commitment that was made by the National Party after the election to both the member for Willagee and the member for Cottesloe was that the state's AAA credit rating was the rider that the royalties for regions program would be based upon.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I am very happy that the National Party was part of the Liberal-National government that delivered that.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: We have maintained the state's AAA credit rating, which was the key rider in all the reporting during the week after the election. That is where we were. It seems also that the members of the Labor opposition do not understand that there has been a substantial change in the state's finances in the months following the election. Since the midyear review, \$4 billion has been stripped from the state's revenue capacity; that is over five months. Members on this side like to go back to their electorates and hold their heads high, but the opposition ignores that. That is what makes the opposition completely irrelevant. I would suggest that the events of last Saturday may well be a result of the sort of attitude being displayed by members opposite. There were two floggings on Saturday; one was the Labor Party in the seat of Fremantle and the other was the East Fremantle Sharks against Swan Districts at East Fremantle Oval. Very different attitudes have been displayed in response to those two drubbings. The drubbing received by the Labor Party was met with a shrug of the shoulders. Members opposite certainly do not seem to be assessing why it happened, or falling in behind their leader and giving him support. The member for Armadale, in particular, has been backgrounding journalists —

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the minister stick to the actual motion moved by the member for Armadale?

Debate Resumed

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Scumbag, I do not background journalists.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: During a week in which the member for Armadale's party needed her to support the team after an embarrassing result in the Fremantle by-election —

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is obvious that the minister has no answers to the questions that have been raised in our speeches to the motion moved by the member for Armadale.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Carry on, Leader of the National Party.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The member for Armadale has failed to support her leader —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: What did you do to Max Trenorden?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Armadale for the first time.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There has been no recognition —

Point of Order

Mr P.B. WATSON: The minister asked the member for Armadale a question and she answered it. He is continually getting off the track and not talking about the point brought up by the member for Armadale. He obviously does not have the answers, so he is trying to make things up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Albany, the member for Armadale has been interjecting incessantly. I have called her to order for the first time. Leader of the National Party, continue, but please come back to the point. Member for Bassendean, I have made my ruling.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: At a time when the Leader of the Opposition needs a disciplined team behind him as the opposition goes through —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What was that, member for Albany?

Mr P.B. Watson: I said that we were not very happy with that decision, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have made my ruling, and that is it.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There seems to be a little sensitivity being displayed. It was all very well when opposition members were delivering their bile and vindictive comments to this side, but when they get a bit of it back, they start to get a bit shaky in the shoulders.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, come back to the point, please.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Leader of the Opposition's question in Parliament today outlined the philosophy of the Labor opposition, which is that the \$19.1 billion of debt was unsustainable and could not be allowed to grow. My challenge to each and every one of the members who have spoken to this motion today is that if they are going to support the Leader of the Opposition, they should outline where the \$7.6 billion in cuts will come from. They need to support the Leader of the Opposition's initial policy of a three per cent efficiency dividend. Until they do that, this debate is irrelevant, because we are not comparing forward estimates with forward estimates. There is a set of forward estimates on the Liberal-National side that supports the state's AAA credit rating and supports investment —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for North West to order for the second time.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There is a lot of sensitivity on that side. If members opposite want to have a debate about —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: They want to interject the whole time because they do not like the tenor of this debate. They do not like the fact that they have been running around all week saying that the royalties for regions program is a fraud, but they cannot outline what the Labor Party's forward estimates would look like. What we have heard from the member for Armadale, the member for Pilbara, the member for North West and the member for Collie-Preston is that the Labor Party's forward estimates would not have changed. They would have added royalties

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

for regions on top of the forward estimates, and that would have resulted in a bankrupt state. That is what the opposition has endorsed today.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have allowed robust debate, but this is getting us nowhere. Would members please observe some decorum.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Let me be very clear: until members opposite put on record where their cuts would have been made so that we can compare their forward estimates with the forward estimates of the Liberal-National government, and then look at royalties for regions, there is no argument on the opposition side, because the opposition is weak, shallow, lacking in ability, and is an absolute rabble of an opposition. I have great confidence in the coach of the East Fremantle Sharks. He had his team out on the track this week, working hard, being disciplined and doing the things necessary to get them back on track. There is nothing on the opposition side that, after the drubbing in Fremantle —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I call you for the first time.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There is nothing to suggest that the Labor opposition has learnt anything from the drubbing it received in Fremantle on the weekend. There is nothing to suggest —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I have warned you as well. Can you please come back to the point.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Let me outline royalties for regions.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: This is what I call a beautiful set of figures!

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The thing I find most interesting about this beautiful set of figures—the royalties for regions budget—is that I, and my National Party colleagues, thought for a week that the Labor Party actually supported it.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Mandurah to order for the second time! The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: We thought that the Labor Party would support royalties for regions. We did not think that the moment it moved to the opposition benches, it would start to undermine it, scrap it, and talk about getting rid of it. That is exactly what it has done!

Several members interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I will talk about the country local government fund, because I do not think I will get any interjections when the opposition hears that the country local government fund is new money. It is a new program for country local governments to deliver infrastructure projects to the 110 councils in regional Western Australia; it is a new project at the top of the list under the royalties for regions initiative. That money is already starting to be rolled out which makes us very happy.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members to my left, I have asked for some decorum in the house. I have called people and I have given latitude. I will not give much more latitude. If this shouting continues, I will call people. The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: It is very clear why the Leader of the Opposition is not in Parliament: he could not bear to sit with this absolute rabble opposite because of the way it is acting today. If it wants to be a credible opposition, I suggest that it start now and start to put in place a plan for the people of Western Australia. That is the job of an opposition. It is not doing it, it is a rabble! The people of Fremantle worked that out on the weekend, and the people of the rest of the state know that as well.

The local government fund is already being rolled out and is delivering \$100 million in 2009-10, which will be a very good outcome for country local governments. This is in response to the \$1.7 billion of underinvestment by

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

previous Labor governments in the last eight years. The new Liberal-National government is recognising that situation and rolling those funds out.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Albany for the second time. The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I hope members opposite who cannot bear to listen to this know that if they get called a third time, they will be asked to go home!

The Country Age Pension Fuel Card is the next item on the list under royalties for regions funding. No-one would deny that the Country Age Pension Fuel Card is new funding. It is a new program to deliver to regional aged pensioners who for years have watched billions of dollars being spent on public transport infrastructure in the metropolitan area. They have watched that and thought “What about us?” At last they do not have to say “What about us?” anymore; they are getting it delivered. But what do we hear from members opposite? They want the scheme extended to Mandurah! The Leader of the Opposition talks about keeping the debt at \$19.1 billion, yet the member for Mandurah is promising a fuel card to everybody in his electorate! Is that true, member for Mandurah?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have you done any analysis?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Is that true?

Mr D.A. Templeman: I know the reason why: the Deputy Premier told me why he wasn’t going to do it in Mandurah—it was too expensive!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah! Will the Leader of the National Party also please try to keep the debate on track.

Mr D.A. Templeman: But the minister asked me a question and now I’m going to answer it! The fact is that he did some analysis for Mandurah, and he realised that it was too expensive to add us in. Is that correct?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Does the member want to include Mandurah in the fuel card scheme?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is that correct? Answer the question!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: No, I am not including Mandurah!

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, but did you do analysis?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I am not including Mandurah! We have announced it! Mandurah is not included!

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, but did you do analysis and find out it would cost too much money? You found out it would cost too much money; that’s why you decided to leave us out!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have given the member for Mandurah some latitude because he was asked a question. He is now starting to shout across the floor again. Will the Leader of the National Party please confine his remarks to what is at hand, and try to keep the debate on track.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Do you want a copy of the agreement that you signed with Mr Barnett?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Do you need a copy of it to understand the agreement?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I do not need a copy; I know it off by heart!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Liberal-National government is very happy to support aged pensioners in country areas.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Armadale to order for the second time!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The Liberal-National government is very happy to provide support to aged pensioners by way of the Country Age Pension Fuel Card. It is a new program that has been rolled out for their benefit.

I will talk now about the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia and the isolated patients travel and accommodation assistance scheme. The RFDS was labelled by the previous government as just an interest group—just an interest group! When the previous Minister for Health labelled the RFDS as an interest group, there were no howls of indignation from members opposite; they just agreed, because they knew that the

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

previous government would not support the RFDS. These country members today who are so indignant about funding for regional Western Australia never said anything when the previous Minister for Health labelled the Royal Flying Doctor Service an interest group and said he would not give it the funding it needed to meet appropriate response times. There was absolutely no response from members opposite. That shows their concern for regional Western Australia, and they will forever be judged on that.

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The Leader of the National Party has a very strong voice, and I am sure that —

Mr M.P. Murray: Where've you been?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I have been listening intently, I can assure the member.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: What I am disturbed about, Mr Speaker, is that I am beginning to not be able to hear him because there is so much noise coming from the other side.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I would ask that they acknowledge that the member on his or her feet should have the right to be able to speak in reasonable silence.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Further to the point of order, I agree with the Leader of the House that members should be able to be heard. However, I add that when a member is making a speech and is making political attacks on members opposite, one must expect some interjections. Perhaps if the minister actually talks to the motion, we would not have this noise in the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have asked the Leader of the National Party to keep it on point.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I am running through the detail of the fund.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well run through the fund. We have four minutes until the dinner break. A lot of people have been called; I do not want to have to call people a third and fourth time, so please keep the debate on point. The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: During their contribution to the debate, members opposite had the opportunity to outline how they would have framed this budget, and they failed to take that opportunity. I am now taking the opportunity to outline what the Liberal-National government is doing under the royalties for regions banner—something that our side of politics is very supportive of.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: A number of private meetings are going on in the chamber. Can people either go outside or take their seats, please. The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The patient assisted travel scheme is another very, very important initiative of the Liberal-National government.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The noise in the chamber is terrible! I cannot hear what he is saying.

Mr R.F. Johnson: It's coming from your side!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have asked for the private meetings to stop and for members to conduct private business outside. The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.G. Stephens: What have you done with the Tom Price hospital?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Pilbara to order for the first time.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: As I said, we have seen this complete rabble of an opposition that is laughing, joking and paying absolutely no respect to their leader, who has called for a little bit of discipline in a difficult week. They are failing to exhibit that. They were out there talking to journalists about undermining him.

Point of Order

Mr P.B. WATSON: Relevance, Mr Speaker! He is getting off track again. He is talking about leadership issues on our side; when we are really concerned about the very important issue of royalties for regions.

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Vincent Catania; Acting Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Terry Waldron

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Further to the point of order, if that is the case, the opposition has not stopped yelling and screaming for 20 minutes. Opposition members said that they wanted to hear the Leader of the National Party and kept asking when he was going to get up. He has been trying to speak for 20 minutes, and people have been wandering around and they have had complete disregard for the member for Armadale's motion. I do not understand the point of order.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Further to that point of order, the Leader of the National Party has continually baited this side of the house, and Mr Speaker has asked him three times to talk to the motion. I think that if he continues to do that, he should be told to sit down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the National Party has the call.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I was talking about the new funding for the patient assisted travel scheme, which is a most important program to assist country people who need to travel for health care reasons.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Also, there is the regional workers incentive program, which will be a program of great interest to some members opposite, and I will be very happy to outline it in the future. It is clear in the budget what the funding will be for that, and we are very happy to outline that. It is a very important initiative.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: The member is a joke—an embarrassment!

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm