

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 5) 2006**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 6) 2006**

*Cognate Debate*

On motion by **Hon Kate Doust (Parliamentary Secretary)**, resolved -

That leave be granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006 to be debated cognately.

*Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 1 May.

**HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan)** [7.47 pm]: The opposition agrees with debating cognately the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 and Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006. It is appropriate that they be debated cognately because the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) deals with recurrent expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) deals with the capital expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2006.

Members will be aware that the bills are brought in every year for the purpose of regularising the payment of funds that have been made outside moneys already appropriated by the Parliament. This year, the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) deals with recurrent expenditure to the amount of \$247 117 833.38. The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) deals with capital expenditure for the year ending 30 June 2006 to the amount of \$84 972 000. Members will also be aware that both bills rely on the provisions of section 28 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985, which is the section that deals with expenditure in advance of appropriation. It states -

Where the Treasurer determines that expenditure should be made for which -

- (a) no appropriation has been made in the financial year; or
- (b) an appropriation has been made in the financial year but the charging of that expenditure would cause the appropriation to be exceeded,

the Governor in a case to which paragraph (a) applies or the Treasurer in a case to which paragraph (b) applies may authorise that expenditure to be made in advance of a parliamentary appropriation on the authority of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act for that financial year and be charged to such fund or account under such heading of expenditure as may be directed in the authority given under this section.

We know that the money that has been expended was expended in accordance with that particular section of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. Members will no doubt recall that the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2005 provided that, during the 2005 financial year, the Treasurer was authorised, in accordance with section 4 of that act, to make payments subject to the terms of the act up to an amount of \$300 million. Members will also be aware that section 5 of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2005 sets out the purposes for which the money can be paid or advanced. The amount was \$300 million for that particular year. Section 7 of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2005, which was assented to on 1 June 2005, also provided for an amendment to the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2004 to increase the previously agreed \$300 million to \$750 million, an increase of \$450 million. Section 4 of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2006, which was assented to on 1 May 2006 - these dates are relevant and it will become obvious why I have referred to them - provided for an amount of \$365 million on which the Treasurer could draw. However, section 7 of that act also provided that the \$300 million that was agreed to during 2005 - that is, in the 2005 act - be changed and the figure of \$300 million was deleted and \$500 million was substituted. That was an increase of \$200 million in the TAA for that year. It is interesting that this happens on a very regular basis; that is, the Parliament is encouraged to believe that the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act for a particular year will be a certain amount of money, only to find 12 months later, when the next TAA is introduced in the house, that apart from the authorisation for that year, a supplementary amount has been tacked on to the end to increase the appropriation for the previous year.

Earlier when I was discussing another motion in this house, I talked about a pattern of conduct that can be shown in criminal law. If it can be shown that a pattern of conduct exists from which an interested observer can infer the existence of an intention to actively distort the figures so as to deceive the reader into a false belief about the actual state of affairs, that in itself can lead to a conviction in criminal law. We are certainly not dealing with criminal law, but we are dealing with a continual pattern of conduct through the Treasurer's use of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act. It is an annual occurrence that the Treasurer asks for one amount and then comes back the next year and says that he needs more and then gets us to amend the previous year's TAA.

Members might ask why he would do that. Any increase in expenditure in the TAA for the previous year effectively means that that particular amount of money will come off the bottom line for the current financial year; that is, it reduces the surplus for the current financial year. It is a very convenient way of reducing a surplus. Given that the anticipated surplus for this financial year is about \$2.5 billion - that is on top of last year's surplus of \$2.265 billion, which was on top of the \$1.192 billion for 2004-05 - members can see why the Treasurer is so keen to get rid of some of the surplus in a convenient way.

Yesterday I spoke on a motion about the increase in water charges announced by the Treasurer for the new financial year. I made the observation that from time to time the Treasurer crows that he is able to not only balance the budget, but also come in with massive surpluses. I made the point that even a kindergarten student could balance the budget and, indeed, could come in with a massive surplus if he consistently overtaxed the community. It is as simple as that, and that is exactly what has been happening in this state for the past seven years. We have seen massive overtaxing and, as a result, the money flows into consolidated revenue and builds up as a surplus. Although revenue increases each year and the surplus increases each year, the expenditure accounts indicate that that significant surplus enables the government to be very lax in its general accounting, and certainly lax in the way it spends money. The expenditure for those respective years is also growing. The more money the government gets, the more money it saves, and the more tax it imposes, the greater the surplus at the end of a particular year.

If we look at the state of accounts for recent years and the very significant underestimation of both revenue and expenditure, we will again see that a pattern of conduct exists. One could almost be led to believe that that pattern of conduct is a deliberate situation whereby the government deliberately underestimates its revenue - it could overestimate its expenditure; it does not make a lot of difference in this case - so that it distorts the real state of affairs. About 18 months ago when I was invited to a meeting of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I asked the Under Treasurer, who appeared at the hearing along with some Treasury officials, how they could get their underestimation of revenue so wrong so often. He accepted at the time that there was an issue at hand and that in fact the underestimations were reflecting on Treasury. I am not so sure that they necessarily reflect adversely on the government, unless they are continually brought to its attention, but it is a reflection of the professionalism in Treasury. The then new Under Treasurer acknowledged that more work needed to be done on that issue, and he gave a commitment at the time that Treasury would look to some outside consultants if required, but certainly internally within government and within Treasury in particular, to look at the situation and consider whether that situation could be improved. Yesterday I asked a question about the results of the work that the Treasury had said it was doing, and I was given a response by the parliamentary secretary. I took the opportunity of looking at the report that the parliamentary secretary referred to yesterday; in fact, it was the "Review of Revenue Forecasting". I looked at the various recommendations made; there were 29 in all. This document was meant to be the basis of improved forecasting of revenue and expenditure. The current 2006-07 figures and, one assumes, given that the state budget comes down tomorrow, the potential 2007-08 figures, show that again it seems that Treasury has not got it right. It would be very wrong to suggest that the Treasurer is telling the Treasury to get it wrong every time. I am not suggesting that that would be the case at all, because it is in the interest of the Treasurer to get the figures right. However, how could he bring down a budget just 12 months ago suggesting that the estimated surplus will be one figure, and then admit to it being something in the order of \$2.5 billion? It is just not on. I would suggest the Treasurer needs to look at that area at again, and the Under Treasurer, who gave me the commitment that Treasury would consider the matter, should look at that review on revenue forecasting and see whether the recommendations in the report are being implemented in a proper manner, and whether they are meaningful.

One might ask what the community got from all this overtaxing, particularly in the past 12 months but also in previous financial years. Firstly, the community got delays in the building of the Perth-Mandurah railway. That is now unlikely to be operational for another three or four months. That is a possibility; it could also be that it will not be operational until towards the end of this year. There were also massive cost overruns on that project, which is something the government refuses to admit. Instead, the government claims that the majority of any cost overruns will be borne by the project coordinator.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** It is already \$200 million over budget.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Indeed it is, but it is interesting that the minister continually says that the contractor will have to bear the cost of the overruns. In fact, the contractor has already initiated legal proceedings in the Supreme Court, and I predict that, in the end, the government will cave in to the contractor, settle the claim and then claim victory for an out-of-court settlement on terms that it will say are confidential and cannot be released.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** It may be that my prediction of the total cost of \$2 billion will not be too far out.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** It may be that Hon Murray Criddle, a former Minister for Transport, is right. The problem is that, regrettably, because the Parliament is being used in this way by the government, it is unlikely

that we will find out the true figure for some time. Again, the government will allow the issue to blow over so that by the time the real answer comes out, it will be old news, so to speak, and people will not be interested.

Some might say that that is unfair; that the government would not seek an out-of-court settlement and then say that the terms are confidential, because that is just not the way this government would operate. I invite members to cast their minds back to about 18 months ago, when Dr Stephen van der Mye was the managing director of Western Power. He became involved in a dispute with the government and the then Minister for Energy, who just happens to be the current Premier, decided that Dr van der Mye had to go, so he was sent on his way. At that time, Dr van der Mye was the highest paid civil servant in Western Australia, earning about \$460 000 a year. He was sent on his way, but Dr van der Mye believed that he had been unjustly discharged from service with the government. He decided to enter into litigation, and issued a writ against the government. If members recall, the then Premier, Dr Gallop, said that Dr van der Mye would not be given one penny more; he was not entitled to another penny, and he would not get another penny. The matter was to proceed to court and the facts were to come out in court to justify the government's position. That is the argument the government ran at that stage. However, less than a week ago we found out that the state government had settled litigation with Dr van der Mye. It is an out-of-court settlement, so the matter will never proceed to the Supreme Court. The issues will never be tested in court and will never become public evidence. The amount of money comprising the settlement was, strangely enough, to be confidential and could not be made public.

I use this account as an example to show that the same situation will occur with the Mandurah railway. The government will argue that it will take the contractor on, but in due course it will cave in, reach an out-of-court settlement and then say that the government has done a good job but no-one should ever know just how much was paid. It seems to me that the government wants to hide behind confidential settlements. I have said in this house before that that is totally inappropriate for any government. Under the Westminster system, the Parliament is the supreme body, and it is entitled to know how the government is spending the taxpayers' money. For instance, I currently have a motion on the notice paper to require the Leader of the House to table certain contracts in respect of Mr Tony Iannello, the managing director of Western Power, who took over from Dr van der Mye. The government has refused to date to table those documents because it does not want the Parliament or the community to find out how much Mr Iannello was paid when he left Western Power. Apart from the fact that he left of his own accord, this is similar to the situation of Dr van der Mye in that the government refuses to tell us what is going on.

Interestingly, I have raised this matter in the past, and again it dealt with Western Power. When the managing director previous to Dr van der Mye was discharged, he was paid a significant amount of money and the government refused at the time to disclose how much it was. I foreshadowed a motion in this house requiring that the document be tabled. It took some time for that motion to come up for debate, but just before it came up, the chairman of Western Power and a very senior officer came to me in Parliament House and said that they wanted to discuss the motion and the documentation I was seeking. They said that they were prepared to give me the documentation but that they would prefer that it remained confidential. I told them that if they gave me the documents, the first thing I would do would be to table them in Parliament. After some further discussion, they accepted that that course of action would occur, and they agreed to give me the documents, knowing that they would be tabled in the Parliament, and that is exactly what happened. It is interesting that I should be discussing three payouts in respect of Western Power, none of which the government wanted to make public. I am aware that Western Power sought legal advice at the time to determine what its position was. That is to say, Western Power sought legal advice to determine how it could take action to prevent the Parliament from finding out what was happening within the organisation. That was the sort of culture that occurred in Western Power at that time. I should qualify that statement and say that I do not believe all of the senior management followed that particular culture, but there is no question that a number of people were very keen that Western Power should never ever tell the Parliament what was going on for fear of being exposed. One of the reasons I supported the disaggregation of Western Power was the hope that we would at least get more accountable entities in due course. It will be interesting to see whether that is the case.

Another thing has occurred as a result of attempts by some departments to not provide information to the Parliament. Members will be aware that the Financial Administration and Audit Act was repealed some months ago. In its place the Auditor General Act and the Financial Management Act were established. One of the things that the committee chaired by Hon Giz Watson was able to achieve when it considered those bills was the addition of a clause in the Auditor General Act requiring a minister who refuses to give information to the Parliament to justify that decision to the Auditor General. Each year the Auditor General is required to audit any matter on which a minister refuses to provide details. I say that because I think that is a very significant step forward and it is a warning to ministers not to hide behind the alleged confidentiality clauses, because they do not wash and they should never wash in this Parliament. I have said it before in this place that there are plenty of ways of having confidential documentation tabled in this place without it necessarily becoming public. It can, for instance, be lodged with the Clerk to be seen only by members of this house. That is one method of doing it.

It can be done and it has been done before. I refer members to an instance some 15 or more years ago in this place when the price of coal for which the government was paying companies at Collie was allegedly a secret and a commercial-in-confidence arrangement was attached to the prices. This Parliament exercised its constitutional right and required that the pricing system be tabled in this house, and it was tabled by way of the documents being placed in an envelope and being handed to the Clerk. Those documents were made available at that stage for any member to look at. I recall the late former Clerk of the Legislative Council telling me some years ago that those documents had been held for a very long time and that no member had ever asked to look at them. I accept that that is the case. The very reason that I currently have a motion on the notice paper is not because I want to find out exactly how much Mr Iannello from Western Power was paid, because I must acknowledge that that is of little interest to me. What is of interest to me is the principle of ensuring that this Parliament is supreme in the provision of information about the expenditure of taxpayers' money. I say that because the day that the Parliament is unable to call for any documents in accordance with the Parliamentary Privileges Act - there are plenty of law cases on the matter to show to what extent the Parliament can call for information and what type of information must be made available to the Parliament - and when the day comes that the Parliament gives up that right or when members do not understand their absolute constitutional right to demand and require those documents to be tabled, that is the day we might as well close up the place because the Parliament will not be functioning in accordance with its constitutional right and it will not be discharging its constitutional duties and responsibilities to the community.

Perhaps I digressed a little. As much as the requirement to table documents is a fundamental and important issue for this house, I was talking about the increased budget surpluses we have seen over recent years and I posed the question: what have we got for our services? In part, I suggested that we got the Perth-Mandurah railway line, which is already way overdue and way over price. Another thing we got as a result of all these budget surpluses is massive increases in land prices whereby Perth prices have now eclipsed the price of land in Sydney and have made home ownership in Western Australia just a dream for many young people in this state. Members might ask how that relates to the budget. One of the items the government is seeking additional appropriation for relates to planning infrastructure and the land market generally. I am arguing that the increase in land prices in Western Australia is a direct result of a lack of planning by the government. That will cause many people in Western Australia to be forced to remain captives of the rental market, possibly for the rest of their lives. It is interesting that only the other day the Premier and the Minister for Housing and Works told the media that they intended to commit an extra \$447 million over the next four years to try to relieve the pressure on the rental market and provide more public housing. An article on page 6 of *The West Australian* on Wednesday, 2 May 2007 under the heading "Nothing adds up as Roberts admits \$447 m won't ease housing crisis" states -

Housing Minister Michelle Roberts made a complete mess of the State Government's carefully stage-managed housing budget leak yesterday, conceding that an extra \$447 million Labor wanted to spend over the next four years on public housing would make only a marginal difference to the number of dwellings available.

The article explains in length the problems that occurred during that media interview and how the Premier had to rescue the Minister for Housing and Works and make other excuses for what was happening to public housing in Western Australia. Apart from \$447 million that the government is committing and that it now admits will make very little impact on the rental market, it is interesting also to note that a local paper in my electorate, the *Eastern Suburbs Reporter*, on Tuesday, 17 April on page 5 reported on a not-for-profit community housing company that is seeking help from the private sector. It recognises that the government is not helping it enough. It is now putting up its hand and saying that perhaps the private sector might be able to help. Under the heading "Plea for private sector help", the article states -

A not-for-profit community housing company that manages properties in the eastern suburbs has urged the private sector to help ease Perth's rental crisis.

Foundation Housing chief executive Kathleen Gregory said by forming partnerships with community housing groups, businesses could help build more affordable housing projects in the metropolitan area.

"We look after more than 500 properties but our accommodation service waiting list is double that, with more than 1000 people on low incomes looking for affordable housing," she said.

She went on to say -

"We have been getting up to 45 calls a day from people needing affordable housing.

"We've now had to tell agencies to tell people not to ring us because we do not have any more housing available at the moment."

The article refers to the need to encourage the private sector to become involved so that it can provide additional support in that area.

The irony of this situation is that for the past 12 months, the housing industry in Western Australia has been asking the Treasurer, Mr Ripper, to acknowledge that the high stamp duty rates in Western Australia are pushing up the price of housing across the state, and to consider cutting stamp duty rates to give first home buyers, in particular, a fair go.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** Is it not the case that house and land prices are going up because of speculative investment?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** That is a factor. However, this government has been in office for seven years. One could argue that had the Department of Planning and Infrastructure released a lot more land, the consequent increase in the amount of land available would have reduced land prices dramatically. It is this government that has allowed these things to occur.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** If we insist on having all these resources developments now, and overheating the economy in the short term, we will have all these problems. Surely that is part of the other pattern that is emerging.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Paul Llewellyn did not listen to what I was saying. Hon Paul Llewellyn decided to go off on a tangent of his own and say it is all the fault of the resources boom.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** No.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I am saying that had this government been able to get on top of the land supply situation some years ago, we would now have an oversupply situation rather than an undersupply situation. Given the economic principle that would then be at work, land prices would be significantly less than they are now in those areas in which there is an undersupply of land. Hon Paul Llewellyn knows that to be a fact. I guess he just wanted to use this opportunity to tell everyone that he is in the house, and to have a go at the resources companies, which is exactly what he has done. Without the resources boom in Western Australia, Australia would be significantly worse off. I thank my lucky stars every day that we live in a resource-rich state, because those resources are providing opportunities that would not be available were that not the case.

**Hon Murray Criddle** interjected.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Murray Criddle is a very experienced farmer. Hon Murray Criddle has made a very good point about the importance of the resources boom, given the current drought across many parts of Australia. For years, Australia rode on the sheep's back. That does not occur now. Things have changed. This country, and this state in particular, has been relying on primary industry for a long time. The farmers are having a bad time. I am very thankful that the resources boom is what it is, and that China is continuing to buy our products. My only wish is that we could undertake more downstream processing, so that we could not only gain a greater slice of the pie, but also create more employment opportunities. One of the failings of all governments over the past 30 years is that we have not insisted strongly enough that the major resource companies commit themselves to downstream processing in Western Australia, or Australia as a whole.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn** interjected.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Paul Llewellyn continues to interject. I will give him an opportunity to not only interject, but also answer a question for me. Where does the member think the alumina that is exported out of Kwinana on big ships is processed?

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** Is that a rhetorical question?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** It is not a rhetorical question at all. It is a very important question.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** To be processed into aluminium?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Yes.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** Obviously anywhere where -

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** It would have been easier had the member just said he does not know the answer, rather than come up with some general comment. The fact is that the majority of that alumina is processed in Iceland.

**Hon Kate Doust:** Using thousands of imported workers!

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** The parliamentary secretary says, by way of interjection, by thousands of imported workers. I am not sure that is the case at all, but I will look into it. I was very interested to find out some time ago from a constituent that the reason we are missing out on the massive opportunity to process alumina in Western Australia is the cost of power in Western Australia. Hon Paul Llewellyn is very involved in the power industry. I take my hat off to him for that. I wish that Hon Paul Llewellyn, with his wind farm, and the other

sustainable energy resources that he is so knowledgeable about - I say that genuinely - would apply his mind to working out how we can produce electricity at a rate that would enable the processing of alumina, and other products, to be done in Western Australia. Clearly, we are losing that value-added effect by not being able to produce aluminium at a reasonable price, because of the cost of electricity.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** Isn't aluminium produced in those places that use hydro power?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** That is exactly the reason I asked the member that question. I thought it would have clicked with the member that that is why alumina from Western Australia is being processed in Iceland. It is a lesson to us that there are huge opportunities for downstream processing. Hon Paul Llewellyn talked about hydro-electricity. We might not have many opportunities for hydro in Western Australia. However, some interesting propositions have been talked about for the generation of electricity in the north west of Western Australia.

Before I was diverted by that interjection from Hon Paul Llewellyn, who wanted to blame the resources boom for the increase in land prices, I was about to say that the irony of this situation is that the increase in land prices is forcing some people, particularly potential first home owners, to be captured by the rental market, and that is where they will be staying for a long time. The other irony is that the high stamp duty charges are also making it difficult for first home owners to get into the market. In February of this year, the Treasurer said that he might consider reducing stamp duty in this year's budget. The state budget will be handed down tomorrow. As a result of that statement, the first home owners market collapsed. I refer to an interesting article in the *Sunday Times* of 25 February 2007, at page 15, under the banner headline, "Ripper dumb: builder". The article states -

The WA Government is responsible for a grinding slowdown in the housing market, says prominent builder Dale Alcock.

Mr Alcock hit out at Treasurer Eric Ripper, calling him "dumb, irresponsible and naive" -

I would agree with irresponsible and naive; I do not think Mr Ripper is dumb -

to foreshadow tax reform on stamp duty in the May Budget.

"Mr Ripper made a gaffe by opening his mouth and indicating there would be tax reform," Mr Alcock said. "He has artificially stalled the market because first-home buyers are now waiting (to buy) until after the announcement.

An interesting irony has been created as a result of Mr Ripper at least acknowledging that he hoped to be able to reduce the cost of stamp duty in Western Australia. We are talking about appropriations for both recurrent and current expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2006. This is the additional appropriation that is required as a consequence of these bills and the earlier spending by the government. However, it is interesting that on Monday this week the Treasurer announced that there would be increases in water charges and transport costs for the public and some other general increases at a time when the Australian Bureau of Statistics has shown that Western Australia is the highest taxed state in Australia. We have actually now beaten New South Wales. For every man, woman and child in Western Australia we pay \$3 000 per head per annum. If we compare that with Tasmania -

**Hon Paul Llewellyn** interjected.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I wanted to say that Tasmania pays \$1 860 per man, woman and child a year. Hon Paul Llewellyn said "Heaven help us; we don't want the economy of Tasmania." I agree. Hon Paul Llewellyn is dead right: we in Western Australia do not want the economy of Tasmania. However, if we followed some of the propositions that the Greens (WA) are advancing in Western Australia when it comes to resource projects, we would end up with the economy of Tasmania and would be growing apples.

**Hon Paul Llewellyn:** We will end up with downstream processing.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Paul Llewellyn cannot have it both ways. We cannot run a powerhouse economy on apples alone.

**Hon Ken Travers:** Or with a canal in the north of the state either.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I agree that we cannot run a powerhouse economy on a canal either, but I tell Hon Ken Travers that it is a good idea to create a massive market garden style development on the Fitzroy River.

**Hon Ken Travers:** Where would you dam it?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Ken Travers assumes that because there is a huge pool of water in the Fitzroy, there would be an absolute necessity to pipe water down to Perth. That was never the proposition.

**Hon Ken Travers:** It's your leader, not mine, who suggested it.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** That is where Hon Ken Travers has got it wrong. The Leader of the Opposition talked about a massive market garden - a food bowl - on the Fitzroy. He did not intend that water be piped down to Perth.

Several members interjected.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Adele Farina is obviously -

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard):** Order, members! I acknowledge that Hon George Cash is responding to interjections, but let us have one unruly interjection at a time, please.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Adele Farina proves that she obviously got it wrong, too, and she is the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure!

**Hon Adele Farina:** I think you got it wrong!

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** What hope have we got if both Hon Ken Travers and Hon Adele Farina get it wrong as often as they do? We are talking about a food bowl on the Fitzroy. We are not talking about piping water to Perth.

**Hon Ken Travers:** Where would you dam the Fitzroy, Mr Cash?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** That is a matter that will be subject to significant engineering study. I do not come into this place with all the answers.

**Hon Ken Travers:** You haven't looked at it, have you? You don't know!

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Unlike Hon Ken Travers, I do not come into this place claiming I know everything. However, I do come in and say that I acknowledge the vision of the Leader of the Opposition on his proposition for a food bowl based on the Fitzroy and I have, as he has, significant reservations as to whether any water will ever be able to be piped to Perth from that project. It was not intended by the Leader of the Opposition, and it is certainly not intended by me in my support for the project. I appreciate the interjections that government members make from time to time because they allow me to enter areas into which I would not normally transgress.

**Hon Ken Travers:** What - supporting your leader in the other place?

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** No. I have been a pretty strong supporter of Paul Omodei for a long time. I do not know where Hon Ken Travers sits in respect of the Labor Party. I say that because a couple of years ago he was a parliamentary secretary.

**Hon Ken Travers:** Yes.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Today he is not.

**Hon Ken Travers:** Yes.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** I do not know whether that is because he does not support his leader or whether he does support his leader.

**Hon Adele Farina** interjected.

**Hon GEORGE CASH:** Hon Adele Farina can call it a cheap shot, but Hon Ken Travers just opened the door and asked me to walk in and hit him! Hon Adele Farina should use her head. I know where I stand and the Leader of the Opposition knows where he stands in respect of my support. I am not sure that the Premier can say the same about Hon Ken Travers. However, that is something that he has to work out; I am not really interested in the ramifications of the Labor Party.

Earlier today I talked about facts and fiction. This is something that will grab Hon Ken Travers's attention. I mentioned a saying that was attributed to President John Adams, who was the second President of the United States and held that office between 1797 and 1801. It was a quote about facts. This is something that Hon Ken Travers will never be able to get away from. President John Adams is claimed to have stated -

Facts are stubborn things . . . and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictums of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

That is something that I know must cause some pain to Hon Ken Travers on a daily basis, because it is often the situation that the facts speak for themselves, and whether or not he likes it, he cannot climb over them.

We are talking about facts. I want to refer to some figures that the shadow Treasurer, Mr Troy Buswell, the member for Vasse, produced the other day. In fact, they are very interesting figures, as they show the budgeted amounts of taxation, revenue and expenditure over a period - that is, the budgeted amount that was published by the government at the time the respective budget was brought down - and the actual figures that occurred some

12 months later when the actuals were known. For instance, in 2001-02 the budgeted amount for total taxation was said to be \$2.775 billion for the year, but it came in at \$2.945 billion; that is, \$169 million more. That was in year one of this government. The second year the government was in office taxation was budgeted at \$3.193 billion, but it came in at \$3.387 billion; this is taxation, and that was \$193 million more. If we keep going, the next year the budget was 3.543 billion, but it came in at \$4.122 billion; that is, \$579 million over the original estimate. In 2004-05 taxation was budgeted at \$3.739 billion, but it came in at \$4.314 billion, or \$575 million more. Last year, 2005-06, taxation was budgeted at \$3.995 billion, but it came in at \$5.195 billion; that is, \$1.2 billion more than was originally budgeted for. That is just on taxation. The total revenue figure shows that in 2001-02 it was \$321 million more than originally budgeted. The next year, 2002-03, it was \$606 million more than originally budgeted. The following year jumped another \$300 million to \$979 million over and above the original budget. By 2004-05 it was \$1.503 billion more than originally budgeted. I am talking about total revenue. In 2005-06, total revenue was \$1.98 billion more than was originally budgeted. The jackpot - we expect to hear it tomorrow - is a surplus for 2006-07 in the order of \$2.5 billion, which is a lot more than was originally estimated at the beginning of the year. Those sorts of figures upset people, because they reveal that they are being overtaxed. More than that, the figures released each year are not credible or believable. When a government gets it wrong so often, a pattern of conduct emerges. One can infer from that pattern of conduct a particular course of action. Although the Treasurer crows about his surplus increases, those who know a little more about budgeting know that it is harder to balance the books with a small surplus and that it is harder to keep expenditure under control without allowing overtaxing to push surpluses and expenditure way out. As I said yesterday, the cartoon published on 4 April on page 20 of *The West Australian* features a horse and carriage and the Treasurer being held up by Robin Hood with his bow and arrow. In the cartoon Robin Hood says "I'm Robin Hood . . . I rob from the rich to give to the poor!" In reply, Mr Ripper quips, "That's all right sunshine . . . I'll just take it back off 'em later!" That is exactly what is happening. The poor old battler is slugged every time.

The opposition is prepared to support the appropriation bills. We have a number of questions about their specific content, but it is proper that those issues be dealt with during the committee stage. We support the bills inasmuch as we know that the money has been spent and that the law requires the money to be appropriated to balance the books, so to speak, in accordance with the Financial Administration Act and the Financial Management Act. In that regard, we support the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill Nos 5 and 6. I look forward to an in-depth discussion about the specifics of the bills when we reach the committee stage.

**HON MURRAY CRIDDLE (Agricultural)** [8.43 pm]: I was waiting to see whether Hon Paul Llewellyn wanted to take up the challenge extended by Hon George Cash during their interesting discussion about power generation and the like before taking the call. In talking to the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill Nos 5 and 6, I will cover a couple of issues raised and make some general comments. I hope to explore some issue in detail during the committee stage.

One of the items under capital expenditure that came to my attention was the Zoological Parks Authority and the \$16.9 million for the retirement of debt. I want to talk about roads and rail, because I know those areas reasonably well. It is always interesting when I hear the government say that the rail to Mandurah was an initiative of the Labor government. I well remember being with the Premier of the day, Hon Richard Court, at 197 St Georges Terrace when he announced that the coalition government would build a rail line to Mandurah via Kenwick for \$941 million. Some of the construction for that project - indeed, about \$50 million worth - occurred during our term of government. Hon Barbara Scott is well aware of that, because she was part of a committee that looked at building the rail through Rockingham itself for \$101 million. That was the part of the construction contract that we were moving towards putting in place. We had already sent out invitations to the private sector to encourage it to become involved and to defray some of the costs. One of the first things the current minister did when this government came into office was to remove that particular expression of interest. The private sector then no longer had the opportunity to build some of the necessary construction along the railway that would have assisted in reducing the cost. The minister very quickly made the announcement that the government would build the railway from Berrigan Drive, along the river and into the centre of Perth. It looks as though the blow-out of that particular construction on top of the original rail project cost will be very substantial. I said from day one that it would be about \$2 million and I believe that it is already \$1.7 million. I heard the minister say that she would not put a figure on it. Obviously, there have been several claims from Leighton Kumagai, the group constructing that section of the rail from the river into the centre of Perth. That particular part of the contract, if my memory serves me correctly, started at about \$195 million and it has reached \$325 million. I will watch with interest to see what the final outcome will be. Obviously, it will be a class piece of construction. The coalition government put an enormous amount of effort into the preliminary work that was done on the rail system, apart from the section from Perth central to Berrigan Drive. The day will come when that section of rail from Kwinana Freeway to Thornlie will need to be constructed anyway. There is a substantial and growing population in that area and that will be a requirement.



I heard the Premier being interviewed on Anzac Day somewhere in Asia.

**Hon Kate Doust:** Sandakan.

**Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE:** Yes, in Sandakan. In that interview he announced that the railway was an initiative of this government. He said that this government had put it in place and it was part of this government's budget. It was in the coalition government's budget and the project was started in our day. It is interesting that he also talked about the southern transport corridor in Geraldton. In actual fact, the road component was in our budget and the rail component was a decision of cabinet. As a minister in the previous coalition government, I announced in Geraldton in October 1999 that we would construct that transport corridor. As it has turned out, there has been a requirement for more funding and only stage 1 of that transport corridor is in place. Stage 2 looks like costing an extra \$30 million or whatever because of the cost overrun.

The reason I am saying this is the other requirements, including the road between Lancelin and Cervantes. I could name a heap of them. I was in Cue the other day and the people there were talking about the Wiluna to Meekatharra road. Whether this government likes it or not, some of the local people made a request for the construction of that road.

I could talk about the Chester Pass Road in Albany; the Hyden to Corrigin road, which should have been built ages ago; and the Lancelin to Cervantes road, which was estimated to cost \$30 million when the coalition government was about to start construction of it. I am told that now the estimated cost is \$80 million. The delay in the construction of these roads has led to the requirement of substantial further funding. At that time the present minister was ridiculing the coalition government because it had borrowed money to build the roads. It was a good move. The infrastructure was put in place and the work was undertaken at an enormously lower cost than what it would have cost two or three years later. Of course, we are now suffering because of that lack of action.

The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006 provides additional funding of \$89 million for the new Perth to Bunbury highway. That amount of money would have just about built the road up the coast, the Chester Pass Road and Muirs Highway. People who live in the south will tell members what a terrible piece of construction the Muirs Highway is. The present road is a dangerous road and there is absolutely no doubt that the highway should be built. All those things were in the coalition budget. I still have that budget in my office. I can demonstrate to anybody who wants to look that those roads have been in the plan for construction in the time that this government has been in power, and none of them has been built.

**Hon Barbara Scott:** You'll have to bring that down into the chamber one night.

**Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE:** It would be interesting, but I have outlined the situation. A number of other roads have also not been built. I see that Gubinge Road in Broome is being talked about. Additional funding of \$6.5 million is required for that road. The Albany ring-road requires additional funding of \$5.2 million. Everybody knows that those roads must be built. However, that additional funding is in this consolidated fund requirement. I applaud the minister for building those roads. I am just saying that there has been an enormous hiatus in road construction in this state, and in the country areas in particular. Obviously, construction of the Bunbury highway will start at some stage in the future.

I want to raise a couple of other issues. We signed a memorandum of understanding - I know that perhaps a lot of people do not think that is worth the paper it is written on - for the construction of James Point harbour at Fremantle. In recent times, we have heard that the outer harbour at Fremantle will cost something like \$1.2 billion. That could be built in Cockburn Sound. That may well be just a play-off so that the unions will have total control of that part of the harbours and ports in Western Australia. However, in Geraldton, where there is a huge requirement for a port, the government is not prepared to put in any money at all, even into the industrial park there. I hear every day that people want to go into that area. However, unless we get roads, rail, power, gas and water into those areas, people will have no incentive to go there. That is what generates the enormous amount of money that we have in royalties that are flowing into the government coffers at present. How good would it be to be in government now and be able to miscalculate the amount of revenue by something like 15 per cent? When we were removed from government, the revenue was about \$10 billion. It must now be approaching \$18 billion. We will hear tomorrow just what the final figure is. It has almost doubled in the six years that this government has been in power. I believe that the people of this state deserve some relief from taxation, or there could be some infrastructure funding, which would be of enormous benefit, so that we could move into the future with some confidence. I draw attention again to those infrastructure opportunities that I mentioned. It is not just roads; it is also ports. A whole range of things could be done.

We could talk about the ports. The access corridors in Esperance, Albany, Bunbury and Broome should have been upgraded quite a few years ago. However, the opportunity to do that was not taken up when it was available. The government has an enormous amount of funding available. We are told that when we were in

government we did not do what we should have done. I point out to the house that in those days we had the Asian crisis and a lot of other difficult situations to deal with. We brought forward some construction projects to give the people of Western Australia the opportunity to get work. We are in a wonderful situation now. There is the opportunity for us to set the state up as we look to the future.

I wanted to outline those issues and to point out that this government is a very fortunate one, given the opportunities that it now has. I mentioned earlier when Hon George Cash was speaking what could happen if we now have a good season with agriculture, on top of the resources sector being so strong - the resources sector looks like being strong for quite some time. That would provide another stimulus come next summer. Although it is a late season for agriculture, the predictions are still pretty solid for a reasonable season. It has started pretty well in the south. In Esperance and places such as that, the season has started quite well. However, we could have that sort of stimulus on top of the royalties. I hope that Treasury is considering that we could have a good agricultural season, because that would give yet another boost to the revenues that come in. Farmers being the sorts of people they are will go out and buy houses and spend the money as soon as it is in their coffers. They will take the opportunity to set up further investments for themselves. It is a happy day for Western Australia as far as budgets go. Money is rolling into the coffers. I cannot believe that a Treasury can get the anticipated revenues so wrong in just 12 months. It seems extraordinary to me that the government gets that wrong year after year. We are looking at a billion dollars right back to 2003-04 and before that there were quite substantial surpluses. I will look forward to asking a few questions later on and I will be interested to hear the comments of other members who are yet to speak.

**HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West)** [8.55 pm]: The Greens (WA) are happy to comment on this bill although it is to be expected that we will have some miscalculations in revenue streams and taxes and so on, given there are so many uncertainties and we have effectively an overheated runaway economy. When I studied economics, inflation was defined as too much money chasing too few goods; that was the simple formula. It was inflationary to overheat the economy by generating too many throughputs that were wealth generating. To some extent I will come back to this point. The pattern of conduct here is that we have tended to liquidate too many assets too quickly and liberated too much liquidity in the economy while not having the capacity to provide the labour or the goods to turn things over.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** What about the China situation?

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** We will deal with the Chinese situation. We need to deal with what has happened with regard to appropriations and the requirement for extra funding in the context of an economy that we have pump-primed to the point where we are creating uncertainties. We should not be too judgemental about the kinds of uncertainties that arise when an economy is running in different directions as it is now.

The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No.5) refers in its long title to an act to appropriate out of the consolidated fund a sum for recurrent payments made during the year ended 30 June 2006 under the authority of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2005. These two appropriation bills deal with the recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure overruns. Both long titles refer to payments made under the authority of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act 2005. That act provides that during the 2005 financial year the Treasurer is authorised to make payments or advances under the act but the aggregate of the payments or advances made and any existing works and services advances is not to exceed \$300 million. The appropriations sought for the two bills before the Council add up to a little over \$330 million, about \$30 million more than the limit. On the face of it this indicates that the Treasurer has gone beyond the credit limit that the Parliament put in place through the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act. I notice that the parliamentary secretary very kindly dropped off some advance copies of the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill details of recurrent expenditure, excesses and new items for 2005-06. That was very generously given to the Greens because we need to know where these overruns happened.

**Hon Kate Doust** interjected.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** It was given to everybody; that was a good thing.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** I was very happy to get it. It was good to see.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** It is a good thing. The expenditure excesses related to capital expenditure. The Greens (WA) are not surprised that they have reached the stage of underestimating the revenue streams coming from taxation or the surpluses that are being generated in the economy. It is not so much that the Greens want us to live on apples and run the economy on grass - and I think that was a rather unfair assertion. Let us look at the underpinning logic of the government needing to keep expenditure under control. We are rolling in money, the economy is flush and our wallets are fat and that is a damn good thing. Hon Murray Criddle made an interesting point. He said that, if the farmers benefited from a good year this year, they would be feeling a little more wealthy so they would buy up big. It would not matter in terms of overheating the economy - driving inflation

and lack of affordability - whether it was government or private expenditure; we are all out there spending. That is what is happening.

**Hon Ray Halligan** interjected.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I do not want to make a value judgement about who is spending the money and who is driving the inflationary trends.

**Hon Norman Moore:** What is the inflation rate right now?

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** One of the interesting things about the Australian inflation rate is that we are being cross-subsidised by cheap imports from China. We need only look at relatively cheap goods that we purchase, and that has downward pressure on inflation rates. I think a certain former Prime Minister raised that point. There has been an external downward pressure on inflation in the Australian economy as a result of cheap imports and cheap labour from overseas. However, that has not stopped us from overheating our labour and property markets because those things are not impacted on as much by cheap, overseas imports. In other words, downward inflationary pressure cannot be caused by importing cheap land, because the land is a fixed asset right here. Let us understand that these surpluses and volatile predictions will occur as a result of choices we make about the way we organise the economy. I am not making a value judgement about whether public or private expenditure will drive this volatility.

The one thing I do see is that the nature of expenditure by our governments - Hon Murray Criddle is asking for more roads and people are saying we want more infrastructure -

**Hon Murray Criddle:** I am just asking for our share.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** Okay. We want our share; nevertheless, we want to keep the economy growing and turbocharging along. However, that will come at a cost. These are old rate reactions. The rate at which resources, materials, energy and money move through the economy is causing the volatility. The rate reactions occur, for example, when a decision is made to liquidate the natural capital; that is, to build another bauxite mine and process it, not at four million tonnes a year, but at six million tonnes a year because we can, and because the company says it wants to. We can use the example of alumina. That said, that natural capital is sitting there waiting for us to use. We can choose to push it through our economy at a faster rate. When we make those decisions to push resources, materials and energy through the economy at a faster rate, we create volatile economies.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** You don't think that that's caused by the fact that China wants the stuff. We had an Asian crisis when we were in government and we didn't sell things overseas as we are now.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** We can blame it on the Chinese, the Americans or the Russians, but the facts are -

**Hon Murray Criddle:** That's exactly what happened. When we were in government, the opportunity wasn't there to sell it. The opportunity is there to sell it now and your argument has been blown out of the water.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** The world is literally -

**Hon Murray Criddle:** Round.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** It is actually round like a ball, not round like a pizza. I remember the last time we had this debate, these flat-earth economists thought the earth was round like a pizza but it is round like a ball.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** You've got all the answers. I can't argue with that.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am not making a value judgement about whether we should be supplying China with resources at a particular rate. There are consequences for choosing policies that tend to race the economy along. Private speculative investment is sucking up the available land. We can argue that 15 or 20 years ago we should have subdivided more land and sprawled across the landscape. We should have thought a lot smarter about the way we organised both public and private housing and had some more forethought about the way we provided those housing opportunities.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** I think you can go back to the days when we were clearing one million acres of land every year. That was a mistake at the time, too. The fact of the matter was that's how Western Australia got developed at that time.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** We cleared one million acres of land per year and 20 or 30 years later we have a salinity problem and we actually have a cost -

**Hon Murray Criddle:** I'm just saying we made a mistake. I'm just telling you that that's the way it happened.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am not arguing whether it is good or bad; I am saying that we did this historically and we ended up with a series of flow-on consequences.

**Hon Murray Criddle:** It's hard.

**Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN:** I am sure it is hard for the member. Let us look at other ways we can invest in this bountiful surplus that we have. Business entities tend to put a lot of emphasis on getting more and more labour productivity. They want a three or four per cent increase in labour productivity every year. We should be looking for resource productivity. I will continue to talk about how we can deal with these surpluses and expenditures. We could be investing a great deal more in resource productivity by investing in water efficiency solutions, energy efficiency solutions and material efficiency solutions. Material efficiency solutions would be in the form of large-scale recycling and material reuse. We get the same economic activity but we do not necessarily increase the throughput of materials through the economy. We tend to dampen down the economy by reinvesting in material efficiencies, water efficiency technology, energy efficiency technologies and catchment land repair. Let us repair those water catchments so we can restore the quality of water flow and ecological services that came from the land that we cleared excessively in good faith. We are not blaming here; we are looking for pathways out of the situation in which we generate volatile economies through excessive through-flow of materials and energy and, in this case, dollars through the economy. I do not know what got into me but I needed to get that off my chest in the light of the comments about the Apple Isle economy that the Greens are proposing. I suspect that the economy we are proposing looks like one in which we use our materials and material flows through the economy more intensively and more efficiently and tends to get greater return on investment in our natural assets and our natural capital.

The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) requests an additional \$300 million out of a total recurrent expenditure transaction of something in the order of \$12 billion, which is effectively a 2.5 per cent cost overrun. Arguably, with a sophisticated accounting system, we should be able to predict that there will be cost overruns and so on. Who would have predicted the spike in housing costs and the increase in revenues from stamp duty? That is not a rhetorical question. We ought to have been able to pick those events; we ought to be able to pick the fluctuation in revenues. The whole global economy looks something like the Western Australian economy, although we are riding highest on the wave.

I make no value judgments here and now about the actual expenditure, recurrent cost overruns and capital cost overruns except to say that, generally, they appear to be inflation-generating expenditures. As a consequence, we are making the system more and not less volatile; we are making it more unstable, not less stable; and more unpredictable, not less predictable. Decisions are consistently made in this house by governments from both sides to turbocharge the economy for short-term gain when we do not have to do that. We will reap the unintended consequences, just as it was unintended that, when catchments were cleared, it would cause salinity. It is unintended that when we turbocharge the economy to liquidate all the natural capital for this generation only, there will be consequences that will make it harder to manage the current account.

**HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan - Parliamentary Secretary)** [9.13 pm]: I thank members who have spoken tonight on both these bills. I also thank them for their support. I will make a few brief remarks before we move on to the next stage of dealing with these bills. I was interested that Hon George Cash made reference to patterns of conduct. I hope that he was not implying that there was any sort of illicit conduct at all. It was an interesting analogy.

Both these bills are essentially machinery bills. As members have mentioned, one deals with additional recurrent costs and the other deals with additional capital costs. Hon George Cash made several comments during his speech. He suggested that the government was hiding things in financial terms from the Parliament.

In April, Access Economics released its regular report, which stated, once again, that Western Australia is the benchmark on transparency and accountability for public sector financial reporting. It graded Western Australia as an A, the best of all states. Access Economics also described Western Australia as the benchmark.

Another comment made by Hon George Cash related to revenue forecasting. He spoke about the results in actuals having been much stronger than forecast, and reflected upon the Department of Treasury and Finance professionalism in the area of financial forecasting. Again, I understand that at pages 130 and 131 of budget paper No 3 for 2006-07, the result of a far-ranging Department of Treasury and Finance review is outlined, and includes input from peer treasuries, including the commonwealth and other states. If members are interested, the reported outcomes are summarised in budget paper No 3 of last year. Included are more robust estimates for oil royalties based upon the futures market prices and assessments of other forecasted estimates. In a boom stronger than expected, results have still occurred and sometimes forecasters have had to second-guess issues such as sharp rises in oil prices. A recent example is the British sailors who were held by Iran. I do not think any forecaster could have foreseen that type of incident.

Hon Murray Criddle will hopefully return to the chamber shortly, but he spoke about the range of issues covered in both bills. This is the first time I have had to deal with these types of bills, and I was quite surprised when I went through the type of detail covered in these bills and the types of unexpected costs that the government has

incurred that were not provided for in the budget. I will give members a few examples of the diverse range of matters that the government has had to deal with in the past 12 months that could not have been forecast in the previous budget. There was expenditure for a number of bushfires that occurred in the south west. Additional expenditure was provided for the by-election in Victoria Park, which was unexpected because nobody could possibly have known that the then Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop, was going to resign. Additional expenditure was allocated to pay for an Acting Electoral Commissioner when, sadly, the Electoral Commissioner at the time passed away. Expenditure was also provided for an unexpected outbreak of European house borer. As Hon Murray Criddle said, there was money for the Zoo. Additional moneys have been provided for wage rises in a range of portfolio areas. Additional funds were provided to pay for the increased cost of the operation of the State Administrative Tribunal, which had been operating for only 12 months, and the demand for access to SAT rose beyond what was expected. There was a range of additional expenditure in the area of tourism to cover some of the costs associated with events such as the Red Bull Air Race and the Tom Hoad Cup water polo event. There are also other matters that are not linked to a set figure in the budget, such as ex gratia payments for mesothelioma cases, which are paid when they occur rather than planned ahead. That gives members an idea of the diverse range of expenditure set out in these two bills that the government has had to pay for that were not planned for and were, in a lot of cases, unexpected.

I thank members for their support of the bills. I know that members have a number of questions about the detail of the bills that they want to raise during the committee stage. This year the Treasurer asked me to provide the full detail of information to those members who would be speaking on these bills, so that rather than just giving them the figures set out in the schedule, he could provide a more detailed picture of the reason for the expenditure and, hopefully, allay some of their concerns about why the government needed to expend these additional funds. I commend to the house the second reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006.

Questions put and passed.

Bills read a second time.