

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 1) 2004
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 2) 2004

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [7.00 pm]: As you can tell, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), I am very eager to recap on the comments I made previously on the budget. Prior to private members' business I was talking about road funding, particularly the Functional Review Task Force recommendation that Main Roads WA capital works budget be slashed by \$50 million per annum. I also referred to the Fremantle eastern bypass.

Before private members' business took precedence, I referred to the Peel deviation and its importance, particularly in the south west corridor, to electorates such as Dawesville, Warren-Blackwood, Mandurah, Murray-Wellington and even Vasse. It is a road of major importance. I referred to the toing-and-froing between our state Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and Hon Ian Campbell, the federal Minister for Territories, Local Government and Roads and manager of government business in the Senate. In a media statement on 5 May regarding the Peel deviation he said -

This is a crucial road in developing a complete transport system for Mandurah, Bunbury and the south west region.

It is interesting to compare his media statements with those of the Western Australian Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. It is clear that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is not likely to provide any funding for this very important road project. I say that because the Functional Review Task Force has recommended that Main Roads capital works budget be slashed by approximately \$200 million over four years. Over the past three years \$150 million has been slashed from Main Roads budget. Capital investment in Main Roads has been increased by only about two per cent, and that will not go very far. It will not fund this very vital road for the south west region, which I understand is estimated to cost \$340 million. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has stated that she has a time line for work on the Peel deviation, which I understand is 2008. An article in today's *The West Australian* said that she was having a good rethink about the time line. Nevertheless, the budget papers do not show any funding for that road.

While the minister has been in charge of the Main Roads budget, \$800 000 has been spent on the detailed design work and a further \$5 million on land purchases. That amounts to \$5.8 million, which is barely a spit in the ocean for this very important \$340 million project. It looks as though the federal Government is willing to come to the table and negotiate the funding for this road. However, this Government has put all its eggs in one basket; namely, the southern railway link. I will come back to that issue. As I said earlier, it would not be one of my speeches unless I spoke about the southern rail link. The Peel deviation is a very important road in the south west region for not only tourist traffic, but also the movement of freight. Industry in the south west is growing and we must provide good, sound infrastructure to accommodate those industries.

I will also talk about the school bus operators, a group of people who have operated under a dedicated contract since 1919. This system is underscored by an excellent record of safety, stability and reliability. It is a much valued service by the local communities. Most country members on both sides of the House have spoken about school bus operators and the service they provide to their local communities. It is a vital system for children in rural and remote communities who cannot access regular transport services to and from school. This industry group is feeling aggrieved by the process that this Government has embarked upon in renegotiating their contract. No doubt, school bus drivers operate also in your electorate, Mr Acting Speaker. Under the coalition they were party to a 13-page contract. Some might say that was not adequate. However, I referred earlier to the safety and reliability of the service, which has been underscored by a very clean record. This document I am holding in my hand is their new contract - a document of some 140 pages. At best, it can be described as punitive. We are talking about people who transport students to and from school. As a mother, I consider that they are very important cargo. When we put our children in the hands of someone who is driving them around, we want to be assured that they will be looked after. Country communities rely on this service, which has been provided very well by this wonderful group of small business operators. It is interesting to note that the Government is claiming in the budget papers that its work with school bus operators was a major achievement in 2003-04. I will come to the point about the feeling and mood of this group of people. There are some 715 contractors throughout the State, who take approximately 25 000 students to school each day. I understand that since this Government took office about 124 contracts have come onto the open market. That is unprecedented. The Government might want to claim as a major achievement that the new contract clearly articulates government and contractual responsibilities. They are wonderful words that sound warm and fuzzy because everybody has a responsibility. Great! We all have a responsibility. However, we are talking about a 140-page document that is causing these people a great deal of uncertainty. They do not feel that they can move forward.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

They have felt intimidated and threatened. They feel that nobody is listening to their concerns, some of which are simple concerns that could have been dealt with in a much better manner.

The Government is claiming that a new payment model, which provides fixed and variable costs with a single profit margin, is also a major achievement. However, school bus operators have told me that the payment model is wanting, and that is causing them a great deal of uncertainty. They lack trust in this Government.

Then there is the notion of the electronic mapping of all school bus services to provide accurate distances, using global positioning systems and topographic and cadastral technology. Wow! We are talking about a school bus route! I have some anecdotes about some of these students. People tell members such stories. I take them on face value. We are talking about a good, decent bunch of people who have been providing a fantastic service to their local community. Some students were getting on buses and were maybe only half an hour from their local school. Now they sit on the bus for one and a half hours and actually travel away from their school. I do not know whether this is a penny-pinching exercise. Quite frankly, when a Government wants to invest \$1.5 billion in a railway and is penny-pinching for the sake of maybe 20 minutes of travel for students, there hardly seems to be any equity.

The new branch structure is another major achievement for 2003, as listed in the budget papers, which state -

New branch structure to manage new business processes and better manage student transport entitlements to meet community expectation.

What does "community expectation" mean? Mums and dads want a guarantee that their children will get to school safely. I have spoken before about the safety and reliability of the service. Why are we going down this path? We are making 124 small business operators feel very uncertain about their future contracts, so they have put them on the market. Nobody wants to buy them. Why would anyone want to buy those contracts when there is so much uncertainty? I assure members that the community will not be giving the Government a big tick for that. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), you should be talking to school bus operators in Bunbury and getting on top of this issue. Giving this responsibility to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has really let those people down. They are saying that the Government should give this responsibility back to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who was at one time the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr P.B. Watson: That's a harsh call.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: While it was under her helm, member for Albany, people had a level of confidence. They do not have any confidence in this minister. I am absolutely certain that if school bus operators and local communities looked at the major achievements that are listed in the budget papers, they would say it is an absolute joke, because they do not have any faith in the minister or her agency. As I said, most of them told me that the Government should bring back the Minister for Police.

I wanted to raise a question that I put to the minister on full-time employees in relation to school bus operators. We are talking about providing greater efficiency and services to the local community and meeting community expectations. I was curious to see whether this was an exercise in just building a little bureaucracy to make the lives of school bus operators as difficult as possible. I asked the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure a question on notice on 24 March 2004, and I have not yet received a response. Ministers have three months in which to answer such questions. The minister obviously did not want to answer this question, which asks in part -

- (a) during which of the periods listed below was the School Bus Division within your area of Ministerial responsibility;

That is, before it went from education to transport to planning and infrastructure -

- (b) where the School Bus Division was within your area of Ministerial responsibility, how many staff were allocated to this division, what were the position, titles and levels of pay in each of the following years -

I then listed a number of financial years. The question continues -

- (c) given that staff are now expected to undertake a review and enforcement role in the management of school bus contracts, is it envisaged that this will be in addition to their existing duties, or will additional staff be required; and
- (d) if additional staff are envisaged, how many, at what level, and what will be their expected duties?

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

That is a fair question. It is about determining whether we are just seeing a bureaucracy being created to support the school bus division. There is nothing wrong with that. As I said before, we are talking about a group of operators who have provided a service since 1919, and have a record of stability, certainty and safety. I am not convinced that the minister has done the right thing by school bus operators. Page 799 of the budget papers shows an increase in the number of full-time employees from 869 to 995 and then to 1 030 over the respective financial years of 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05.

Another simple issue that school bus operators have raised with me is airconditioning. Most people would not get too upset about airconditioning. School buses are delivered with airconditioning. As you can appreciate, Mr Acting Speaker, the windows do not open on most school buses. They are built to accommodate the airconditioning, which can provide both heating and cooling. The bus drivers are told that they can operate the airconditioners on only 50 days of the year. I do not think anyone needs to be an Einstein to realise that in a State such as Western Australia, with its climate, 50 days is not many days, particularly when there has been a long summer. It requires some commonsense, which does not seem to be applied in this matter. For everybody's information, the *Oxford Dictionary* defines commonsense as sound, practical sense, especially in everyday matters. It is an everyday matter. It should be a simple thing. Surely the school bus operators should be able to use some discretion about whether to use airconditioning on 50 days or 55 days. Students go to school for only 190 days a year. For goodness sake, we are quibbling over a couple of days just to save a bit of money!

I also want to talk about the *Prospector* service. Under the major achievements for 2003-04 on page 793 of the *Budget Statements* is an item on the delivery of new railcars and the commencement of high-speed services for the *Prospector* service to Kalgoorlie and the *AvonLink* to Northam. I understand that the delivery of the new railcars has been a disaster. Services were to commence in November last year. Here we are in May 2004 and the service is still not under way. I have been told that the railcars have been delivered and that there is a problem with them. That is difficult to understand and more difficult to accept when the budget papers state that this is a major achievement for 2003-04. That is hardly an achievement if the service is not running and if the cheque has been paid. I put a question on notice to the minister on 1 April 2004 in the following terms -

I refer to the rail service to Kalgoorlie and ask will the Minister advise -

- (a) when will the new train, 'The Prospector' begin service delivery;
- (b) when was the new Prospector originally scheduled to begin service delivery;
- (c) what were the reasons for the delay in introducing this new train;
- (d) have all the rail cars for the new Prospector been delivered;
- (e) if not, why not;
- (f) are any monies outstanding for these rail cars, and if so why; and
- (g) will the Minister explain why the services to Kalgoorlie are being neglected in favour of the massive funds being spent on the South West Metropolitan Railway?

I had to get that in! I will raise those issues with the minister during estimates committee debates.

Another matter that keeps occurring, and that I am being inundated with letters from members of the public complaining about, is cuts to bus services all over the metropolitan area. The Government has been grandstanding about how it is providing public transport services in the form of the New MetroRail to the southern suburbs, the extension of the Clarkson rail line and the soon to be opened Greenwood train station. These are all great things for the provision of public transport. However, seniors in local communities, such as the Premier's electorate of Victoria Park, are writing to me to say that they cannot get a bus to take them into the central business district or to the local hospital or shopping centre. That is simply not good enough.

Mr P.B. Watson: You must get a lot of mail from all these people talking to you!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I do. I am very popular. Do not distract me. I have 16 minutes left, and I have a lot more to tell members.

The member for Riverton chaired the South Metropolitan Transport East West Study, which looked at this very issue of the integration of bus and rail services, yet at the same time community members were up in arms writing and complaining about the loss of their regular bus service, not to mention also the removal of the taxi users subsidy scheme. The Government had intended to remove the taxi subsidy that disabled people have been entitled to for a long time if they need to use a wheelchair. I want to know exactly how much the Government thought it would save by removing that subsidy. I am glad the minister has had a complete re-think on that matter. People who are disabled and want to catch a taxi certainly should not be discriminated against. That was

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

very mean-spirited on the part of the minister, but obviously enough members on the government side put pressure on the minister to cause her to have a re-think about the removal of that subsidy.

I turn now to Warwick train station. The member for Kingsley spoke in great detail about that matter in her speech. Warwick train station is actually within her electorate boundaries, but it abuts my electorate of Carine. That it is a very well utilised train station. As the member for Kingsley stated, it is very difficult after about 7.20 am to get a car parking space at that station. Although we should be encouraging people to catch buses to the railway station, people still elect to use their car, because that integration between bus and rail often does not exist; or, if it does exist, the frequency of service does not exist. That issue is at the heart of this matter. If we want to get people out of their cars and onto rail, we need to provide frequency of service. We have now found that another car parking station needs to be built at Greenwood to cater for not the number of commuters but the number of parking bays that are required for the people who want to use the Park 'n' Ride facilities. The same issue has arisen in the member for Murdoch's electorate. Recently I attended a public meeting in his electorate to discuss some of the concerns that people have raised, particularly about the environmental aspects of the proposed additional car parking station at Murdoch.

The member for Kingsley has highlighted the issue of Warwick train station. I share the member's view that although we need to make it possible for people to use public transport, we have not examined the issues thoroughly enough. One issue is the integration of bus and rail. Another issue is the number of railcars. I acknowledge that the coalition Government recognised that part of the problem was that the two-car sets that are currently being used on the northern suburb rail line are failing to cater for the number of commuters who want to use the rail service. People in the inner suburbs of Glendalough and Stirling often find that when they get to the station the railcars are already full and there is no room for them. Those people live only about five or 10 minutes away from the central business district, yet they cannot get on a train. It is now proposed to extend the platforms at the northern suburbs rail stations to provide for the next stage; that is, the new three-car sets for the northern suburbs rail line, which will extend to the New MetroRail to the member for Mandurah's electorate. Of course the member for Mandurah cannot wait for that rail line. However, he will never get the Peel deviation.

Mr P.B. Watson: Here he comes!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I knew he would! I knew I would get him started! I want to talk about the Mandurah railway. I have spoken about a number of aspects of that railway in great detail. However, the other day when I was reading the *Hansard* of the federal Parliament, I found some very interesting comments from Senator David Johnston from Western Australia. He talks in a matter of public interest debate about the Western Australian Labor Government and all the promises it made about being a Government for the people. He talks also about this Government's city-centric approach. What I found particularly interesting were his comments about the railway. I have asked a number of questions of the minister about the railway and the reports that have been commissioned by the Government on the railway. With your indulgence, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), I will quote a paragraph of Senator Johnston's speech in the Senate on 24 March 2004. He talks about how the proposed new route of the railway will go straight along the freeway and into Perth, because it was thought that that route would be 12 minutes quicker than the route that had been planned by the previous Government. This is the issue - it will be 12 minutes quicker. He continues -

However, it has recently come to light - but it has not been announced by the hapless Minister for Planning and Infrastructure -

Those are his words, not mine; they are a direct quote -

that the new system will not only service fewer people than was forecast by the previous coalition plan but take three minutes longer, as the train will have to slow down to a snail's pace for the last segment of its journey as it navigates the Narrows Bridge and the very expensive engineering nightmare of a new tunnel into Perth near the proposed station near Parliament House, west of the CBD.

I do not know that he has got that quite right. He continues -

The latest modelling by government appointed Voran Consultants is devastating news.

He is saying that the so-called 12-minute saving that the minister keeps playing on is in fact not true. It will actually take three minutes longer than the Kenwick route would have taken. I find that very interesting. I have put a number of questions on notice to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on that matter. As I have said, many of those questions have not been answered.

I have eight minutes left. I want to allocate some of that time to my electorate of Carine and to the people whom I represent and who have supported me in the time that I have been the member for Carine, to whom I am eternally grateful. The boundaries of my electorate have changed. As people would know, the southern boundary of my electorate now goes from Karrinyup Road to Scarborough Beach Road. My northern boundary

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

was at Hepburn Avenue, but it has now moved down to Warwick Road. I will lose about 6 000 electors from the northern end of my electorate and I will pick up 12 000 voters from the southern end. Part of that electorate is the former electorate of Innaloo. That has created a number of new issues for me to deal with. Coastal planning will be a big election issue that will require a great deal of community discussion and understanding of matters that people feel very passionately about.

I would like to take up a couple of issues on behalf of my electorate. Firstly, there is the issue of power supply problems. I believe that this goes right across the board; it is not just in my electorate. We have heard all sorts of different stories about power supply problems over the past few months, and certainly during the summer months. Complaints have been ongoing in my electorate since I became the member, so it is not something the Opposition did not have a problem with when it was in government. This problem requires a large allocation of funds to resolve it, but I wish to raise these issues on behalf of my community. Carine Glades Shopping Centre endures constant power cuts. The shopping centre is adjacent to my electorate office, so I hear about it frequently. Last week the shopping centre suffered a power cut during which retail shops could not use their tills. One constituent in Duncraig listed five power cut events lasting from 15 to 21 hours between February and April this year. The many blackouts reported to us, and their duration - anything from a few minutes to several hours - indicate an unreliable supply. Explanations are always different - for example, debris from trees - but the main problem indicated was that the North Beach substation that supplies Carine is inadequate. It is fed by an overhead powerline known as the Waldorf feeder. As it is overhead, it is subject to a number of problems. Therefore, Western Power cannot and does not guarantee uninterrupted power supplies. In March 2003 the Minister for Energy said that the five-year reinforcement plan for the North Beach substation was almost complete, and that this should improve reliability in the area. The minister also said that work on a fourth feeder from the Landsdale zone substation, intended to relieve the load on the North Beach substation, was completed, and that this additional load transfer should further improve reliability in the Carine area. However, the reports I have received indicate that it continues to be a problem. Today when I came into the Parliament, I spoke to a staff member, in one of the ladies toilets, who told me that she had had power cuts at her home twice in the past two days. Today she had an electric hair device with her because she could not get ready at home. She could not even iron something to wear. That is most unfortunate. That person will remain nameless!

The other issue I raise in the last four minutes I have is the intersection of Beach and Davallia Roads. I have written to the minister on a number of occasions about this intersection. It is adjacent to my electorate office, and I can see it from my office window. I have witnessed a couple of very serious accidents there. Fortunately there have been no fatalities. The intersection was recently listed as the eighth worst intersection in the metropolitan area. There have been 13 traffic accidents, and four people have been hospitalised, but no fatalities. The right-hand arrow into Davallia Road from Beach Road was installed not very long ago, after I sought intervention for that intersection, but accidents continue to occur. Members need to understand the topography of this intersection. Okely Road should be a dual carriageway, but it is still only a single carriageway. There is a slight bend, and the line of sight makes it difficult for motorists heading from south to north to get a clear view of vehicles travelling in the opposite direction. The speed limit of 70 kilometres an hour on Beach Road should be questioned, particularly approaching those traffic lights. We have suggested that perhaps the limit be reduced to 60 kilometres an hour, but the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has decided that she will not support that. There are a number of entry points into the garage, the shopping centre and the sporting grounds, because the road is also adjacent to the lovely Carine open space, where huge numbers of people participate in physical activity both on weekends and during the week. Reduction of the speed limit east and west of the intersection would have an impact on the number of accidents. The setting sun is also a factor for motorists travelling west on Beach Road. All these issues require immediate attention. It certainly does not appear in this budget as black spot funding, yet it was listed as the eighth worst intersection in the metropolitan area. I understand that other intersections require just as much attention, and funding needs to be allocated to those. I know that in the electorate of the member for Girrawheen, for example, there is a terrible intersection on Mirrabooka Avenue that needs immediate attention. I would not be advocating that my electorate get funding before that of the member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You will be very pleased to know that we have been given black spot funding.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is good to hear because it means that my electorate is closer to the top of the list. Does that mean that the intersection goes from eighth worst to seventh worst?

I have only one more minute left on the clock. I could raise an enormous number of matters. While some people will be pleased with this budget, from my perspective it is disappointing, particularly in the area of road funding. I alluded to that issue at the start of my address.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [7.37 pm]: I fully support these Bills. I will not be negative like the previous speaker. I will talk only about the positives for my electorate.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mr D.A. Templeman: They are all positives.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They are; that is right. Albany at the moment is buzzing. I will mention some of things Albany has achieved through the budget. First, \$750 000 has been allocated to undertake minor and other works at the Albany port. The port is a very important part of the Albany region. It handles the shipping of woodchips and grain all the time. I do not care where the money comes from, so long as there is money to upgrade the port. Under fire and emergency services, \$150 000 has been allocated to continue refurbishment of the Albany fire station. I congratulate Bruce Manning and the staff of the Great Southern Development Commission. They do a tremendous job, for not only Albany but the whole region. The sum of \$4.345 million has been allocated to continue work at the Albany small boat harbour, and \$64 000 has been provided to commence work on the Albany harbour footbridge to link the central business district with the harbour.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: No, there is not much left for the member's electorate!

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is outrageous!

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Albany boat harbour footbridge will link the city and the waterfront. For the past 20 years, various Governments on both sides of the House have said that they would fix the Albany waterfront, and now the Government is doing something about it. It has put \$12.7 million towards developing a small boat harbour. Now the Albany footbridge will provide a link from Stirling Terrace right across to the waterfront. With all the trucks coming through loaded with woodchips, this will make it much safer for the tourists. There is nothing worse than seeing tourist boats come in and watching the people who come off those boats walking across the railway line to get to the city centre.

Mr B.K. Masters: Where is that money coming from? Which agency?

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is coming from the Great Southern Development Commission. The budget provides for \$820 000 for a day hospital for the centre for the aged. It is a great innovation, which means that people are in hospital for a short period and can go home, and then be picked up by Silver Chain and brought to hospital during the day for, say, physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. It gives these people more independence. Most elderly people do not want to go to hospital because they think that when they go to hospital they will not come out, and sometimes that happens. This will give them a lot more independence.

In the budget \$10.4 million has been allocated for libraries. The City of Albany and I lobbied the minister very hard to get more funding for the library. I am a great user of the Albany library; I probably take out four or five books a week. Every time I visit the library I am lobbied very hard. It is great to see that \$10 million will be spent on libraries across Western Australia. Libraries are a very important part of our communities, especially in regional areas. Libraries are a great meeting place. People from the ages of one or two years up to 70 or 80 years of age and even older use libraries not just to borrow books but also as a meeting place.

An amount of \$7.4 million has been allocated to continue work on the Albany justice complex. An amount of \$1 million has been allocated to connect the Albany Regional Prison to the town's deep sewerage system. There are a lot of problems in the Little Grove area with seepage and water flowing into the harbour. The money will go a long way towards correcting that. An amount of \$6.5 million is to be used to continue work on the new district police complex, which is to cost a total of \$9.26 million. I congratulate John Watson and all the other police officers in the Albany region. John would like to congratulate them himself but unfortunately he is gagged! He and his staff do a tremendous job; they work right throughout the region. Since John was posted there he has put the region into gear. All the crime statistics are down. I am his referee for another police position. I do not know whether that is a positive or not. Let us see whether he gets the job. No-one has rung me yet. I do not know whether that is a good sign.

The Quaranup recreation camp near Albany is to receive \$808 000 for upgrading. Anyone visiting Albany should visit the camp and look across the harbour. It is one of the most serene places in the world. The Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre is to receive \$1.5 million for redevelopment. It is a vital facility in the region. People from throughout the region use Albany's sporting services. It is great to see that they are receiving some money.

A total of \$11.92 million is allocated for works in the Albany region by the Water Corporation. A lot of people believe that Albany has plenty of water because it rains all the time. That is a myth; it has no water. It is a serious problem. The water drains away; it does not go into the catchment areas. An amount of \$608 000 is allocated for a new 25-megalitre tank at Mt Melville. Actually, we got it built without anybody going crook about how it looks! An amount of \$2.4 million is for infill sewerage at Little Grove. I spoke about that before. A lot of the effluent is flowing into the harbour. It will be replaced by a deep sewerage system.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mr D.A. Templeman: If the member is not re-elected, there should be an inquiry!

Mr P.B. WATSON: These are some of the things that have been neglected in the past eight years.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): Order, members! This is not a private conversation.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you for your protection from my own side, Mr Acting Speaker!

I congratulate the Gallop Labor Government for its \$1.8 billion investment over four years to ensure the safety and reliable quality of the electricity network throughout the State. It is not a problem in the Albany area because it has no pollution; it does not have any of the stuff that occurs in the city. Albany has beautiful and serene surroundings. However, Albany's hinterland does have problems. It is a real problem, especially 50 to 60 kilometres outside Albany.

A total of \$26.2 million will be spent on the maintenance and construction of road networks in the great southern. The area is having problems with trucks carrying woodchips. There are a lot of woodchip plantations in the area. I am pleased to see that the minister has a working group in the area dealing with the problem of access to the port. A lot of the woodchip farms were established on little farms serviced by gravel roads. I know of a lot of problems in the Mt Barker region. During the middle of winter the trucks churn up the roads. There are problems with school buses using the roads. I am glad that the minister is right on top of the issue.

I have talked about all the things that Albany will get and I will now talk a little about Albany itself. I want to talk about the Returned and Services League. The RSL in Albany is a tremendous movement. It works very hard. I want to mention my mate, "Digger" Cleak, who is the President of the RSL branch in Albany. "Digger" has a vision for Albany to be the Anzac town of Australia. I believe it can be even bigger. The dawn service in Albany is now an icon. It was recognised as the fourth most important out of 12 state icons.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You fought very hard for that.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I did; I fought very hard. An amount of \$250 000 is a gift from the State Government to the Anzac memorial park. It is part of the vision shared by "Digger" Cleak, the City of Albany and me to have the Anzac memorial park recognised as an icon. The distance between one side of the park and the other is the same as the distance between the trenches in Gallipoli; that is, the Australian and Turkish sides. We hope to have gardens on either side. One side will represent Australia and the other Turkey. We will have young children from local schools look after parts of the gardens. For example, children from Spencer Park Primary School may look after part of the Turkish garden, while children from Flinders Park Primary School may look after part of the Australian garden. It will encourage children to retain the memory of the soldiers who left Australia and gave their lives. I mentioned the other day that I have a photograph at the back of my office that shows Anzacs sitting on one of the pyramids in Egypt. The photograph shows many young men who went off to war. They thought it was a great adventure and that they would save their country. A lot of them did not return. The last they saw of Australia was Albany. With the \$250 000 from the State Government for the Anzac memorial park, "Digger" Cleak, the RSL and the City of Albany hope to obtain a further \$250 000 from the federal Government and an additional \$250 000 from the Turkish Government. Albany has another first over other Anzac-related areas of Australia. It has a sister city arrangement with Gallipoli. Last year the Mayor of Gallipoli visited Australia and signed an agreement. The Mayor of Albany had intended to travel to Gallipoli this year but unfortunately she became ill and the delegation did not travel. There is a strong tie between Albany and Gallipoli, and we hope to build on that. There is a statue of Atatürk on the boardwalk at Albany. When it was unveiled about 200 Turkish people from Perth visited Albany. I got to do Turkish dances with some of the ladies. I have just about got my back right! In 2014 it will be 100 years since the diggers left Albany. There will be great celebrations. Now is the time to plan for the celebration. We held an Anzac ball this year, which was run by "Digger" Cleak and his group. It was a great success; it is a stepping stone for the future. Things are really going well for Albany. I believe Albany is the Anzac town of Australia. We should encourage people to visit Australia. Many people do not want to visit Gallipoli because of the security problems. People can come to Australia and remember their grandfathers. There are plans for an interpreter service at which people can type in the names of their grandfathers to see their history in the Army or Navy.

I will refer now to the Nathan Drew Memorial Trust. It is amazing how, out of adversity, positive things come. Young Nathan was lost off rocks at Albany last year. It was a very sad event. The Drew family did not sit back and say that it was terrible, feel sorry for us. They wanted to make sure it did not happen again. They started the memorial trust to try to find ways of making it safer for people on the coast line. There is a new invention at the salmon fishing holes; it was developed with the assistance of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. It is a device which, when broken open, releases flotation balls that roll into the sea. As soon as the seal is broken they send a signal to a receiver on top of a nearby hill. That is necessary because mobile telephones do not work in the area. The signal automatically sends an SOS to the local police and other emergency services. They are trying to promote them right across Australia. Surveys have been done of near

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

misses. On the plane on Monday night I was reading about how many near misses there had been in the Albany area. The survey asked how many people had been washed into the sea or had had near misses, and it was an amazing number. One gentleman told a meeting that he was washed into the sea 12 years ago near Walpole. He was in for an hour and a half, and he got himself out. No-one knew about it, and he did not even want to tell his wife but finally told the interviewer that he could now handle people knowing about it. It was great for him to tell people about it. Many people are washed off the rocks and are rescued. Rocks on the west coast generally are not high and it is not difficult to climb out of the sea. In my region, the coastal rocks can be 50 feet high, and people can be sucked under those rocks by the undertow. Even a strong swimmer can bump onto the rocks. People should swim out to sea away from the rocks, but the natural inclination is to swim in. The rocks can just crush people. I congratulate all those involved in the Nathan Drew Memorial Trust as they do a wonderful job. I will approach the minister to get funding for that project. Many people have worked to turn a tragedy into a positive, and I am tremendously proud that they are part of my region.

I will also talk about Margaret Martin, who has a group in my electorate that I outlined in a 90-second statement that the member for Girrawheen kindly helped me with the other day. This group raises awareness among pregnant women about drinking alcohol and the adverse effects it can have on the child. I congratulate Margaret and her group. When the regional Parliament was held in Albany, Margaret took time to speak to most members of Parliament and she gave them flyers. It is not a very well-known program, and I am proud of Margaret and the group down there for the work they do.

This week is National Volunteer Week and I now refer to some volunteer groups in Albany. I am bound to miss some as there are so many. I was at the Albany Surf Life Saving Club awards on Saturday night as I am a patron down there. Many people are involved in the Albany surf club, which won the state award last year for the best club. Yes, Bunbury won it the year before, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean) - do not look at me like that! We will probably win it again this year. It is a family orientated club. I cannot think of the young girl's name, but she is a short person -

Mr D.A. Templeman: That's rounded it down!

Mr B.K. Masters: Height deprived - not short.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Vertically challenged.

Mr P.B. WATSON: This is serious. I refer to a young lady who is a short person. The surf club bought her a board of her own. She was competing on the big boards and having a lot of trouble. The Surf Life Saving Association (WA) and the Albany Surf Life Saving Club provided a specially made board. If the smile the young girl had on her face could be sold, it would be worth a million dollars.

The Albany hospice has a tremendous group of volunteers. This is not meant in the wrong way, but the "Old Boilers", as I call them, on my hospice fundraising committee are the salt of the earth. They not only look after people in the hospice, but they rattle the tins and work in the Butterflies opportunity shop and give their time for nothing. A problem is that many of these people are getting older. As I say, they are my "Old Boilers", but I love them; they are the salt of the earth and beautiful people. We must get more younger people involved. When these people go, we will not have the volunteers. I congratulate them all.

Our State Emergency Service group is fantastic. Whenever functions are held that require traffic control and such matters, these people are there giving their time. If someone is washed off the rocks, they are out rescuing people in the middle of the night. They direct traffic at car accidents. Albany and Denmark have the youngest SES brigades in Western Australia. I congratulate all these members.

The Albany Police and Citizens Youth Club is tremendous with Terry Eaton and his group. Funding has been provided for the new centre. The State Government has put in \$1 million, and the Federal Government has put in only \$440 000. We have been pushing this project for some more. The centre is still \$200 000 down. I am sure that between the federal Government and the State Government we can get the centre going for our children. It is very important for our community.

I have a very arty person on the bench in front of me in the member for Mandurah. He can speak about such matters.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Hear, hear!

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Vancouver Arts Centre is fantastic. Every week, I receive an e-mail saying something different is happening in Albany. A rap group from Sydney visited a while ago, and I thought that that should be very good. They had everybody dancing. I had the honour at half-time of opening the Perth International Arts Festival in the area, but nobody wanted to know me! I was not rapping. If I had made a rap speech, I might have been all right.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

The HarbourSound Festival is put on by another community group. We were on Middleton Beach the other night with all the jazz musicians assembled. It was tremendous.

Albany held the highland games this year. All people in Albany are active in trying to get people to visit Albany. It was great to see all those men in skirts!

The Albany Light Opera and Theatre Company put on a production of *HMS Pinafore*. I was very impressed by it.

Mr T.K. Waldron: I was in *HMS Pinafore* once - as a girl.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I can understand that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: As a mermaid?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Now, now; I am talking seriously here.

The cast included Chris Holden, Neil Jones, Mick Vertigan and Chris Morris, who works for the Water Corporation and played Dick Deadeye. I can never look him in the face again. He walked like the hunchback of Notre Dame - this will not be captured correctly in *Hansard*. He stole the show; he was tremendous. The cast also included Trevor Dack, Robin Hughes, Terry Stevenson and Naomi Arrowsmith, who is from the Water and Rivers Commission. They all seem to be on the stage.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's the thespian blood.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is it. Naomi Arrowsmith, Gina Venturini and Susan Withingstall are tremendous singers. We had all the sailors in the cast. I must mention the director, John Taylor, and his assistant director, Janine Taylor. Findlay McNish, the musical director, is a legend in Albany. I spoke to him after the performance. He showed me each of the score pages for all the different instruments in the orchestra for the show, and I asked him how he worked it all out. He said that he looks down and gestures wildly. Findlay is there for any charity work needed for the community. I congratulate him. I also mention the Spectrum Theatre.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is a great theatre. I visited it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is a great theatre. I am a member, and I hand out tickets and usher people to their seats. I refer also to the Great Southern Festival.

Aaron Probeski went with the Premier to the Somme and London as part of the Anzac group. Saffron Sharp, who only just missed out on making the Anzac trip with young Aaron, got up in front of 20 000 people and spoke at the Kings Park Anzac Day service. Saffron will go a long way. I congratulate her. She is not only a great spokesperson for Albany, but also a tremendous singer. She is a good young person. These are only two of the many tremendous young people in Albany. This was shown when the Youth Parliament was held in Albany. All the kids from the Albany region came into town. At first, we had to try to get them to talk and to be active as they were very quiet, but, by crikey, at the end of the day, they were up having their say about the real issues affecting youth. I was very proud of them.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Hear, hear!

Mr P.B. WATSON: I have spoken about John Watson and his staff.

I went down to the senior citizens centre the other day when Lotterywest provided a reclining chair for podiatry patients. A concert is put on every three weeks for seniors around town, and they have singing on Monday. I have been invited along next Monday to sing with the girls. I am sure it will be a highlight in everyone's life! If they can get a tape recording for those who cannot be there, I will bring it up to Parliament and lay it on the Table of the House.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What will you sing?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I do not know yet, but I am sure it will be great.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The over-50s.

Dr E. Constable: What about a preview now?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I think I would get thrown out.

Dr E. Constable: Others have done it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: If I could have another five minutes, I would.

Dr E. Constable: Hon Ernie Bridge sang in here once.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mr P.B. WATSON: I can yodel but I do not want to put anyone to sleep. The over-50s are a tremendous group of people. A lot of people in Albany have been put off work and are probably sitting at home. When the over-50s get together, they exercise and have meetings. The member for Dawesville would know all -

Mr A.D. Marshall: Marvellous people the over-50s. The over-65s are a little bit better, but the over-50s are good.

Mr P.B. WATSON: By the sound of it, the member just hit 66 years of age. Since I came into office, my staff and I have put on a senior's concert every year. One of the highlights this year will be the barber shop quartet. It will consist of Superintendent John Watson, if he is allowed to talk, Andrew Hammond, who is about six foot seven inches tall and will be standing next to John Watson who is not that tall, "Digger" Cleak and me. We are all going to have to shave off our hair to look like John Watson or he will have to grow hair to look like us.

I would like to thank my staff. When a member is away from his office, his staff is his life blood. I would like to thank Julie Hooper, Pam Stoney and Guy Wroth for the tremendous work they do.

Dr E. Constable: You have so many staff in Albany.

Mr P.B. WATSON: No, Julie and Pam job share, just in case anyone is getting upset.

The last thing I will talk about is a little more serious. In January I had an operation for prostate cancer. I was lucky. A person I know from Albany went along to see the doctor the same time as I did to get a blood test. His doctor told him to wait for six months and not to go back to see a specialist. He took his doctor's advice and did not go back to see a specialist, and he is now no longer with us. When he eventually went back to the specialist, a biopsy was done and his cancer had spread from his prostate into his blood stream. I spoke to him at the hospital and he said that they had given him six months to live. Two weeks later, I was flying up to Perth and I read his death notice in the paper. Some men think "No, I don't want to get a prostate check. I do not want to have to go through the indignity of having a digital test done." Great, be tough, but at least go along to see a doctor. Men can get a blood test done; they do not have to have the digital test.

My dad died from prostate cancer. It was one of the most horribly things I have ever seen in my life. A man whom I respected and loved was just like a baby when he died. I did not want to put my family through that. Guys can be tough and say, "I am not going to do that. I am alright." However, they should go for a walk in the morning and see how many 70-year-old women are walking around compared with 70-year-old men. Men can be tough but at least go to the doctor and have the option. People will say that for someone to have prostate cancer they must have some symptoms. I did not have any symptoms. My dad died of prostate cancer. At 47 years of age, I went along to my doctor and he said to me, "Don't worry about testing. In America they say it does not matter." I went home and my wife said, "You go back and get tested." I got tested for prostate cancer for eight years with no problems. Then my blood test results went up and I had a biopsy done, which my friend did not do. The doctors noticed there was some darkness in the biopsy or something that they could not pick up. They said that there was something there they were not too sure of. I went back six months later and the cancer had become very aggressive. I made the decision to get it taken out.

In life a person can think that things are going really well, but when he is lying in a little cubicle in the hospital before an operation, he can get to thinking; "When they operate today, will they pull out the cancerous thing or will it have got into my blood stream or something like that?" I can tell members that in that situation a person reassesses his life. At least I had the option to do that. If people do not go and get the test done, they will not have that option. They can be happily going along when, all of a sudden, they get some bad test results and say, "Damn, I wish I had had the test done earlier." Some people get tested and the results will not be as bad as mine were or that of my friend's, but at least they will have the option and the chance to decide their course of treatment.

Next Wednesday in Albany we will be holding a men's awareness night. John Todd, Haydn Bunton and I will be talking about our experiences. People have pushed this issue under the carpet. I raised the issue with the Department of Health but its attitude was that every man gets prostate cancer. However, some men might get it earlier than others, and it will kill them. I am saying no more about the Department of Health. I do not want someone in the Department of Health telling me what I can and cannot do if it is going to make a difference to whether I live or die.. I fully support the Bill.

DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [8.05 pm]: This evening I want to concentrate on some of the issues that are clearly of concern in the electorate of Churchlands. The first matter that springs to mind deals with schools. In the Treasurer's second reading speech, he referred to developing a world-class education and training system. They were his words and that is the aim of this Government. If the Treasurer wants to develop a world-class education and training system, then it will cost a lot more than the Treasurer thinks, and certainly a lot more than he has indicated in this year's budget. Overall, the increase in funding in education and training does not keep

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

up with the rate of inflation or the rate of the population increase. We will soon be running behind rather than ahead in the area of education. We cannot possibly maintain or improve standards unless we are prepared to pay for it, and education needs to be funded properly, not in a token way. The Minister for Education and Training and the Treasurer have spoken about a \$72 million increase, but it simply is not keeping up with the need.

Since the Beazley inquiry in the 1980s, there have been a string of changes to education in this State, most of which I would agree have been really important changes. However, most of those initiatives have not been funded adequately as we have gone along, and schools in many instances have had to struggle to keep up with the demands placed on them. We have constant change. We have had changes in the curriculum and changes in year 11 or 12 more than once. We have had the inclusion of many children with disabilities, something which I would be the first to support. We have had a major change to the school-entry age. Full-time preprimary education has been introduced as well as guaranteed kindergarten places, and the list goes on and on. All of these are very good initiatives but not one of them has been properly funded.

We are now talking about other changes. The Minister for Education - I support what he is doing - is talking about changing the school-leaving age. I will come back to that in a moment. I support these changes but we have to make sure that these things are funded properly. We are yet to have a definitive analysis of the impact of change in school-entry age on schools, which is looming in 2009. In 2009, the first cohort of children that were affected by that change in school-entry age will be turning 13 years of age and in year 7. That is really the crunch because that is a major change. A lot of questions are yet to be answered. Is 13 years of age too old to be in a primary school? What curriculum changes are needed if children of that age are at a primary school? I could rattle off a whole lot of questions that need to be answered, and we have not yet dealt with that issue. If it is decided that 13 years of age is too old to be in primary school, that has huge implications for the secondary school curriculum and for the organisation of schools. It has huge implications for the physical plant. More classrooms will be needed in schools if we are going to think about putting those children into secondary schools. It is now the middle of 2004, and as yet, we have still not decided what to do with these children, and we are not planning for it. My fear is that we will end up with a hotchpotch of some children going to high schools, some staying in primary schools and some going into middle schools. However, we must deal with the educational issues before we can make our decisions. I do not see that debate happening. While we need that debate to occur and to get some definitive answers, we are launching into a new debate about the school leaving age. They are all very important issues that need to be dealt with now, not in a few years time. We need policy decisions as soon as we can possibly get them. We need to know what the funding implications of those decisions will be. My fear is that we will leave it too late, we will not make good decisions and there will certainly not be the funds set aside to deal with the change in the school entry age.

I mentioned a moment ago the current Minister for Education's initiative to debate the school leaving age, which is a very important topic that should be debated in the community. However, if members stop to think about that for a moment, they will realise that if we were to go through with such an initiative, it would carry with it major expenses and major funding over a number of years. On the basis of my calculations, we are talking about an extra 4 000 students in the State's high schools. It may even be more than that. In the main, we could probably safely assume that those 4 000 students will not be university bound. They will comprise children who leave school now at the ages of 15 or 16 years before year 12, so we can assume that they are looking at other pathways and other career options. If I am correct in assuming that those 4 000 students are not tertiary education bound, there are implications for the courses that they study in school, the curriculum, developing the curriculum, expanding the current curriculum, expanding capital expenditure, and perhaps specialised buildings that might be needed. We need to know whether there will be the teachers available to teach the subjects that those kids will want to study. Without taking more than a minute, members can see that it will have serious funding implications. There is no indication of where that money will come from. We will start to slip behind if we cannot fund education in the current budget to the level at which it needs to be funded.

Turning to the Churchlands electorate for a moment, one of the major issues facing schools in the Churchlands electorate is the need to upgrade ageing physical plant, such as buildings. For example, Wembley Primary School is 65 years old. Luckily \$1 million was found a few years ago to fund an upgrade of that school. Floreat Primary School is about 54 years old. All the schools in the electorate are more than 35 years old, and some very old indeed. If members look at the physical plant in those buildings, they will see that they were definitely built for another era. If they compare the buildings in those schools with modern schools that have been built in new areas, which of course must be built, they will see that architects are listening to educators and are building schools for not only the present but also the future. They are building schools with flexible spaces that can be used over a long period as the curriculum develops and changes, and as the needs of teachers and changes in teaching style and learning develop. The old schools are hamstrung by their design. It is becoming more and more difficult for teachers to provide the sorts of options they might wish to provide. That is one aspect of the curriculum and how it relates to the buildings in which children are taught.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

The toilets at the Floreat Primary School and Lake Monger Primary School should have been replaced 10 to 15 years ago; they are disgusting. I understand, from talking to parents at both those schools, that some children refuse to use the toilets. It may seem trivial to some people but it is very important.

Mr B.K. Masters: It is happening at Vasse Primary School.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is happening at lots of primary schools. I am using these schools as an example.

Mr A.J. Dean: It is important for girls.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: It is important for both girls and boys. On a hot day in February kids do not want to use the toilets because they are disgusting, smelly and broken, and they do not work for most of the time. On a 40-degree day kids who do not want to use the toilets do not drink any fluids because they know that if they do, they must use the toilets. They hang on all day and get dehydrated, and they get sick. I sent the Minister for Education a scientific article on the medical impact on children of not using toilets at school. I am yet to get an answer from him. I hope that he has read the article and passed it on to people in the Department of Education and Training to read, because it is a serious issue. There is simply not enough money in the budget to provide for the necessary upgrade of school toilets. It is a serious issue that affects all children.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What are the demographics of those schools?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The numbers have risen since I have been a member of Parliament. They are not as high as they once were, but in most of the Churchlands electorate demographics are changing and a younger group of people are emerging. It is moving through that cycle at the moment. It is a bit variable, but two or three of the schools are full and other attendance figures are holding pretty well.

Consideration should be given to providing other physical plant, such as libraries. The Minister for Education today opened the library and resource centre at Wembley Downs Primary School. The school has fought for four or five years to get that upgrade. The library was previously housed in the undercroft of a building that was never designed for a library. The school has been struggling with space. The minister last year visited Woodlands Primary School, which has a library that was funded and built by parents many years ago. It is just over half the size of the standard resource centre and library in a new school. I understand that the school is at the top of the list in the west coast region of the Department of Education and Training. However, there is no guarantee that it will get a library. It has been waiting for some years. City Beach Primary School is desperate for a new library and resource centre.

There is a growing difference between new schools that are being built, which I do not deny need to be built, and older schools. We need to put far more money into upgrading schools in older and more established areas. I urge the minister to give serious consideration to that, because the difference between those schools is getting greater and greater every year. As the member for Vasse has said, a similar situation exists in schools in other areas. I can sum it up by saying that schools in established areas are not well suited to the needs of schools in the twenty-first century. Although I am sure that the minister is concerned about schools in areas of growth in new suburbs, he must be equally concerned about schools in electorates such as mine. Administration areas and teachers' preparation areas in some of the older schools are like rabbit warrens. Floreat Primary School is a case in point. It is very difficult for teachers there to find adequate space in which to prepare the lessons that they need to prepare. Those schools need areas that are specifically designed, so that teachers can do their complex job well and work in pleasant surroundings. There are many makeshift work spaces in older schools. They are becoming commonplace. There are old canteens and other spaces for art and music that need replacing.

Another issue that has arisen recently is that of the inadequate electrical supply at a number of schools. At Wembley Downs Primary School parents raised a lot of money, I think \$26 000, to provide some airconditioning in some of the classrooms, only to find that they needed to find the same amount of money to upgrade the electrical supply before they could install the airconditioning. That is pretty hard. The \$26 000 was a lot of money for parents to raise over a number of years. They struggled and worked hard to do it and then found that situation. If it were a new school, the electrical supply would have been adequate for the installation of the airconditioning. However, as it was an old school, the electrical supply was inadequate and everything needed upgrading. At first the parents were told that they must do it by themselves and find the money for the upgrade. However, I am pleased to say that money has been found to assist with that upgrade, although I think the school must provide some of the funding as well. It was a great shock to those parents, after many years of hard work to provide airconditioning for the school.

Money has been spent on the schools that I am referring to. Undercover assembly areas and one library have been constructed, and there have been some other upgrades of the schools. Two administration areas have been upgraded as well, but a lot more is required. I will certainly be quizzing the minister next week about what is in

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

the current budget. From my first glance, it appears that there is less than there was last year, so we are not getting too far ahead in this area.

Another issue raised by the Treasurer was that it is an objective of this Government to ensure that we have a safe and supportive environment. I asked myself whether constituents in the Churchlands electorate feel safe and secure in their homes and in the environment in which they live. My observation was that they probably do not. As I walked around the Churchlands electorate over the past two or three weeks delivering a newsletter with supporters of mine, the thing that struck me over and over again was how people fortress themselves in their homes with gates that have special locks and windows that have locks. I am noticing more and more very large, loud dogs. Some dogs bark as one walks from one end of the block to the other, and become louder as one gets closer to them. They are really fierce dogs. To me they do not look like normal, docile pets. They are there to guard the houses, especially when the people who live in those homes are away during the day at work. I have noticed more and more of these large dogs.

The SPEAKER: I thought they were all in my electorate.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: No, there are a lot in mine too, Mr Speaker. I am sure there are lot in every electorate in this State.

Mr P.W. Andrews: None worse than mine.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: The member for Southern River has been bitten by one. That provides a source of great insecurity to members of Parliament if they want to go doorknocking. My advice is to avoid any house that has a large dog barking within it.

Mr P.W. Andrews interjected.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I would not put myself in danger. My friend on my left, the member for Southern River, has had a bad experience with a dog. Was the member for Southern River doorknocking at the time?

Mr P.W. Andrews: I was.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: He was doorknocking at the time, so everybody should take my advice.

Mr B.K. Masters: In 1987 I was doorknocking for the Liberal Party in Kwinana and was bitten by a dog. The lady came up to me and said, "I'm so sorry; we vote Liberal as well."

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I would say it was not a very well-trained dog.

The SPEAKER: What thanks did the Liberal Party give it?

Mr P.W. Andrews: The dog that bit me was owned by Carol Martin's nephew.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I will get back to my speech. We have had a little aside about dogs. The point is still a serious one; people see a need to fortress themselves in their homes and protect themselves in a number of ways with alarms and other very expensive systems. They also have animals that will act as a deterrent or protector.

One very important issue that gets down to the old infrastructure in established areas is expenditure on police stations. I am aware that funds are available in this budget for that purpose. However, I am very disappointed that no funds are available to upgrade the police stations in the western suburbs. A year or so ago, perhaps even two years ago, I visited a number of police stations in the area with the members for Nedlands and Cottesloe. We went to Wembley Police Station, which is very close to my electorate office, and Subiaco Police Station. I also went to Claremont Police Station and the other members went to the police stations in Nedlands and Cottesloe. What struck me, particularly at Wembley, was the appalling state of the old building in which the police and detectives work. They are expected to work under appalling conditions. I suspect that if occupational health and safety officers went into Wembley Police Station, they would close it. One can see how unsafe it is with one look. I will always remember a comment that a young woman detective made about the substandard conditions at Wembley Police Station. She said that there was only one toilet and that they must share it with the crooks. They also did not have an interview room. When they were interviewing a crook, to use her word, and the crook wanted to go to the toilet, that crook would use the toilet that the staff in the police station used. She said that they could not believe the mess the crooks made when they used it. That would of course be deliberate behaviour. I do not think our police should work under those conditions. I agree with the minister that the substandard, old-fashioned buildings are totally inadequate for the job. Two years ago a study of Wembley, Subiaco and other police stations was undertaken and recommendations were made for their upgrade. Not a brass razoo has been set aside in this budget for planning for or upgrading of the police stations in this area. The time has come for that to happen. I urge the minister to revisit this issue and make sure that funds are set aside as soon as possible to build a state-of-the-art police facility to service the Wembley and Subiaco areas. I do not believe that we need to replace both stations. As I have said to the minister before - I think it was during the last

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

estimates committee - I could see one state-of-the-art police station fulfilling the role for the Wembley and Subiaco areas. To this point, the study undertaken on the needs in the area was a waste of time and effort.

I would like to make a few brief remarks about the quality of health care. Once again, the Treasurer said that an objective of this Government is to provide quality health care for our loved ones. Those were the words he used in his speech. One asks the question again: does this budget do what the Treasurer promised with regard to health? Much of the Treasurer's speech was based on the Reid report and the reforms that will supposedly come over the next 13 years. The Reid report recommendations will cost \$1.7 billion. The Treasurer referred to total spending on infrastructure over the next 13 years of \$2.6 billion. If that spending were averaged over 13 years, one would expect about \$200 million to be spent each year over the 13 years. However, in the next financial year \$162 million will be spent, in the following year \$169 million will be spent and spending will then drop to \$147.5 million. In the fourth year \$154.5 million will be spent. We all agree that health is a crucial area of need, but the figures in the budget indicate a half-hearted attempt by the Gallop Government to get on with the job of providing the infrastructure recommended in the Reid report.

The other fact that bewilders me is that the Reid blueprint promises very few new hospital beds - about 370 extra over the 13-year period. It hardly seems enough to cope with the increased demand that there will be. It is certainly not enough to cope with current demand. It beggars belief that enough new beds will be provided in hospitals in 13 years. At best, the Reid recommendations look like a reorganisation of the geography of the hospital facilities, particularly in the metropolitan area. Under these circumstances I cannot see how the quality or quantity of health care will improve very much for the people who need it now.

Ambulance funding is another case in point. For many years the ambulance service has been asking for increased funding from the State Government. There has been a recent announcement about an injection of funding for that service. I would be the first to support it. However, I am not sure that that injection of funding will solve the problems that we have. Ambulances will pick up people who are unwell from their homes or from an accident and take them to hospital. However, there will still be a bottleneck at the hospitals, because not enough beds will be available for people to go quickly through the system from the emergency service into beds in the hospital. That is the problem now. This Government is not providing any more beds in the near future to cope with that issue.

I have one more issue to raise before I finish. I refer to libraries. Library funding was raised in a question without notice yesterday by a government member. Of course, it was a dorothy dixer. It was raised also by the member for Albany in his speech. The Churchlands electorate is serviced by two excellent public libraries. One of those libraries is in the Town of Cambridge. That is a brand-new library - it was opened only last year - and it is in an excellent location at Floreat Forum. A lot of people use that library. It has excellent parking facilities. There are also wonderful facilities underneath the library that are used by all sorts of groups, such as for exercise classes for older people, and meeting rooms. It is a very well-used and beautiful facility. The other library that services the Churchlands electorate is in Gildercliffe Street in the City of Stirling. That also is an excellent library that was opened just a few years ago. Therefore, my electorate is serviced by very good library services and excellent librarians.

In recent weeks I, like probably most members of this Parliament, have been inundated with messages and letters from people urging me to put pressure on the Government to provide increased funding for books and resources for community libraries. It has been an issue of concern for a long time that Governments have not risen to the occasion and provided enough funding for libraries. Yesterday during question time the Minister for Culture and the Arts waxed lyrical about how the Government will be contributing \$10.3 million over the next four years to public libraries. That is \$2.575 million each year spread among the 268 public libraries in Western Australia. On average that is \$9 608 per library per year. When we look at it in that way, it does not sound very much. At this level, the appropriation for resources for public libraries is laughable. In the Town of Cambridge alone, this will mean 42c for each person on the electoral roll; that does not even account for the children in the Town of Cambridge. One cannot buy a *Phantom* comic for 42c, so the Government could not even buy a comic book for each person. One cannot buy a copy of *The West Australian* for 42c. We are not talking about providing a huge number of resources for each of the 268 public libraries in the State. Across Western Australia that will mean about \$1.35 per person. I understand from people whom I asked today that one cannot buy a *Phantom* comic for \$1.35 either, so the Government will not be providing very much per head of population by expending the amount of money that the minister was so excited about yesterday.

In anyone's language, the money that is being provided for public libraries is a paltry amount. The truth of the matter is that community libraries have been let down through successive Governments in this State for a long time. I agree with the minister that the Gallop Government has made an effort. However, it is clearly not enough to provide the sorts of resources that a modern library should have. Modern libraries that provide computer and other services for the community are very important. As others have pointed out, libraries provide

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

a meeting place, a place at which information can be gained, a place from which people can send e-mails and access the Internet, and much more. The budget papers claim on page 979 that this funding is to meet the information, recreation and lifelong learning needs of the people of Western Australia. The amount of money being provided to public libraries will not do that. It is time that this Government, and any other Government that wants to take on this issue, did better than we have been doing over probably the past two or three decades. It might be a 44 per cent increase, as the minister stated yesterday during question time, but the minister now looks pretty silly if she thinks this is an adequate amount of money to spend on the information, recreation and lifelong learning needs of the people of Western Australia.

MR M.P. WHITELY (Roleystone) [8.34 pm]: Recently I read an article in *The Bulletin* about mental health issues in Australia. I guess it is fair to say that that article was highlighting what the magazine described as a crisis in mental health in Australia. I was pleased to read that Western Australia has the highest per capita expenditure on mental health in the nation. However, simply having the highest level of expenditure does not guarantee best practice. Effective mental health services delivery is about not just the dollar quantum, but also how effective the expenditure is. Of course it is also heavily influenced by the quality of clinical practice in the State. I want to highlight an issue that I have highlighted previously in this Parliament, but on which I have since done some further research, in respect of children's mental health; that is, of course, the issue of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. As I have stated a number of times in this Parliament, the rate of prescription of amphetamines for the treatment of ADHD in Western Australia is four times the national average. In 2000, from memory, approximately 18 000 Western Australian children between the ages of four and 17 were routinely prescribed mostly dexamphetamine, and to a lesser extent methylphenidate, more commonly known by its brand name, Ritalin, for the treatment of ADHD. I do not have the latest figures, and I will be interested to see them when they become available, but the best estimate I can make is that approximately 20 000 children in Western Australia are currently using stimulant medication - amphetamines - for the treatment of ADHD.

When I came into the Parliament I set myself some goals, which obviously revolved around doing a good job for my electorate of Roleystone. However, I also set myself the personal goal of trying to influence policies in government that would reduce the rate of prescription of amphetamines for ADHD in Western Australia. I probably somewhat naively set myself the goal of trying to halve the rate of prescription in Western Australia. To put that in context, if we were to halve the rate of prescription per head of population in Western Australia, it would still be twice the national average. To put that further in context, Western Australia is not the only State that has concerns about sloppy diagnostic practices and the inappropriate prescription of amphetamines for ADHD. I have long campaigned on this issue. In 1998 when I was the Labor candidate for the seat of Tangney in the federal election, I wrote an article in the "thinking allowed" column of the *Fremantle Herald* titled "Action Deficit Disorder". The article highlighted the previous Government's failure to implement the recommendations of a report that it had commissioned on attention deficit disorder. That report was actually commissioned by four ministers in the previous Government - ministers Prince; Barnett, the current Leader of the Opposition; Edwardes, the member for Kingsley; and Minson. The report highlighted two key strategies that would, if implemented, help to address the problem of misdiagnosis and over-prescription. The first of those strategies was that the stimulants committee of the Department of Health be authorised to carry out random audits into the use of block authorisations, and that paediatricians and psychiatrists found to be failing to abide by the appropriate criteria have their block authorisation capacity removed. For the information of members, block authorisation was the practice whereby those clinicians who were the heaviest prescribers were assumed to be competent and were not held accountable for their prescriptions on an individual script basis. The previous Government did not take any steps to implement that recommendation. That recommendation was actually picked up by our Government, to the credit of the former Minister for Health, Mr Kucera, who made a policy announcement in late 2002 that the Government would go further than just auditing the practice of block authorisation and would remove it. That was a success, I guess. That was one of the two key recommendations from that excellent report in 1996.

The second recommendation, which has not been picked up by this Government, and which I am now realising is probably the most critical recommendation of the two, is that state child health services be resourced further to establish multidisciplinary teams for the assessment and treatment of children with attentional disorders. I am convinced that that is the key to reducing the rate of prescription in Western Australia. That conviction follows a visit I made to the eastern States during the summer recess. I had a meeting with the Parliamentary Secretary for Health in Victoria, who told me that that is the model Victoria has adopted. Child and adolescent mental health services are localised and have multidisciplinary assessment teams involved in the diagnosis of ADHD. Parents concerned about aspects of the behaviour of their children can go to the public sector and get their child assessed by a group of experts who take the time to review the child's behaviour. I was informed that they have a minimum of three one-hour meetings with the child. Then, as a team, they decide whether the child fits the criteria for ADHD. That is the major reason the rate of prescription in Victoria is amongst the lowest in

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Australia, and is approximately one-sixth of the rate of prescription in Western Australia. That was the second recommendation of the 1996 report but as yet it has not been picked up. I am now convinced that, although the removal of block authorisation was a good step, the key to addressing the problem of misdiagnosis and over-prescription is to provide the opportunity for parents to get the assessment done in the public sector by qualified teams that assess the child and have no role in, and derive no economic benefit from, the ongoing treatment of the child. We have a privatised model in Western Australia under which most diagnosis is typically done by paediatricians, not child psychiatrists who are better equipped to look at the child as a whole, because they have a greater depth of psychological training. Paediatricians tend to follow the medical model, and the first line of action is too often to prescribe medication. Often those paediatricians are involved in the ongoing treatment of the child, so I am concerned that they derive an ongoing economic benefit from the diagnosis and medication of the child. We need to go back to that 1996 report and pick up some of the key recommendations in it; then at long last we will address the problem.

The 1996 report, which I said was a very good report, was written when the rate of prescription of amphetamines for children with ADHD was about 0.9 per cent of four to 17-year-olds. Now the best estimate is five or six per cent. The report was written when the rate of prescription was about one-sixth of what it currently is. Even at that time the rate of prescription was three to four times the national average. We have seen an exponential growth in the rates of prescription across Australia, but Western Australia has always maintained its relative position way out there as the heaviest prescriber. The report expressed concerns about the rigour with which the diagnosis of ADHD is made. The report said -

The parent is frequently the sole source of information and often educational and behavioural information is not sought. When information is sought from the school, the questions asked are frequently inappropriate. Behavioural observations are rarely obtained. The rating scales commonly used also present with difficulties.

I will say little bit more about rating scales later on.

This report is now eight years old. It was prepared when the rate of prescription was one-sixth of what it currently is, and it highlighted concerns with sloppy diagnostic practices that are no less true today. It addressed the issue of the rate of prescription in Western Australia as compared with the rest of Australia. It said that -

... compared with other States and Territories, Western Australia had a disproportionately high usage of both Dexamphetamine and Methylphenidate. This may indicate either that Western Australia is mis-diagnosing and/or over-prescribing stimulant medication or that the other States and Territories are yet to 'catch up'.

They never have actually caught up. They have rocketed forward, but they have never come close to approaching the rate of prescription that exists in Western Australia. The report also highlighted concerns about the differential rates of prescription across Western Australia. I will say a little more about that when I analyse the figures collected in 2000 about the relative rates of prescription in the various federal electorates representing Western Australia. The report concluded that the reason for differential rates across the Perth metropolitan area had nothing to do with socioeconomic factors. It stated -

It is the view of the Working Party that the differential rate of prescriptions may be more reflective of the prescribing patterns of paediatricians servicing the various areas, than it is of social or other factors associated with ADHD in those areas.

In other words, the doctors and not the patients were influencing the rates of prescription of ADHD drugs. At that time, in 1996, there were two particular areas with very high rates of prescription. One was the western suburbs, and the other was the south east corridor. At the time I was a teacher in the western suburbs, and now I represent an area in the south east corridor, and I can tell members that the demographics of the western suburbs and the south east corridor are enormously different, but the prescribing practices of the paediatricians servicing those areas are not. That was the key then, and I suggest that it is still the key now.

I have recently revisited the 1996 report and found that perhaps I should have paid more attention to it at the time. It said that some conditions commonly have symptoms similar to those of ADHD, including hearing impairment, intellectual disability, specific learning disabilities, autism, brain injury, epilepsy, child depression and family dysfunction as well as being a normal active preschooler. Since that time, rather than describing those as conditions that have similar symptoms, the language of the ADHD debate has changed so that those conditions are now described as being co-morbid. Very often, children described as having ADHD are said to have a co-morbid condition such as mild autism or childhood depression, and that children have those co-morbid conditions in addition to ADHD. That highlights the fundamental flaw in the science of ADHD, which confuses the issue of cause and effect. I have researched this extensively and, frankly, I was a little timid when I first started expressing strong views about ADHD because I had no expertise in the area. However, the more I look

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

at this the more I am convinced that it is dangerous pseudo-science that results in our children being prescribed dangerous medication in great droves. It is a result of this confusion of cause and effect. ADHD is in fact no more than a collection of symptoms. Nobody has ADHD that causes him or her to behave in such a way. A child may have a range of conditions that may cause him or her to display inattentive and/or hyperactive or compulsive behaviours that are characterised as ADHD. If ADHD exists, it exists by definition. In other words, if a child is observed displaying these core behaviours, that child has ADHD. ADHD does not cause the behaviours. Something causes the behaviours that are characterised as ADHD. That is the key point, and in some respects moving away from that point or giving way on that point loses the debate. That is where the ADHD industry - it is an industry - has been so successful in marketing drugs to our children.

ADHD is an incredibly controversial topic for two reasons. I will go into them in some depth. Firstly, the diagnosis is very subjective. I will read out the diagnostic criteria later. The member for Southern River and I have done it once before in the House but I will do it again because it helps to understand the issue. ADHD is even more controversial because the most common treatment is the use of amphetamines. When used for recreational purposes, amphetamines are illicit substances and a no-no. Amphetamines are sometimes prescribed for children younger than four years of age. Guidelines in Western Australia allow for children as young as four years of age to be regularly medicated. Treatment through psychostimulant medication - amphetamines - is controversial. There are divergent views about ADHD. I characterise them as belonging to those who are ADHD enthusiasts and those who are sceptics. I am obviously a sceptic. Regarding the cause and treatment of ADHD, enthusiasts believe that ADHD is a genetically predetermined biochemical imbalance in the brain that is best treated with psychostimulant medication. That is claimed in the absence of any evidence that an individual has a biochemical imbalance in the brain. There is no diagnostic tool that shows a biochemical imbalance in the brain. The enthusiasts believe a biochemical imbalance leads to the behaviours and that the best form of treatment is to address it through medication. Sceptics counter that the causes of such behaviours are many and varied and that there is no one underlying cause. To assume there is a biochemical imbalance in the brain is inherently dangerous when the consequence of that is to medicate to address the imbalance. I also have the concern that, in some cases, neurotoxins may cause a biochemical imbalance in the brain. In other words, there is something in the child's environment or diet that is causing the biochemical imbalance. We should be treating children by addressing the cause; we should be removing whatever it is from their environment or diet rather than medicating to try to get the balance right in the brain.

Mr D.A. Templeman: How long has ADHD been diagnosed in Western Australia? What have been the treatments?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: There has always been a condition known as hyperkinetic disorder, which represents the extreme cases of ADHD - children bouncing off the walls. Historically, that has been treated with amphetamines. The explosion of the diagnosis of ADHD has happened since the late 1980s - about 1988.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have the young people in the 1980s who were diagnosed with that, who are now adults, been tracked or studied, now that they are in their mid to late 20s?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: To my knowledge, that is an area that has been largely ignored. In fact, most of the studies look at the short-term efficacy of the drugs and say that they induce changed behaviour. If people are given psychostimulant medication - mood-altering medication - it should be expected that their moods will alter. There has not been a great deal of study in that area but it is something that the committee conducting a review of ADHD in Western Australia might take up. It is a good point.

The second aspect I will discuss is the approach of enthusiasts and sceptics to the rates of diagnosis in Western Australia. Enthusiasts believe that prescription rates in Western Australia are so high because Western Australia is so good at diagnosing the condition and the other States are yet to catch up. It is supposed that we have best clinical practice and the other States are not as good as us. When I travelled to the east I visited the health departments in South Australia and Victoria as well as a number of ADHD-related organisations in New South Wales. When I put that proposition to them, they guffawed. Western Australia has an atrocious reputation. The clinical practice in Western Australia is held out as being very poor. Frankly, self-praise is no praise. Many of the heaviest prescribers are the ones who say they are the best at diagnosing. ADHD is quite often described in the media as the result of poor parenting. Pressure is put on parents by claims that poor parenting is leading children down the path to medication. I reject that totally. Parents do not medicate their children for ADHD. Parents do not write the prescriptions for ADHD. It is not poor parenting that is leading to this problem in Western Australia; it is poor doctoring. It is a fairly small pool in Western Australia.

Mr B.K. Masters: Do you not accept that high sugar levels in food and additives can be a factor?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I do; I think that is true. However, I do not think it is a universal cause. Children do not always present with symptoms in a clinician's office. If a child presents with symptoms or there is evidence of

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

impulsive, hyperactive or inattentive behaviour, there should not be an automatic leap to medicate him. It is something that is done far too quickly in Western Australia. Far too much blame is attributed to parents when it is not poor parenting that is involved. The parents do not write the prescriptions; the doctors write the prescriptions.

Mr B.K. Masters: Parents must show some responsibility for the food eaten by their children etc.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: There is an inherent problem in trying to address the underlying causes of ADHD behaviours. Very often the solutions involve a range of options, some that may work in some cases and some that may work in others. For some children it may be diet modification. That can involve a lifestyle shift on behalf of parents. Certainly, the parents have a role to play. Parents are generally referred to a paediatrician by their GP. If the only option given to them by the paediatrician is that their child has a biochemical imbalance in the brain that is naturally occurring and needs medication, that view may ignore the fact that the child may drink one litre of coca-cola each day. Parents cannot be blamed for that. However, parents do have a role to play in the management of the condition. Very often, the solutions to the problems as they present are very complex and involve substantial lifestyle changes. The problem is that there is no magic bullet solution. There is no one simple answer.

Mr B.K. Masters: My wife is a preprimary teacher's assistant and I know that, when such a child presents, the parents are given a lot of assistance and information about diet and medication.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: That is excellent.

Mr B.K. Masters: Unfortunately, the message is not given strongly enough right across the government sector.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Unquestionably, some parents are more receptive to those messages than others. There are parents who have access to greater financial resources. Some have a greater preparedness to listen, often depending on education levels. Some will challenge what they are told by the medical profession. There are a range of responses. Some parents are presented with options for their children that they choose not to take up. In turn, that can affect a child's behaviour.

Another point raised by those who argue that we are underdiagnosing ADHD is that undiagnosed ADHD is the cause of illicit drug use. The argument is that if a person has ADHD that remains undiagnosed and unmedicated, that person will self-medicate by using illicit substances and drugs to address the biochemical imbalance in his brain. It is the sort of argument put up by people like George O'Neil, who has a clinic in Subiaco. He says that often he sees undiagnosed ADHD sufferers who have self-medicated. The same people typically argue that Western Australia is the best State in Australia at diagnosing ADHD; therefore, we are better at prescribing. If it were true that we are best at spotting, diagnosing and prescribing, and if undiagnosed ADHD led to drug abuse, the rates of illicit drug use in Western Australia would be below the national average. Those rates in WA are above the national rates. From memory, there are eight classes of illicit drug use, and in only one class is Western Australia below the national average. In fact, the illicit use of amphetamines in Western Australia is twice the national average. Therefore, a very similar substance that is used to treat ADHD is abused in Western Australia at twice the national rate. The evidence far from supports the argument that we are best at diagnosing; therefore, we prevent undiagnosed people with ADHD from self-medicating. The evidence points in the other direction. The legal market in ADHD drugs in some way fuels the trade in illicit amphetamines.

A member interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: That is right. If we look at diagnostic criteria for ADHD, a child is supposed to have displayed the characteristics of ADHD before the age of seven years. If a person is diagnosed when age 25, and the clinician argues the person has a drug dependency because of the ADHD, the clinician must go back 18 years to assess behaviours. A time machine would be needed. There is a degree of nonsense every way one turns in these arguments.

In relation to these assumptions that there is an underlying chemical imbalance in the brain, I now refer to *DSM-IV-TR - Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, which is prepared by the American Psychiatric Association as the Bible of mental health in America, and used widely in Australia to diagnose conditions like ADHD. *DSM-IV-TR* acknowledges on page 88 -

There are no laboratory tests, neurological assessments, or attentional assessments that have been established as diagnostic in the clinical assessment of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

One can only assess the behaviours. I will come to how they are assessed in a moment. Interestingly, *DSM-IV-TR* also reads on page 86 -

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Signs of the disorder may be minimal or absent when the person is receiving frequent rewards for appropriate behaviour, is under close supervision, is in a novel setting, is engaged in especially interesting activities, or is in a one-to-one situations (e.g., the clinician's office.)

In other words, the clinicians do not even have to see these behaviours. The behaviours themselves are extremely subjective to assess. They involve impulsive and inattentive behaviours, and the clinician does not see those behaviours in his office because they are one-to-one situations. In an interesting or novel situation, under close supervision or receiving frequent rewards for appropriate behaviour, the behaviour will not be seen. The kids will not be seen not paying attention when in a novel or interesting environment. This is the nonsense of this stuff and the pseudo-science becomes apparent.

It is appropriate to read through the criteria. It demonstrates the subjectivity of the criteria. The diagnostic criteria for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are broken up into three categories - inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. A person previously had to show six inattentive behaviours and six hyperactive impulsive behaviours to be characterised as ADHD, but the diagnostic criteria have been loosened in recent years. Therefore, a person demonstrating six of one category or six of the other category is assessed as ADHD. In other words, that is six inattentive or six hyperactive impulsive behaviours. Let us go through the inattentive behaviours. I have noted these as follows -

- (a) Often fails to give close attentions to details and makes careless mistakes in school work, work, or other activities.

Remember, these are the criteria used to assess children as young as four years of age. They continue-

- (b) Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities.
- (c) Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
- (d) Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish school work, chores or duties in the workplace.
- (e) Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities.
- (f) Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as school work and homework.)

Four-year-olds with homework; now there is an interesting concept! The criteria continue -

- (g) Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g. toys, school assignment, pencils, books or tools.)
- (h) Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.
- (i) Is often forgetful in daily activities.

A person must show only six of those criteria to be assessed ADHD. There is no definition of "often". No line in the sand indicates how many times the behaviour must be shown. It is entirely at the judgment of the clinician.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Ninety-eight per cent of people in here are like that!

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Exactly. The hyperactive symptoms are as follows -

- (a) Often fidgets with hands and feet or squirms in seat.

You can sit up straight, please, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr D.A. Templeman)! The criteria continue -

- (b) Often leaves seat in classroom or other situations in which remaining seated is expected.

Has any member seen the member for Innaloo? Further -

- (c) Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate.
- (d) Often has difficult playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly.
- (e) Is often on the go or often acts as if driven by a motor.
- (f) Often talks excessively.

Impulsivity

- (g) Often blurts out answers before questions have been completed.
- (h) Often has difficulty awaiting turn.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

- (i) Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g. butts into conversations or games.)

Those are the diagnostic criteria used to assess a condition that results in 20 000 Western Australian children being put on amphetamines. They are funny when they are read out as we all display those criteria, yet they result in 20 000 Western Australian children being put on amphetamines. Remember that I said that clinicians do not have to see these behaviours in their office, but the clinicians use the ADHD rating scale like the one prepared by the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre I have with me. This lists criteria, and applies four scale categories. For example, the first criterion of fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in school work, is followed by “Never or rarely”, “Sometimes”, “Often” and “Very often”. There is no categorisation of what constitutes “Often” or “Very Often”, but as soon as a child reaches the second highest of the categories, he or she makes the grade. The diagnostic criteria refer to often. There are 18 such behaviours, and a child must display six of them to be assessed or described as a ADHD predominantly active type or ADHD passive type. It is rubbery and subjective; it is disturbing.

Mr T.K. Waldron: In putting all those things together before someone is recommended to be looked at, are you saying that once they get that result, they are automatically referred?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Anecdotally, and there is plenty of supporting evidence, and members can refer to the 1996 report I quoted previously as concerns were evident as early as 1996 in Western Australia, behaviour observations are rarely made; in fact, they rely on those sorts of scales and measures.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Is that done by the schoolteachers or -

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: That would typically be filled in by a schoolteacher. It is also worthy of note that this information comes from *DSM-IV-TR*. *DSM-III* had the same criteria but it was much tighter. A child had to have six of the impulsive hyperactive behaviours and six of the inattentive behaviours to be classified as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; that is, they had to have at least 12 of the 18 behaviours. The criteria have been loosened now, so that a child can have either six of one or six of the other. There is another category of ADHD that is called “attention deficit activity disorder not otherwise specified”, which is defined as “symptom patterns that do not meet the full criteria for the disorder but have a behavioural pattern marked by sluggishness, daydreaming and hypoactivity”, which is being underactive. Children can be diagnosed with ADHD because they daydream too much, they are too sluggish, they are too hyperactive or they are just not paying attention. A child can also be diagnosed with it on the basis of this sort of the evidence, which is less scientific than a personality guide in an average women’s magazine.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Are you saying that responsible schoolteachers don’t take into account more than one of those set of six that you talked about?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Schoolteachers do not diagnose these children. Schoolteachers provide the evidence for the paediatrician or the child psychiatrist who makes the diagnosis. If a teacher has to report on a child’s behaviour and little Johnny has had a bad day and been misbehaving, it will influence how the teacher reports his behaviour. There is no definition of the word “often”, and yet that report ends up being the evidence upon which the clinician relies. As it says in *DSM-IV-TR*, the clinician will not see that child’s behaviour in his office. Members should also bear in mind that it says that children will not display that behaviour if they are in an especially interesting activity or situation. In other words, if a child has a teacher who enthral and excites them, they will not display ADHD behaviours. Members can see the subjective nature of the diagnosis.

I think that highlights the need for more tightly defined ADHD diagnostic criteria. The prescribing guidelines have to be developed cooperatively between the medical profession and state and federal health authorities to tighten up the diagnostic criteria. In fact, we may end up going back to using ADHD medications on only those children who have extreme hyperkinetic disorder. They are the kids who are really bouncing off the walls and who must have the medication to control their behaviour, at least in the short term, so that other interventions can be tried, but they can be medicated for only short periods. At the moment, children are being diagnosed for daydreaming too much, and then they are put on medication, possibly for life.

As I said, the diagnosis is controversial. The treatment is even more controversial because it involves the use of amphetamines. Typically, in Western Australia and Australia, dexamphetamine is used rather than methylphenidate because dexamphetamine is on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. Dexedrine is an American brand name for dexamphetamine. GlaxoSmithKline, the manufacturer of dexedrine, has on its web site the following warning that must be put on dexedrine sold in the United States -

Amphetamines have a high potential for abuse. Administration of amphetamines for prolonged periods of time may lead to drug dependence and must be avoided. Particular attention should be paid to the

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

possibility of subjects obtaining amphetamines for non-therapeutic use or distribution to others, and the drugs should be prescribed or dispensed sparingly.

In other words, doctors need to be on the alert for doctor shoppers who will get a legal script and then use it for a black market trade.

GlaxoSmithKline's web site then goes on to list the possible side effects of dexamphetamine, which include palpitations, tachycardia, elevated blood pressure, overstimulation, restlessness, dizziness, insomnia, euphoria or, conversely dysphoria, dyskinesia, tremor, headaches, motor tics, phonic tics, Tourette syndrome, dryness of the mouth, unpleasant taste, diarrhoea or conversely constipation, anorexia, urticaria, impotence, extreme psychological dependence and severe social disability - otherwise known as the Zombie effect. These are all the potential side effects of a drug that we, in Western Australia, routinely give to 20 000 children. The web site then goes on to state that overdose levels are highly individual with the prescribing information and -

Individual patient response to amphetamines varies widely. While toxic symptoms occasionally occur as an idiosyncrasy at doses as low as 2 mg, they are rare with doses of less than 15 mg; 30 mg can produce severe reactions, yet doses of 400 to 500 mg are not necessarily fatal.

I think the Learning and Attentional Disorders Society of Western Australia has put up a dartboard with my face on it. I am not its favourite son and, frankly, its members are not my favourite people either. Can I ask for an extension of time Mr Acting Speaker?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A. Templeman): No, I am afraid you are not able to have that member for Roleystone.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Michele Toner, Executive Officer of LADS, appeared on *Face the Facts* on television Channel 31 when it ran a program on ADHD. On that program she and another spokesperson from LADS undersold the dangers of the medication and said that a person would need to take as many as 200 tablets to get a high. Typically, the tablets come in either five-milligram or 10-milligram tablets. Let us assume they are five-milligram tablets. Two hundred of those tablets amounts to 1 000 milligrams. GlaxoKlineSmith says on its web site that doses of 400 to 500 milligrams are not necessarily fatal. This is dangerous information and it is dangerous practice in Western Australia. What can we do about it? How does this relate to the budget? We need to urgently pick up the second of those two recommendations from the 1996 report. We need to urgently establish localised child and adolescent mental health services that have multidisciplinary teams that can be involved in the assessment of ADHD. Pilot programs along these lines have been established. A pilot program is being run at the Bentley Health Service, and the people there are doing a fantastic job. However, they are seeing an incredibly small number of children - I understand it is fewer than 100 children. Most of those 100 children are being taken off medication, and most of the remainder are having their dosages reduced. Frankly, it is too late to address the problem at the treatment end. We need to be addressing it at the front end. We need to have public sector assessment opportunities for parents who are concerned about their child's behaviour. They need to be able to approach a public sector service where there is no economic imperative and no economic benefit from misdiagnosis and overprescribing. Multidisciplinary teams need to make a collective decision about whether children in fact have ADHD or hyperkinetic disorder to such an extent.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Haven't you got an electorate to talk about?

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: I may not have an electorate to talk about, but I consider this to be an incredibly serious issue. In fact, the health and welfare of 20 000 children is far more significant to me than whether we have a Liberal or a Labor Government. I am far more passionate about this than I am about any other issue, even those affecting my electorate. However, the rates of diagnosis and prescription in my electorate are the highest in Australia.

MR B.K. MASTERS (Vasse) [9.20 pm]: This is my first response to the appropriation Bills in my new capacity as an Independent member of the House. It may well be my last of course, but I am working as hard as I can to make sure that it is the first of many. I have been very pleasantly surprised at how much time I have to attend to electorate issues now that I no longer have responsibilities in the Liberal Party, the shadow Cabinet and so on. I commend to other members the concept of becoming an Independent. It has much to support the abolition of ties to major parties, because I have found that I have between 30 and 40 extra days a year to devote to other activities. At the moment those other activities involve issues within my electorate.

My intention tonight is to speak mainly about the electorate of Vasse, but I will make some comments towards the end about the overall financial impacts of the budget as well as the budget allocations into the areas of science and environment, which were my shadow ministry portfolio responsibilities until February of this year. I remind members yet again - I know I am sounding like a cracked record - that in the estimates committee of 2001 the then Minister for the South West, who is now the Minister for Health, made the comment that the south

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

west corner of the State, including the electorate of Vasse, is seen by many people as the chardonnay coast. That would not have been an unreasonable statement, but he went on to say that as a result of that, he saw little need for further funding for that chardonnay coast area. Since that estimates committee statement, I have spent the past three years trying to point out to people in the Liberal Party, on what used to be my side of the House, as well as to government members on the other side of the House, that in fact there are many unmet needs within the electorate of Vasse.

I will very quickly go through a number of examples to highlight how the area is suffering, and at the same time enjoying, an annual population growth in the order of six per cent. It obviously creates problems because of shortages of appropriate infrastructure, as well as shortages of services as provided by staff and personnel. In the health area, there is no doubt that increasing pressures are being placed on nursing staff at Busselton District Hospital. Over the road from the hospital is the Kevin Cullen Community Health and Development Centre. I am waiting for a response to a question on notice that I asked the Minister for Health, but I am told that there are five or six unfilled vacancies at the community health centre, and that they are as a result of a deliberate policy decision by the Government to not fill the positions until the scream from the local community is so loud that it cannot be ignored. The Government will then find people to fill the vacancies.

The real shortage in the health service relates to nurses at Busselton District Hospital. The changes that are being forced on the nursing staff at the hospital mean that they are being given more and more duties to undertake, which means less and less patient contact time. When I speak to nurses I am told, almost without exception, that everyone went into the nursing profession because they wanted to have personal day-to-day contact with patients. They wanted to be able to help them in a multitude of ways, one of which is personal contact. The pressures being placed on nurses in this modern era of health care provision is such that nurses do not have the ability to talk and interact, and psychologically, as well as physically, assist patients. No wonder nurses have been leaving the profession in droves. One of the main motivating factors that got them into the profession in the first place is now being denied to them.

Another issue of health services is that planning for the new Busselton hospital will now be at least three years late, if it starts at all in this term of government. In 2000 I made representation to the then Minister for Health, the member for Darling Range. I was told that the moneys that were about to be spent on Busselton District Hospital would allow it to continue for maybe three more years to provide efficient and competent hospital services. I was told again in 2001, by the new then Minister for Health, that planning for a new or upgraded hospital would begin at any tick of the clock. It is now almost three and a half years since the Gallop Labor Government was elected. To the best of my knowledge, no assessment has been made of the needs of Busselton District Hospital. Even though I have asked for things to be done, I keep being told that it will happen and that I must be patient. Unfortunately, the Shire of Busselton is still the fastest growing municipal area in Western Australia. Although it has dropped from being first to being the second fastest-growing area in Australia, it is clearly a shire under significant pressure. The hospital is only just coping with the pressures placed on it at certain times of the year.

There is also the question of whether the Kevin Cullen Community Health and Development Centre needs to be bulldozed and built somewhere else. I have been receiving mixed reports about it from people in my electorate. I am told that there is a multimillion dollar unmet maintenance program, for which funding has not yet been provided. That applies to both the hospital and the community health centre. If the significant dollars needed for the community health centre capital upgrade are not available over the next few years, an entirely new health centre will be needed. It disappoints me that some money is not provided to at least make the centre presentable, acceptable and workable in the interim while awaiting final decisions.

I continue to be frustrated because of the lack of adequate staffing levels in the South West Mental Health Service. Bunbury Regional Hospital has a dedicated psychiatric ward. I have been given all sorts of excuses over the past two or three years. I have been told that it is very difficult to find psychiatrists. It is, but I am not sure what sort of effort has been put into trying to find the right people. I have been told that it is very difficult to attract specialist psychiatric nurses to Bunbury. I am sure that is a fair statement, but nonetheless Bunbury is an area that desperately needs psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses. They are not being employed at staffing levels that enable the beds in that ward to be opened. I know of cases in which psychiatric patients who need to be involuntarily admitted to a psychiatric ward are taken to Perth because the staffing levels at Bunbury are inadequate.

Turning to the Water Corporation aspect of the budget, deep sewerage at one stage looked like being extended to virtually all of the Busselton and Dunsborough town sites by about 2004-05. However, when the Gallop Government came to power, if I may approximate, the whole program basically was cut in half. We were told that half as much work would be done each year, thereby doubling the lead time for the project. To the best of my knowledge, deep sewerage will now not be made available throughout the coastal low lying areas of the

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Busselton and Dunsborough town sites until 2009 or thereabouts. I will talk about that problem later on, because it has implications for both the way in which this budget fails to deliver to many Busselton people and the environment. Nutrients and other pollutants from septic tanks in a near-coastal sand-dune environment very quickly end up entering the nearby marine waters - in this case Geographe Bay. From the 1940s to the 1970s, there was a history of major seagrass degradation. The nutrients from farmland and septic tanks are likely to have been the cause of that major degradation.

I have been a regular complainant about the lack of professionalism of and commitment by Western Power to do things that I believe are absolutely essential. The Busselton community, as well as the communities of Dunsborough, Eagle Bay and Yallingup, have reported to me over the past year or so that there have been continuing and frequent power outages. They might be blackouts or brownouts. Nonetheless, there are power flicks, power surges and significant other problems that do not seem to get much better. One reason the quality of the power supply in Busselton is so poor is that the Busselton town site happens to be home to the rare and endangered ringtail possum, as well as the brush-tailed possum, which is more widespread. I am told time and again by Western Power that the reason for many of these outages is that possums climb the power poles and electrocute themselves. That may be true. If so, it has been true for so many years that one would have expected Western Power to have done something to alleviate that problem. I searched the Internet on this issue after Mr Billy Baldock was killed in a fire that was started, as I understand it, because a possum climbed a power pole east of Bridgetown. Mr Baldock was caught in the ensuing fire. The blame for that fire was laid not so much at the feet of Western Power but at the feet of this somewhat innocent possum that was allowed to climb this power pole. It was because of that accident that I searched on Google using the words "possum guard" or "animal guards". Right around the world animal guards have been designed and put in place on power systems for decades. These systems stop animals from climbing power poles, electrocuting themselves and causing power outages. It is an easy solution that is relatively cheap to implement, yet Western Power is still only conducting evaluation trials on a relatively small number of power poles within the Busselton town site. I am afraid that I find this to be unacceptable.

I will raise a grievance with the Minister for Education and Training tomorrow, so I will briefly outline that the student population of Dunsborough is rapidly increasing. The town site of Dunsborough will require a new primary school, probably as early as 2008 and certainly no later than 2010. Vasse Primary School is a most wonderful primary school. I remind members that Queen Elizabeth II visited Vasse Primary School some three years ago when she was in the south west. It was the only school she visited, and she did so because of its older-style buildings and the quality of the education environment at that school. The difficulty, however, is that Vasse Primary School is located in an area adjacent to very rapid urban growth. Some new subdivisions are coming on stream to the north of it. Not one house has been built in one of these subdivisions, yet a parent has already enrolled a child at Vasse Primary School for next year, because as soon as that family gets title to the land they will build on that block, and they want their child to go to Vasse Primary School. Vasse Primary School will also be surrounded by new urban development that will eventually hold 7 000 people. That is the Vasse Newtown development. I understand that the Department of Education and Training has not yet started the process of trying to determine the best way of meeting the primary school needs of the Vasse Newtown area, in addition to the fast-growing urban areas to the north and north east of the existing Vasse Primary School.

Anyone who is interested in education issues will know that Busselton Senior High School is in great disrepair. It has so many transportables that it is turning parents and children off coming to that school. A local area education planning recommendation is currently before the minister, which I will talk to him about in this place tomorrow. Something desperately needs to be done with secondary schooling in the Busselton area. West Busselton Primary School, which has experienced a reduction in student numbers because of the opening of the Geographe Primary School, still does not have a dedicated canteen, music room or art room. It is deficient in a number of other ways. I hope that over the coming years the Department of Education and Training will find appropriate funding for all those schools in my electorate.

I turn briefly to the portfolio held by the Minister for Community Development. I have been trying to emphasise to the minister a particular issue on which urgent action is needed. It relates to the provision of emergency or crisis accommodation within the Busselton town site for victims of sexual or domestic violence. I understand that the Government last year finally received a report on homelessness in the State, which showed that Busselton was the number one, or close to it, community that needed special accommodation for people who are homeless. I also understand that the Department for Community Development has an internal listing of the communities in which crisis and emergency accommodation with full-time support is needed. Number one or two on the list is Busselton. Busselton has been on that list for three, four or five years, yet in spite of trying to put pressure on the previous Government and despite three and a half years of asking this Government, there has been no funding allocation for Busselton via the federal Government's opportunities for supported

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

accommodation funding. It is the State Government that allocates or decides where that money will go, and nothing has happened in that regard.

Having criticised the Government for that, I will thank journalist Eloise Dortch from *The West Australian*. Article after article in *The West Australian* and other forms of media have told how Busselton is a wonderful place in which to live and how it provides a seachange opportunity for anyone who wants to move from big, old, dirty, ugly, crowded Perth to the safe, wonderful environment of Busselton - I might also include Mandurah, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr D.A. Templeman) -

Mr M.P. Murray: And Collie.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: And Collie, of course. After article after article in the media about how wonderful it is to move down south, I was finally able to convince this journalist that a significant proportion of the people who move to the south west - to not just my electorate but also those of the members for Warren-Blackwood, Mitchell and Bunbury - are like any other people in Western Australia and have their fair share of problems. The end result is that many services and community infrastructure projects are needed in the south west. I was very pleased, therefore, to see that *The West Australian* last Saturday ran three very good articles about the fact that although Busselton may be an attractive place in which to live in many respects, it has its fair share of problems. I hope that the Government will look at those articles and make sure that we get some funding. This budget has missed out my area in that regard. Perhaps the situation will be different under a future Government.

As I will be saying shortly, there has been a significant and worthwhile improvement in the funding for the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I congratulate the Government on that. Nonetheless, in places like the south west corner of my electorate, even a four or five per cent increase in funding is still not enough. For example, the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park extends for some 120 kilometres from Cape Naturaliste in the north to Cape Leeuwin in the south, yet fox baiting occurs only in the southern area around the Boranup forest. The financial implications of undertaking fox baiting to control foxes, and feral cats to a lesser degree, in the rest of the park make it too difficult, so it does not happen. While I am talking about local environmental issues, I must also say that I have been very disappointed that the Busselton office of the Department of Conservation and Land Management has not been able to fill certain positions that have been vacant for two or three years. People have not wanted to explain the reasons for that to me. That situation is unacceptable. I know that people of high quality have left the department because of the uncertainties associated with the positions for which they have applied but for which they have been told applications will again be called. We do not know why.

I turn now to planning and infrastructure. A very big issue in that area continues to be coastal erosion. As I have been warning for some four or five years, the coastal erosion problem at places like Siesta Park and at the beachfront in front of most of urban Busselton has now extended and compounded into a problem of coastal erosion and seagrass accumulation in front of the Port Geographe development. I will not go into detail on that matter. However, I did say in this place only a couple of months ago that, in my view, if the current plan that has been ticked off on by the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the developer, Axiom Properties Limited, and the shire, does not work - and we will know that this time next year - the only workable or credible solution to that coastal erosion problem at Port Geographe may almost require that the State Government put in between \$2 million and \$2.5 million of taxpayers' funds to rebuild the beach with a large volume of sand in the order of 150 000 or 200 000 cubic metres. It may also require that the Government assist the developer to buy a dredge that will be based at the Port Geographe marina full-time so that the problem of coastal erosion and the shoaling of sand and seagrass within the harbour mouth can be dealt with on an ongoing basis. I hasten to add that it would need to be an electric dredge, because it has been proved that a diesel-powered dredge that close to housing creates a significant noise and smell problem, so money would need to be made available for that electric dredge.

A Main Roads WA issue that again falls under the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure relates to the Dalyellup area. That is now the fastest growing area in the south west of Western Australia. There is 17 per cent population growth within the Shire of Capel, and almost all of it is within the Dalyellup development. There is an urgent need for a slip lane at the intersection of the main road with Bussell Highway. Also, I am sorry to say that the speed limit on that section of Bussell Highway - I think it is at the Norton Promenade-Bussell Highway intersection - must be lowered. The current speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour is far too high and too dangerous. I have seen a number of near accidents at that intersection. Significant decisions need to be made to help alleviate that problem. A final issue relating to Main Roads WA is that the section of Bussell Highway from Vasse to Margaret River suffers from twice the state average death rate and twice the state average serious accident rate. From my understanding there will not be any improvements to that section of Bussell Highway until 2005-06. I find that unacceptable.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

As a final comment about the needs of my electorate, I remind the Treasurer, who unfortunately is not in the Chamber at the moment, that the Shire of Busselton is very keen to be given at peppercorn rental, or at a peppercorn sale price, the second-oldest police station-courthouse complex in the State - the one that was vacated by the Department of Justice and the Police Service some three years ago. That land obviously has a high value, but because the Shire of Busselton was never given endowment land in the same way the City of Bunbury was given endowment land, the Shire of Busselton has a very good case to argue in support of having the old police station-courthouse complex given to it free of charge.

These are some of the areas in which I believe the Busselton area in particular, and the electorate of Vasse overall, is deficient and therefore needs additional infrastructure and services expenditure. What has the budget delivered to meet all of these needs? I originally wrote down the word “zip”, meaning nothing. However, on careful analysis of the budget papers, there are actually two new spending initiatives for Busselton. The first is \$1 million for the purchase of land for a new school site. I presume that this is to do with the middle school proposal that is subject to the local area education plan. I commend the Government for that. That is fantastic. The second is an unspecified amount of expenditure by Western Power to improve power supply facilities in the Ludlow area, which in turn will improve the power supplies for Busselton. Busselton is the fastest growing municipal area in Western Australia, and it has been in ongoing need of government assistance for all of the seven years that I have been a member of this Parliament, yet it will get only two new spending initiatives.

That can be compared with the city of Bunbury, which is on the northern boundary of my electorate. What will Bunbury get? Of course it is no surprise that Bunbury is a marginal seat. Bunbury will get seven new spending initiatives: a Bunbury community house; a Bunbury heritage museum; a Bunbury region capital works program that will be implemented by the South West Development Commission; the development of an action plan for renewal of the Bunbury central business district area; assistance with the redevelopment of the Bunbury outer harbour; another \$2.4 million for the Bunbury Back Beach project; and another \$200 000 for capital works of various types, including capping of the Koombana Bay groyne. The bottom line is that Bunbury, being a marginal seat, gets a heap of government funding in this budget. However, Busselton, in theory because it is a safe conservative seat, gets virtually nothing. I am pleased to say that Busselton, meaning the seat of Vasse, is now a marginal seat. It might still be a conservative seat, but it will now be a marginal seat to be won by either the Independent Liberal who is standing before members tonight or the candidate who has been endorsed by the Liberal Party. Recognising that the seat of Vasse is now a marginal seat, I would have thought a lot more expenditure would have been made available in this budget for my electorate. However, those funding initiatives have not come through, and I therefore express my disappointment at that.

More generally, I applaud the Government for having frozen the prices of water, sewerage, electricity and public transport. They will effectively be reductions in prices when we take inflation into account. Those reductions will be appreciated by a significant proportion of the community. However, I point out to members that water in the Busselton area is supplied by the Busselton Water Board. My understanding is that the Government’s freeze on water charges does not apply to the private instrumentalities of the Busselton Water Board and the Bunbury Water Board, known as Aqwest. Sewerage charges may well have been frozen. However, my understanding is that more than 40 per cent of Busselton home sites and businesses are still not connected to deep sewerage and cannot be connected because there is no sewerage line near them. Therefore, the end result is that for 40 per cent, or more, of my constituents, a freezing of sewerage rates will make absolutely no difference at all. Electricity prices may well have been frozen, but I can tell members that people in my electorate would be happy to spend an extra three or four per cent on their electricity charges if only they could get reliable electricity supplies. They cannot get that, as I pointed out earlier.

Finally, a freeze on public transport prices is wonderful. The only problem is that my electorate does not have particularly good public transport facilities; therefore, my constituents will not benefit all that much. I praise the Government for its decision to give a rebate on stamp duty for first home buyers. That is a worthwhile initiative. However, I did receive a telephone call from an invalid pensioner in Dunsborough. He quite rightly pointed out that in Dunsborough the median house price is so high that people virtually cannot find a house that costs less than the \$220 000 threshold level that the Government has set for the 100 per cent reduction in stamp duty for first home buyers. Even when we take into account the sliding scale for rebates up to \$330 000, the majority of people who live in communities like Dunsborough will not be able to benefit from the rebate should they be first home buyers. On one hand the Government can say how wonderful it is that people in Dunsborough and Busselton can live in houses that are so valuable, but on the other hand these are people who, as first home buyers, are having significant trouble borrowing the money, saving the deposit and doing all the things that are needed to get into their first home. The invalid pensioner who phoned me, who is married with children, advised me that his financial position is such that he would need a full rebate of stamp duty if he were ever to fulfil his dream of buying his first home in my electorate. While I praise the Government for its rebate on stamp duty, in my electorate it will not be used to the extent to which it would otherwise be used.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

All in all, the budget implications for me are not at all bright or positive. I find it disappointing that the big picture in the state budget shows that state debt has blown out to that magic figure of 47 per cent. In other words, the Treasurer has borrowed right up to the hilt; he cannot borrow another cent. That means that, whether there is a change of Government at the next election or not, the next Government will be constrained in its ability to borrow money for the various purposes that would need to be funded by borrowings. Why has this massive increase in borrowing occurred? I think the figure is about \$1.5 billion. The answer is that there has been a misdirection of funds into the southern rail line. I am still quite happy to support the southern rail line on the Kenwick route, but the rail line on its present route will significantly disadvantage all those people currently using the bus lane on the freeway. More importantly, however, planning opportunities are provided by new rail lines in greenfields areas. My understanding is that this Government is not taking up all those opportunities because it wanted a rail line different from that of the previous Government. It did not matter whether it was better or not; it just had to be different, so it could be called the Gallop Government railway, rather than the Court Government railway. If that story is true, this Government deserves to be criticised for having made a \$1.4 billion or \$1.5 billion public capital investment decision on the basis of not much more than ego. I still believe that the Kenwick route is the best route. It would have upgraded the Armadale line at the same time and provided some very significant public transport benefits to everyone living in the south east corridor. Everyone living in the south west corridor and Rockingham and Mandurah would have benefited as well, and there would have been planning benefits. I will provide one specific example of what I mean by a planning benefit. If a rail station is built in a greenfields area, planning concessions can be given to land developers so that instead of having low or even medium density housing they can have medium to high density housing, so that there is a greater catchment population living within walking or cycling distance of that train station. The greater the population living around that train station, the more people will be using public transport, and therefore the operating deficit - there will never be a profit with public transport - will be lower. As a result of moving the rail line onto the freeway, from the Mount Henry Bridge north there is simply no opportunity to build any housing on one side of the rail line or around any of the railway stations, because it is right on the Swan and Canning River system and there is no opportunity whatsoever to increase housing density and urban population, and therefore no catchment population to put passengers onto the railway line.

There are a few other little misguided or misdirected allocations of funds. One I need to mention is the \$7 million being given to one of the world's biggest corporations, namely DaimlerChrysler, for a two-year fuel cell bus trial here in Perth. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure knows that I am a very strong supporter of using the cleanest possible energy in Perth's bus system. I will not talk about the trip that she and I made together during the time of the previous Government, and that last night in Berlin. I do not think she needs to be embarrassed about that, and neither do I for that matter.

Mr M.P. Whitely: I remember Berlin!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I wish I did not remember Berlin! Nonetheless, \$7 million is going as a subsidy to one of the world's biggest corporations. It will be making a profit out of its fuel cell buses once it actually gets them right. It should be paying us to bring the buses here to operate in a Mediterranean climate, to see how well the fuel cell system, including a distribution system for hydrogen gas, will work in our climate.

I will briefly talk about those areas of what used to be my shadow portfolio responsibilities. I will begin by referring to page 613 of last year's *Budget Statements*, which relates to the Swan River Trust. In those budget papers, and those of the previous two years, under the heading "Significant Issues and Trends", the incredible pressures being placed on the Swan and Canning River system and the urgent need to take action were mentioned. I will quote a few words from that section -

- The population growth in Perth . . . is causing a marked increase in:
 - pressure for residential and commercial development . . .
 - the level of recreational and commercial use of the waterways . . .
 - the potential for environmental degradation . . .
- The increasing pressure on the use of, and condition of the rivers requires a planned approach to the development . . .
- Community demands for information advice and participation . . . are also increasing. . . .
- Algal blooms . . . are prevalent . . .

Later the paragraph states that the extent and severity of these blooms is causing problems. The statement continues -

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

- Seasonal erosion and accretion along the foreshores together with the deterioration of existing foreshore protection is increasing the demand for corrective work . . .

Anyone who read that introduction to the Swan River Trust section of last year's *Budget Statements* would have realised that the Swan and Canning River system is in some significant crisis. However, what has happened to this year's *Budget Statements*? The section on the Swan River Trust is on page 646. Under the same section, "Significant Issues and Trends", almost all of that expression of concern and alarm has been removed. The statements have been sanitised. I am wondering whether I should accuse the Minister for the Environment of either having got her own staff to write this introductory section, or heavying the staff at the Swan River Trust to tone down the tenor of the statement that introduces the Swan River Trust's activities and issues in this year's budget. For example, instead of referring to increased pressures and other problems, the worst the *Budget Statements* refer to this year is a large and persistent algal bloom that continues to dominate the upper reaches of the river. It then goes on to refer to wonderful things, such as -

- Much has been accomplished over the past 60 years to address these issues . . .
- . . . The new legislation . . . will provide the broad framework to bring together the contributions of State agencies, local government and the community.

I do not deny that the actions the Government is proposing to protect and enhance the Swan River are welcome, because they are. However, last year's very realistic, matter-of-fact and down-to-earth summary of the problems facing the Swan and Canning River system has been replaced with a sanitised account, and the minister, I am sorry to say, is hoping that everyone will forget just how significant the problems are in the Swan and Canning River system. We are still experiencing algal blooms and significant fish deaths in the river system. In spite of that, all the urgency seems to have been removed from the Swan River Trust. I find that to be quite unfortunate.

Going through the different portfolio areas, I am pleased to see that the Department of Conservation and Land Management has received a funding increase of 4.5 per cent. That is highly commendable. However, I think it is merely a reflection of the Government's old-growth forest policy, under which a significant increase in land area will soon, one hopes, go to national parks and nature reserves. It has been long in coming but at least it is finally here. I am sorry to say that the Kings Park Board has suffered a massive decrease in funding, partly because the walkway has been completed. Last year's total budget expenditures, being the total cost of outputs and capital contributions, were \$20.4 million, which was expended in this current year. In the coming year that figure drops to \$13.5 million. It is a 25 per cent reduction or more. Considering that Kings Park is the State's most popular tourist attraction, I find that to be very unfortunate. The Department of Environment has suffered a \$5 million cut in its total expenditures. When the total cost of outputs is added to the appropriation for administered grants and the capital contributions, we end up with a reduction of about \$5 million. Even if we accept that the Mt Walton waste disposal facility is not getting the \$2.6 million that it received last year, there is still a real reduction in the environmental protection portfolio budget compared with last year. The Water and Rivers Commission, which is now part of the Department of Environment, will suffer a cut in real terms. It is worse when allowing for inflation. Last year \$61.49 million was spent in capital and operating costs. This year the figure drops to \$58.75 million.

I have almost run out of time, so I cannot go into the budget's many details as much as I would like. However, I did put out a media summary concerning what I found in the environmental portfolios. I will read into *Hansard* the last three paragraphs of my media statement. I said -

"I agree with the Greens MPs. The environment is a big loser in the state budget and recent funding announcements by environment minister Judy Edwards have been made without mentioning the cuts in other core sections of her agencies," . . .

"I hope that the Greens will tell their supporters to put Labor last on their ballot paper when we have the state election next February."

"Premier Gallop talks about having saved our old growth forests, and he has, but the rest of our environment is losing ground."

I will speak very briefly about the science portfolio. It is almost impossible to understand. I am very pleased that I will be able to grill the Premier next week during the estimates hearings. The Government has promised a significant spending allocation in the field of science. However, the result is that, because there are no forward estimate details provided beyond the year after next, it is impossible to tell whether there is an increase, a decrease or a maintenance of the status quo over the next four to five years in the funding for science. In my media release about that I stated -

On available data, the science and innovation portfolio may have had a cut of up to \$16 million, but who knows? It may be less, it may be more, but it's impossible to work out.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

In conclusion, as always, the budget has good and bad points. I will not repeat them. Overall, out of a score of 10 my assessment of the Treasurer's latest budget is 5.5. It is a pass but he can do significantly better. However, like me, he has run out of time.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [10.04 pm]: It is incredible that I am standing here tonight to give my fourth budget reply speech. Like many members who first came to the Parliament in 2001, it seems like yesterday that we were giving our first speeches. I will kick off tonight by congratulating the Government on removing the stamp duty for first home buyers to the levels stated in the budget. I think it is a positive step and it is something that I support. I also welcome the five per cent reduction in stamp duty for others and the freeze on charges for power and water. However, I must say that stamp duty and charges have risen significantly in the past three years. While the measures will help, overall they are not as good as they sound.

As I said, this is my fourth budget reply speech. I have always focused on the inequities in country areas. I will focus this year on inequities in inland country areas of the State. One of the reasons I am in this place is those inequities. I used to witness them when I lived and worked in Perth for a period. Most of my work took me to the country, where I spent the majority of my life. I personally saw the inequities being brought home first-hand. That is one of the reasons I got involved - to try to help close the gap. Country people do not expect everything that is in the city. Generally, country people are very reasonable and fair. However, the gap seems to be getting wider and that concerns me. I think it is fair enough to ask why the gap is not being closed when we come to budget allocations, infrastructure and services to country areas, particularly inland areas. I note that the member for Merredin commented last night that wheat exports alone injected \$3 billion into the economy. Country areas play a very important part.

My electorate of Wagin did not get much from this budget. The press release for the great southern shows only Albany, Albany, Albany. The member for Albany confirmed that tonight when he went through the list of what is happening there. I have no problems with that because Albany is a major centre and a great place. It services a lot of the great southern. However, it seems that the imbalance has gone up. The *Budget Overview* lists five things for the great southern. Four of them relate directly to Albany. However, there is a wind-diesel project at Bremer Bay, which is fantastic. There is a message. I think country people are pretty smart about that. I heard Labor members talk about the federal budget yesterday. They cannot have it both ways.

I also want to concentrate on projects that were started by the previous Government but left unfinished. Stage 2 of the Narrogin link road is still unfinished after three years. The road goes nowhere. Money already spent has been wasted. The final stage of the Narrogin Regional Hospital is yet to be completed. The oil mallee plant deserves to be finished. I am sure members opposite will agree that for the sake of \$600 000 it should be finished. I will concentrate more on that later.

A lot of new things in my region have been established over the past few years but they have all been achieved with money from the previous Government. I am referring to the Narrogin hospital, the Wickpin health centre, the Kukerin health centre, the Kojonup health centre, the Narrogin residential college, Katanning Senior High School, the Narrogin recreation centre and the link road stage 1 etc. The real emphasis in this budget has been on the metropolitan and major coastal centres, the Pilbara and the Kimberley. Inland country Western Australia in the south west land division misses out again. People in the area feel ignored, and it affects their confidence; it affects the whole area. If the Labor Government is back in power after the next election, I urge it to take a good look at this because it is necessary. Whichever Government is in power next time will have to address some of these issues.

I now want to refer to some of those issues. I will start with power, which is a huge problem right across WA, including the outer areas of the metropolitan area. I acknowledge the allocation of \$418.6 million in the budget to deal with power. It is a big increase and a step in the right direction and I welcome it. However, to where will that allocation be delivered? The member for Merredin spoke extensively in his speech last night about the budget allocation of \$12 million for the whole wheatbelt area; that is just not enough. The wheatbelt and other areas towards the edges of the network incur many of the major power problems. The Government must address those problems and an allocation of \$12 million to do that is just not enough. There appears to be no plan to fix the network in the next few years. I blame all Governments of the past 20 years for running down the network. We need a blueprint plan to prioritise the problems and fix the network. There is no plan. This Government is just throwing money where it thinks it should go at the moment. Big ticket items, such as transmission and infrastructure, appear to be serving the populous coastal areas, when struggling inland areas really need attention. The main problems are reliability and safety of the network.

I want to talk a bit about safety on powerlines because it is a real issue. I note that I highlighted safety issues in my speech last year on the budget debate. I talked about the fire at Darkan that occurred on a really bad day of weather. That fire would have been catastrophic but for the great effort by firefighters and a fair bit of luck that

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

day. I warned last year about the danger to life that a fire such as that posed. Unfortunately, this year a fire caused by the malfunction of a pole occurred at Tenterden, which resulted in the loss of life. This issue should not be taken lightly. The Government has taken the issue on board in the overall budget, but priority must be given to some of these country areas. The Government must have a plan of key priorities, it must follow that plan and it must get these issues fixed as soon as possible. Last night the member for Merredin referred to some of the power problems that are occurring right now. Just today some people from Woodanilling and Katanning in my electorate came to Parliament last Sunday. The power in many of their homes was out for seven hours. That is just not good enough. We need to get serious and fix it. There are major problems in my electorate with powerlines south and east of Kojonup and Katanning, in Yealering, Darkan and the eastern areas of the Great Southern Highway.

I return to the Narrogin oil mallee plant, which I have mentioned quite a few times in this place. It is now getting to a critical stage. I am prepared to wait another two to three weeks but then the Government must get serious with it. It can be fixed for an amount of \$600 000 and be up and running to proof of concept stage, thereby not wasting the \$9.3 million of taxpayers' money that has already been spent on it. I ask members to bear in mind that this pilot plant is about producing power, carbon and oil. The planting of oil mallee trees will assist the environment, thus helping to address the great problem of salinity. For the sake of \$600 000, it is a win-win project that we must get on with. I know that government members agree and I ask them to ask the Treasurer again to get this project happening.

In concluding my comments on Western Power, I congratulate Western Power line men - the guys on the ground. They cop a lot of flak from the public when the public is upset with Western Power. Those guys do the best they can. I know some of them quite well and I know they get exasperated at times when they want more help to deliver their services better. The problem is that as Western Power loses skilled workers, it takes a fair while to replace them and the skills. We need to take that into account.

Mr J.N. Hyde: The carbon oil mallee plant we are pushing very hard on. It has got to be an absolute winner.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Good. Let us just get it over the line together.

Mr J.N. Hyde: Your side may have got the technology wrong originally. The Labor Government has got to come in to fix it.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: That is not right. It is a pilot program that, it was found, needed the use of gas, which resulted in more safety issues. That caused a problem. However, I do not want to get into that debate tonight, as I do not have time. However, I will have a chat with the member for Perth about it later.

Mr J.N. Hyde: We are always chatting. However, it has worked everywhere else in the world, if you get it right up front.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I will talk to the member for Perth later about that.

Mr J.N. Hyde: Thanks for your assistance.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: No worries; I am always happy to help.

I want to talk about road funding. Roads are critical to country WA because we rely on our roads for everything. We travel great distances. Country members such as the members for Collie and Eyre travel miles in their work, as do most people in country WA. Roads are critical for business, schooling, health access and for social and everyday lives. We cannot ignore country roads. Unfortunately, they have been ignored a great deal for three and a half years.

I acknowledge some black spot funding in my area that I welcome. Three or four projects in my area have been funded, such as the Collie Lake King and 129 Gate Roads intersection, the \$24 000 allocation in Wagin and also the widening of the Piesseville Road intersection off Albany Highway. Also, one overtaking lane is being provided on the Albany Highway, which I welcome. It is terrific. However, the problem is that only 48 Main Roads projects are in the budget this year, which is a reduction from 110 projects. Also, \$340 million is to be spent on six projects in the Perth south east corridor. That is fine. We need money to be spent there as well; however, the regional road allocation is still only at \$23 million in direct grants and this figure was \$45.5 million only two years ago. That drop has a great effect on local roads that all local people must use.

At the local government conference last year, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure met local governments from our region on this issue. The minister said that she would try to get the budget increased. It has not happened. Country people are thankful for the federal Government's roads to recovery program, as the reality is that this is keeping many shire roads going. Focus on that area is needed.

I mention a couple of important projects. The completion of the Narrogin link road is essential. I hope the minister will complete the next stage, which is critical. It has four stages. Stage one was undertaken by the

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

previous Government, but the project has been going nowhere for the past three years. People would appreciate the provision of stage two. More passing lanes are needed on Albany Highway, which has been the forward thinking for some time. One passing lane is provided this year, but half a dozen should be in the budget. More money is needed for local roads. I also mention the Bridgetown to Donnybrook road. The member for Warren-Blackwood travels that road more than anyone. I do not use it a lot, but I know it needs attention.

I support road safety. I agree with the road safety education programs and promotions etc. I have been involved with them through football, and they are great and must be continued. We all acknowledge what happens on our roads, and we talk about road deaths, which are terrible. However, road trauma injuries affect families on an ongoing basis. Work is being done to improve that situation but road funding is lacking. Increases in traffic and heavy vehicle use on some roads make them very dangerous, and this will cause accidents.

I move next to tourism. I could not believe that this budget has a reduced allocation for tourism at this time. Tourism has had many problems in the past few years with world events and pilot strikes etc. This provides a great opportunity for Australia, particularly Western Australia, to capitalise on that situation by promoting and advancing our tourism. Cutting the tourism budget sends the wrong message, particularly to the many volunteers throughout country WA trying to make tourism work. Extra funding and focus is critical to the expanding industry. Rural WA needs to attract new industry to communities to build our towns. It is easy to say that, but hard to get the new industry. Tourism is an industry that is already in place. We need to help it grow and to enhance it and capitalise on it. I expected an increase in the tourism budget, and for the Government to focus on this area. It is an opportunity lost this year. The Premier talks a lot about tourism and makes quite a big noise about it, but he is not delivering. People have asked what there is to see in my region. There are many attractions, such as the developing wineries, farm stays, the Wagin historical village and giant ram, and the Dryandra Forest in which the night viewing area called Barna Mia has been established and which the minister opened last year. It is a fantastic tourist attraction. There is also the Kodja Place Interpretive Centre, which promotes cultural awareness of the various cultures of the Kojonup region; the Katanning Old Flour Mill; Police Pools in Katanning; the Williams Woolshed on Albany Highway; and the Facey Homestead in Wickepin. I could go on and on listing them; there are a heap of tourism attractions in my electorate. However, we need financial and professional assistance to promote them and help link the tourist attractions. I mention the Heartlands tourism group, which is working well with all our local tourist bodies in each shire and town. Our local shires also have formed groups to work together to link tourism in our area. However, we need more assistance and coordination. We all pride ourselves on what a great State this is. Like most people, I love this place. We should spend more on tourism because it is an industry that already exists that is of great benefit to the State and the people in it.

I refer now to policing, which is extremely important. I have done quite a bit of work recently in that area in my electorate and in other parts of the country. I acknowledge the increase in the budget to recruit 75 extra police, although with attrition and retirement, at best, police numbers are being held; they are not actually increasing. In country Western Australia there are approximately 56 unfilled police positions. That does not bode well for law and order or crime prevention in country communities. This budget does not contain anything - I was hoping for something - to upgrade the police stations, particularly at Williams, Narrogin, Jurien Bay etc. With the minister's permission, the National Party has been touring country police stations. I toured the Williams, Narrogin, Kojonup and Wagin Police Stations. They have some problems. I have listed these problems before, but the occupational safety and health issues in these stations are huge. I think the member for Churchlands referred earlier to the fact that officers at Wembley Police Station were sharing facilities with offenders. At Williams, officers eat from the same table on which they take people's fingerprints and do blood tests because they have nowhere else to eat their lunch. The sergeant in charge's office is an old store room, which is not much bigger than the seats in front of me. It is not good enough. We need to do something about those stations. The Western Australian Police Union supports the community in this request. We need to do something about safe holding cells in the country. Only 25 per cent of those cells are safe and can be utilised. Only a certain number of police officers man country stations, and they are required to watch people when they are in the cells. That takes them away from other duties. Prisoners cannot be kept in those stations overnight, so two police officers must take them to Perth, Albany or wherever they must go. That travel can involve half to three quarters of a day, which means those officers are not at the stations. Police resources are being wasted in that way. If some of the cells could be strategically upgraded, that would reduce the burden on our already overtaxed police in the country.

In light of the 56 unfilled police positions, housing is a real issue. We must be able to provide a policeman who is posted with his wife and two children to a country area with a reasonable level of housing. Drugs are also a big issue. It would be terrific if we had a greater police presence so that more focused operations could be undertaken. However, I congratulate the police. They have had some very successful raids in Narrogin and

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Katanning where some real problems have emerged. I think they are doing a terrific job and I congratulate them, particularly Superintendent John Watson, whom the member for Albany has already acknowledged. He is doing a fantastic job. I would also like to acknowledge Sergeant Brian Wilkinson, who has just left Katanning and gone to Busselton. He will do a great job there. In his two and a half years in Katanning, he got the crime and burglary rate down by around 50 per cent. He and his staff did a fantastic job and I thank him for the work he did there.

The magistrates circuit in my region has been cut, which is a real issue. We have taken it up with the Chief Magistrate Steven Heath. I do not know whether we will get back some of those circuits but it does cause real problems, particularly for those people who now have to travel to Narrogin. It is a long way for a lot of people from Corrigin, Wagin or Pingelly where the courts used to be held. Witnesses also have to travel, which is a real impost. Some people are choosing not to travel and therefore breaking bail, for which they can end up going to jail. This matter has been brought to my attention more and more by the local solicitors in our area. It is sad to see Safer WA go. However, it has gone and we have to get on with life. Some of our Safer WA committees have now formed into local committees such as the Safer Kojonup committee, and I am sure they will do a great job.

As the National Party spokesman for education, I want to concentrate on that topic a little tonight. There is a small budget increase of around about three per cent in education. That is a fair sort of increase, but I am concerned about the natural growth in schools of about 1.5 per cent and whether we are actually keeping up with that. The budget contains a lot of interesting initiatives, mainly for the minister's favourite projects. However, to be fair to country schools, they miss out, particularly in relation to capital works. Capital works is a real issue in country schools. Very little of the \$151.8 million in capital works funding has been made available to country schools, which is disappointing. The Government identified a number of significant issues and trends that will place teachers under greater pressure and heighten the expectation of government schools. Yet, there is little by way of new initiatives to support these challenges. In fact, the last year's certified agreement, the way that was handled and the failure to address key issues raised by the State School Teachers Union of WA suggest that we may be in for more conflict in the future as the expectations on our teachers rise and so too do demands for better work conditions. Whichever party is in government after the next election will need to be prepared to deal with these issues. School maintenance is a real issue in my area, having had our local Narrogin district budget cut last year by some \$200 000. I acknowledge the \$7 million one-off payment this year to assist, which helped, but only with basic things. There is no way that we are catching up. It is a bit like a farmer. If he does two or three kilometres of fencing every year, he can keep up with the maintenance issue on his farm with regard to fencing. However, if he does not do any fencing for 15 years, bang, he has a huge problem. I am concerned that that is happening to the schools in my region.

Yesterday, we were lucky to have the Minister for Education and Training and Paul Albert, Director General of the Department of Education and Training, look at the design and technology centre at the Narrogin Senior High School, which is really in an atrocious condition. We have equipment there from the early 1900s that came from the old Fremantle technical school. I think they both agreed that that needs attention, and I am hoping something will come of that. The Narrogin Agricultural College needs a new residential wing. It is a great agricultural college that has good facilities other than that. It is doing a fantastic job, and I think the minister who saw it understands that. I noticed that the member for Greenough talked about Kalbarri District High School. I am travelling to Kalbarri next Friday to look at that school because it has real issues, which I have written to the minister about.

I want to highlight a letter from the Dumbleyung Primary School parents and citizens association written by Tom Pearce, who is its president. Members may remember Tom Pearce; he was a great Claremont footballer who played in the premierships side in the 1980s.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr T.K. Waldron: This letter is from Tommy, who the member for Albany would know is a great and reasonable bloke. The letter states -

Our children are currently being educated in an unsafe surrounding because of the state of our school grounds. The school grounds has many areas of cement slab paving which is uneven and unsafe and there is inadequate disabled access to the school.

If this was a workplace, and the children the employees I feel sure that it would be closed until the repairs are done as there would be unions up in arms and work safe involved but alas it is only a primary school in a small country town without much say.

He goes onto talk about how much money the P&C association spent on the school building undercover areas and new playgrounds - it spent \$5 000 to \$10 000. The P&C has identified other areas in which it needs to do

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

more. More undercover area is required, and the P&C will provide that. I am happy for the Hansard reporters to have that letter. I believe it sets out a real problem. This is from a top fellow who would not write that on behalf of his P&C unless it were true. I have with me some photos that show that the paths in the school need attention.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Are you happy to table them?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I am happy to table them, as long as I get a copy back. I do not want to lose those photographs that the P&C took.

I want to move on to school retention rates, which the minister talks about a lot. The Government has identified the retention rates of 15 to 19-year-olds as a major issue in education. I do not think any of us would argue or disagree with that principle. I certainly do not. I support that principle. However, I am concerned about the impact this may have on children in country Western Australia, particularly in the smaller areas with sparsely scattered groups of children, who historically have had more limited access to government services and facilities.

Yesterday we had a forum about raising the compulsory school leaving age to 17. It was a terrific day. The minister expressed the importance of design and technology areas as part of that plan. I looked at what we have at Narrogin, and it all fell into place very nicely. That was a good part of the day. I have an open mind about raising the compulsory leaving age. It would be great if we could keep our children in education of some sort. That includes working and having training on the job, apprenticeships, traineeships and TAFE courses etc. However, in country WA, we must be realistic. If we are to do this, we must have resources in place. I am talking about money, facilities and teachers, and business and industry supporting it, because, without that, we will not be able to deliver it. It is a great idea, but we must be able to deliver it.

In our small country towns, the issues of transport and accommodation will become an absolute reality when children are kept in education until they are 17. The issue of information technology will play a part in enabling us to do it. I will watch the results of the forums with great interest. It was a very positive forum yesterday. The issues that I am raising are the issues that the people are raising. The minister, or whoever wants to introduce this measure in the future, will need to make sure that all those things are in place before it is introduced. We do not want to find ourselves in a situation in which we cannot deliver it because we do not have the resources or the facilities. The public will lose confidence in it, it will fall in a hole, and that will put it back another 20 years. Let us make sure we have the resources to deliver it.

We have spoken in this place about relocating dysfunctional families to country towns. People have said that they do not want that to happen. I believe that it is okay if the services are there to support the families. At the end of the day, the families must be supported. It is no good dumping people with problems in Wyalkatchem, Kojonup, Newdegate or wherever if there are no services or resources there for them. The issue is the same with education.

I want to talk about incentives for teachers, because that is very important. I have raised with the minister in a grievance and in a question the issue of permanency incentives in country WA. He has agreed that we should have them. In fact, he said that it is a great idea; why did he not think of it; let us do it. However, it still has not happened. I believe that the minister might be running into problems with the Department of Education and Training, or perhaps he just has not got around to it. I will raise that matter with the minister again, because that is a key way in which we can attract teachers to the country.

Professional development in education is critical and costly. We need to have more professional development in the country regions. We must utilise our schools. We have been talking about utilising our schools for students by raising the compulsory leaving age to 17. Let us utilise the district offices and the professional people in country WA to deliver more professional development locally. More teachers will then undertake that professional development, and it will take the pressure off school budgets. I urge the minister to do that.

The issue of offering wider subject selection always arises in country WA. We must have a more flexible staffing formula to allow that to happen. There is some flexibility, but greater flexibility needs to be applied. If the compulsory school leaving age is lifted to 17 years, we will have to do it. The minister agreed with that yesterday at the forum. We will have to provide flexibility to have people able to deliver the policy. We need it now, particularly in some of our district high schools, but we must not get ahead of ourselves. I urge the minister to address that.

Another initiative in education is the increased use of information technology in schools. It provides the ideal opportunity for country students to gain access to subjects and information that may not otherwise be available. However, I would be very concerned to see this technology replacing a commitment from the Government to ensure that country schools are fully and adequately staffed. The issue of the cost and time involved in information technology maintenance remains unsolved. We must work together on staffing and the use of information technology. I must get off the subject of education or I will run out of time.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is a very good speech. I am very impressed.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I thank the member. I am still going. I want to get onto the subject of agriculture, but I am glad the member is impressed. I have often said that I am a positive person. I think I have been quite positive about the budget as well as pointing out some obvious problems with it.

The budget for the Department of Agriculture has a small increase, but the real concern is the staff cuts. Any further staff cuts would be critical for agriculture, because during the past two years there have been substantial staff cuts. The staff in the Department of Agriculture cannot deliver the required advice and assistance to farmers, so they are not able to fulfil their proper role. The real threat applies to the control of vermin and noxious weeds, particularly dogs in the east, skeleton weed and, in my electorate over the past two years, more break-outs of footrot, ovine Johnes disease and bedstraw, which has never been seen in my electorate before and is a really critical issue. The Department of Agriculture staff who are trying to keep it under control, such as Graham Blacklock from Katanning and John Glauert from Albany, do a tremendous job. I have a real concern that we will see more of it happening. It is a real worry. I would urge the Government to do something about staffing in the Department of Agriculture, remembering that agriculture is a major industry in this State and a very important one. It earned \$3 billion from the wheat crop alone this year, so the figures are substantial. There is a shift towards research and development through universities, which is fine, but we must make sure that we keep control of the agriculture budget, otherwise we will run into problems.

I will turn to health, because the clock keeps ticking. Once again being very positive, I welcome the \$178 million extra in the health budget, which is substantial. It will obviously be of great assistance. However, we must ask where it is going. From what we have seen in the past years and from what I can find in the budget, not much appears to be going to inland country Western Australia. Obviously the hospitals in Perth require a large chunk of the budget, but let us make sure that its distribution is fair and equitable. The real problem that is being experienced in country Western Australia is the diminishing role and services of our country hospitals. I want to refer to three in my electorate. They are in the towns of Dumbleyung, Wagin and Kojonup. They are small, thriving country towns containing strong communities that do a lot for themselves. However, they are seeing their hospitals lose services and play a diminishing role in the community. We must remember that they are more than hospitals; they are multipurpose facilities that deliver a wide range of health-related services. They are very much about preventive health. Obviously preventive health is the way to go, if it can be done, because it saves money down the track. The hospitals run programs such as the well women's clinics and men's clinics. The member for Albany talked about prostate cancer. I thought he spoke really well about it and about diagnosing it. Men do have a problem with it. In some of the eastern country areas it is a macho thing, but men's clinics give them the opportunity to have their health problems addressed, which will hopefully save lives. The hospitals also run educational health programs, child health services and therapy services. I could go on and on. Taking away the local accountability of our hospitals and the local input has been to the detriment of country hospitals. Local knowledge is still absolutely vital. People rely on their local hospitals, particularly young mothers, older people and single parents. It is really important for the people in country towns to have the ability to go to their local hospital at one o'clock in the morning for reassurance when their child is sick. I was a single parent for three years and can remember taking my daughter -

Ms S.M. McHale: Were you?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: For three years I was a single parent. At that stage I had a two-year-old and a three-and-a-half-year-old daughter. I can remember taking my daughters to Kojonup hospital at one o'clock in the morning simply because I was worried. I did not know what I could or could not do. On one occasion one of my daughters was quite ill, but she was eventually okay. However, on other occasions my daughter was fine and I was probably being a panicking dad because I did not have the knowledge. At least I went home knowing that she was okay. I had a good night's sleep and she slept well - maybe with some Panadol or something. In that way, I could perform well as a parent the next day. The problem is that people say that these services can be taken away and that people can use the phone. That is okay, but there is nothing like face-to-face reassurance. Quite often people in the country know the nurses at the hospital. It is a very localised thing. Whatever we do, let us not take that away. I think we can utilise our country hospitals better. The member for Churchlands spoke about a lack of hospital beds. Let us utilise some of the beds in country hospitals.

Another issue that is raised all the time is the accident and emergency services at our hospitals. The Department of Health has asked me why I want an accident and emergency unit at Dumbleyung hospital, because it can deliver only very basic services. A few months ago there was a motorbike accident in the area. Stabilising the patient at the Dumbleyung hospital before he was transferred to the Narrogin hospital was critical. I believe there should be three levels of accident and emergency units: a high-level unit for major accidents and emergencies, and people would know to go to that unit for the really bad accidents; a mid-level unit, where

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

people could go for the mid-level accidents; and a very basic, local unit. People would know to go to the Narrogin hospital if it was a serious accident. If it was a minor accident, they could go to their local accident and emergency centre. That is something that should be considered.

I have spoken to the Minister for Health about a consultation process on changes to hospitals. The consultation process at Dumbleyung was appalling and it got the community offside right from the start. People in the country are sensible people. If the Government takes country communities with it, and consults with those people properly, it will get somewhere. It will get the changes that may be required, and in a responsible way, and it will not have a big fracas and outrage in the community. The people of Dumbleyung were treated very poorly, and I think the minister and the Department of Health now realise that they made a bad error. I hope that when they want to make major changes in the future, they talk to the people, tell them that they are looking at this, ask for their input and work it through. That is what we did in the end and it worked out well.

I turn now to sport and recreation, because I think that sport and recreation is greatly underestimated in our community at times. The value of a fit body and mind is really important to good health. I acknowledge the \$9.2 million that has been allocated in the budget for the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. The other day the minister said that well over 50 per cent of that money goes to country WA. That is fantastic, and I welcome that. It is a great scheme. It is critical for country WA to develop the facilities to accommodate sport, which has great and crucial social benefits in WA.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I did not talk about mental health because I ran out of time, but mental health is a problem. It is crucial to keep kids active and involved in clubs and to give them leadership opportunities through sport and recreation. I would like the scheme to be expanded.

I will also speak about the country sport enrichment scheme. It is not listed in the budget papers, but I hope it is still there. That scheme has been under some threat in the past year. It is a hugely successful scheme that brings major sporting events to country centres. We need to expand it to bring more sporting events to country centres, so let us not wind back that scheme. I will ask questions about that scheme during the estimates hearings. The Healthway "smarter than smoking" scholarships give country sportsmen and sportswomen the opportunity to train in senior squads and travel to Perth and interstate. It does a great job. I think it has a budget of about \$300 000, but that needs to be increased. There is a huge impost on country parents, who always want to do the best for their kids, in taking them to Perth for hockey, football or swimming. Huge costs are involved just in taking their kids to the local squads in their region. We need to increase that funding. If kids make it, that is great. However, if they do not make it and come back to country centres, they come back as leading citizens and take on leadership roles. They pass on their experiences and set examples for other kids in the area, which helps with our social and health problems. It is critically important. I know that I speak a lot about sport when I get the chance, but it is really important. I re-emphasise the importance of physical education in our schools and continued programs to address obesity issues.

I will talk about a couple of issues that we should look at in the future. One is the extension of new business establishment grants or low interest loans to new businesses that have proven they have something established and have raised certain amounts themselves, so that they are not just coming for handouts. AQ2 Pty Ltd, which is a company in Katanning, is providing fluorinating pumps to the Water Corporation. Its pumps are now also going to the eastern States. The company will probably get into providing systems for sprayers for agricultural businesses. I hope that the Minister for Agriculture will visit that company when he is in Katanning in the next few weeks. If that company could get just a little assistance from the State Government, it would make it. I am sure it would repay the Government fivefold.

I also mention business relocation grants. We are trying to attract business and industry to country WA. Quite a lot of businesses and industries get built out in the city. That happened to a horse feed business that has now gone to Williams. The company was based in Bayswater but had to get out because of the nature of the business and because the area was becoming more built up. No assistance is provided to companies to help them move, which they do at huge cost. We need to provide some assistance with that. We need to get the regional headworks scheme back on track as soon as possible, because it is very important.

I also raise the issue of the review of changes to the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia. I want to make sure that the review takes place, because we need input from our fire brigades on how FESA is working. I recognise our fire brigades in country WA and the magnificent job that they do. I also recognise all those who fought the fires in Tenterden and all those in the community who have since helped the people affected by those fires to recover. It has been fantastic.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

We are all Western Australians and we must have fairness and equity across Western Australia. Budgets are about people. We must remember that people live in the inland areas of Western Australia as well. I feel that those people have been neglected, and that the Government needs to put that right.

I will finish by thanking the people of my electorate. I am very fortunate in the Wagin electorate. If I am successful at the next election, my electorate will have expanded to take in Boyup Brook, Tambellup and the east ward of Bridgetown. I am very fortunate. I have a great electorate. They are fantastic people to work with. It is a great region made up of people who get off their backsides and make things happen. Although we will always look for government support, I think the people of that area set an example for the Government to follow, by making things happen. The Government should not neglect them, because they are very important to this State.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie) [10.47 pm]: I will say a few words on the budget and associated issues. I am quite happy with the way in which the electorate of Collie has progressed over the past three years. I have received help from within government. I have had to prod them a bit, but the ministers have certainly given me some support over the past couple of years to make sure that the town of Collie and surrounding areas have not been forgotten. It is great to have quite a list of projects that have started. Some have finished and some are still moving. One of the major issues in the middle of the electorate, which will be a boon to the entire south west in the future, is the Wellington National Park. Although the Opposition started that process and attempted to purchase the land, it was finished under the Labor Government. It is a case of showing that the Labor Government is committed to moving on and getting things done. There was a lot of consultation with green groups down there. There was quite a bit of argument about where the boundaries would be, but in the end a compromise was achieved. People are very happy with that.

The top end of the Ferguson Valley now has a full range of bed and breakfast facilities, ranging from five-star accommodation to a backpackers hostel and vineyards. I see it as being the Swan Valley of the south west in the future. It is certainly a lot closer to Perth -

Ms J.A. Radisich interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It will take over from that area; the member is getting pushed out. It is certainly an area of great growth. The prices of blocks of land have probably trebled in the past three or four years. Some of the bigger wineries have taken over some of the smaller growers. I do not know whether that is good or bad, but that area has boomed. It is also coupled up with the national park. The minister was down there recently to open a boardwalk around the king jarrah tree - a huge tree that started to suffer a bit of stress because of the number of visitors. That shows where the tourism is picking up. At the top end of the Dardanup shire near Wellington Mills is Gnomesville. I am sure quite a few people should end up there. That place is something special and it has been adopted by the community. One or two people started putting out plastic gnomes and at times the vandals got stuck into them, but the people kept going and now the vandals would have to be there for a week to smash all the gnomes.

Mr P.B. Watson: They breed well, do they?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: They do. People visit from all over Australia and from overseas as well. They are the things that the member for Wagin was talking about. People in small communities do not just sit back; they get off their butts and get things happening. That is something with a very low capital cost that brings in tourists. It has also resulted in a couple of restaurants starting up along the road from Bunbury. Those are the sorts of positive things that are happening in the Boyanup and Dardanup areas.

In the town of Collie itself, the call centre has been opened by the minister. It is now running at full steam with 30-odd jobs, and it has been a boon to the town. People in small businesses have commented to me that they have noticed the extra funding that is coming into the town. While they are not well-paid jobs, they are generally taken by people who do not have the money to travel out of town to spend it. It certainly keeps the money within the town. I made a personal visit to the call centre and it was great to see some of the kids from the town who had never had jobs before working there. It is a starting point. It was something special to see the look on their faces. As a politician, one gets a lot of abuse. However, one young guy who is quite large put both thumbs up, indicating that he had finally got a job at the age of 21. It was his first job! They take a bit of micky out of him, but he is very happy about his job.

The other area is the motor sports complex. The Government has put money into that over a period. It was not started by this Government, but it is pleasing to see how it is progressing. I believe the western five lakes project will be one of the biggest tourist attractions in the upper south west. It will hook onto the back of the Ferguson Valley and will really benefit Collie and the surrounding areas. At the moment that area is not ready to be opened up. The water quality is not quite high enough, but it is moving on very well and I am sure that after this winter, with some more rain, it will reach the mark of 5 pH. That one water body is two and a quarter kilometres long and one kilometre wide. It will be opened to skiing, jet skis and the like, as well as other recreational

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

purposes. Anyone who has read the Press lately will have seen that the Waroona Dam and other dams have been shut for skiing. This is a growth area. In recent times people have been going down to the Margaret River and the Blackwood River for skiing. The water in the inland towns where people used to ski is not of adequate quality, such as Dumbleyung and a few of those areas. If we are able to get this area up and running, it will certainly be a boon to the tourist industry within Collie.

I want to push the point about how different projects have been promised but have not got off the ground. It took a bit of pushing and shoving to get the focus away from the coast. The coastal towns were sort of living off themselves and growing all the time, while the inland towns from Pinjarra through to the Collie turn-off, including Yarloop, Brunswick, Harvey and Waroona, were stagnating a lot because people preferred to live on the coast as the towns did not contain a great deal. I am pleased that the Labor Government has funded a feasibility study to look into the sustainability of those towns. Although those towns are not in my electorate at this stage, it certainly does affect people from one end of South West Highway to the other.

The member for Murray-Wellington complained a bit about what the Government has not done. What amazes me is that in the eight years that he was in government as the Whip, and in the 21 years that he has been the member for that area - a very well respected member, too; I do not take that away from him - he and his government did not get on with the job of making those towns sustainable. He and his government sat and watched as there was a drain of people towards the coast and real estate prices went up on the coast and down in the towns. At the same time, those towns on the coastal strip have been suffering from the downturn in the dairy industry. We know what happened with deregulation. I am sure my colleague on the other side understands that also. We are not out of the woods yet. I hope the study will have some positive outcomes and provide some directions to make these towns sustainable all the way along that coastal strip and as far inland as Wagin and those sorts of towns as well, because we must look after those towns too, as the member for Wagin did say. Every time a government department is taken out of a town, it has an effect on the town. I use Collie as an example. We do not have a Homeswest office in Collie. We have only a part-time Centrelink office. It costs \$7.85 to travel to Bunbury on South West Coachlines. There is no concession for people to travel to Bunbury. That causes all sorts of problems. It costs over \$15 for a return trip. That is a significant amount for people who are unemployed or on a low wage and need to travel to Bunbury for legal or Centrelink business. Centrelink has tried to alleviate some of the problems by allowing people to do their interviews over the telephone rather than travel to Bunbury, because if people miss their appointment they are in breach, which means that no money comes in and crime rates go up; it is just a general cycle. I hope that in the future the minister will look at providing concession cards for low income earners, and also for students who need to travel to Bunbury to go to the South West Regional College of TAFE. To charge students \$15 a day to go up and down the hill is quite an expense for parents, who generally have to foot the bill.

The other issue that is of concern to me in the Donnybrook and Preston Valley area is power supply. The unreliability of power supplies is quite unfair at times for the people in the packing sheds, who employ quite a few workers. When the power goes off and they ring Western Power, they are told by the answering machine that the power will come back on again in two hours, so they get the staff back in and get ready to go again. However, when the power does not come back on in two hours and they ring again, they are again told that the power will come back on in another two hours, but because it is a recorded message, they cannot really get their point across. The system of having a recorded message about when the power will come back on again is antiquated. A lot of money needs to be spent on that system so that people can be made aware of when the power will come back on. Recently some people were without power for up to 17 hours. All the storage guys had gone away, because they expected the power to come back on again in a couple of hours, but then at the last minute they had to rush around and hook up to generators and shift fruit from one place to other so that it did not spoil and ruin their income. A fair bit of work still needs to be done in that area. I am sure the Treasurer and Minister for Energy is well aware of that from the number of phone calls that I got and passed on to him.

As I said, the motorsports complex is now being used by the Police Service for driver training. The school kids also use it for driver training. The student driver training program is a great program. They have tracked the people who have gone through that program. Of all the kids who have committed a breach somewhere along the line by speeding or having a crash, only 14 per cent of the ones who had done the driver training got into some sort of trouble as opposed to about 60 per cent of the other P-plate drivers, so the course really works and should be encouraged. Western Power sponsors the course to a great extent, and I thank it for that. Also, the high school works very closely with the course providers to make sure that every student in that age group gets a chance to do driver training. It has certainly saved lives and has saved money in that way within our community.

I am pleased to report that there has been some government funding to help Pinetec get off the ground in Collie. That is about a \$10 million project that will employ up to 30 people in the future, some of these being young people, whom we desperately need in Collie at the moment.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

There has been an influx of older people into Collie - the grey power. However, most of them are hooking up their caravans and heading north, and the economy suffers from that. They moved into Collie just before the real estate prices increased. They bought very good houses on the coast for around \$120 000 and sold them for between \$300 000 and \$400 000. Therefore, they had a surplus when they sold them and could afford to buy a caravan and a four-wheel drive. From now on they will spend winter in Exmouth, Broome or Derby, which does not help Collie's economy. It puts a strain on it in another way, because more services must be provided for older people. I hope to get the chance to do that myself. However, Collie is a changing town and we must adjust to that. We need help to keep that adjustment going.

A couple of other projects are happening in Collie. An environmental clearance was given for the CollTech project, which is moving slowly. I have previously spoken about this in the House. The people in Albany are especially worried about the cowhides that CollTech uses to make a facial cream being contaminated with mad cow disease. I should not say anything about women putting it on, because it would only get me into trouble. A new process has enabled the product to be extracted from sheepskins. The worldwide market is crying out for it. CollTech is working in conjunction with the power station to use the distilled water from the cooling process, which needs a huge amount of clean water. The salty water that is left over goes into the sea through the saltwater pipeline. The production is environmentally safe and friendly, and will create 15 to 20 jobs. That is going very well.

These projects do not come about just by throwing money at them. I thank the Shire of Collie, which has worked very closely with me. It has given me a hand and pointed me in the right direction on many occasions on changing the economic base of Collie. Members are aware that for many years Collie relied on the underground and open-cut mines. When the underground mines shut, 300 jobs were lost in one hit. I remind the member for Warren-Blackwood that, unlike the timber industry, the coal industry got little assistance from the Government. Some \$200 000 was provided to retrain people and was spent on a few crane lessons, bobcat tickets and that type of thing. However, the people in the community did not lie down, cry and bleat, and ask for more money. They got off their butts and made sure that things happened.

Another issue that I am happy to say has finally come to fruition is the power procurement process, which has been a long time coming. It is probably a couple of years behind schedule, although both coal companies are happy that they now have a program to work to. It is Collie's last roll of the dice. It is very important that Collie have a chance to secure the next base load power station. I am confident it can. The companies have been accused of rorting the system over time, but those contracts were signed off on and, in some ways, I do not blame them for running the contracts for the full distance. It is not their fault that someone in Western Power was not smart enough or brave enough to say what the price should have been at the time. Technology has progressed and allowed coal to be produced more cheaply, but the contracts will be in place for another couple of years. Some of that money helped retool the coal industry, including when the underground mines shut. Some big shovels - the 2 800s - were brought from Newman. They are 40-cubic-metre buckets. That probably does not mean a lot to many people. However, when I see two Toyotas parked in one of buckets, I know that things have changed. That money has allowed the industry to retool, so that it can become competitive in this next round. I was a union official at the time the underground mines shut, and I know that some of the changes were hard to take. However, with hindsight I can see why that was done. It will give us a chance to honour the contracts.

What does worry me is to see Western Power sign off contracts. Some of the figures given to me for the Kemerton power prices include 38c a unit. Coal is currently 6c a unit. I cannot see why it was allowed to happen or why it happened in Western Power. I know there are some forces of darkness in Western Power. I have certainly had face-to-face arguments with some of its people; they do not want coal at all. It would be a very foolish move as there is only one pipeline. Even that is in receivership. No doubt someone will buy it at a bargain basement price and possibly lay another pipe. At the moment we cannot afford to have the next base load on gas. We had a blackout earlier this year, and I am sure if that goes on and we have troubles with compressors, we will have the same problem again. Although not reported in the Press, I know from sources in Western Power that they had their fingers crossed and were riding like hell, hoping that nothing would go wrong and cause a blackout. In the end it caught up with them. I have raised the matter many times in my party. It does not matter what the excuses were, people want the power. To be quite honest, many medium to large businesses do not care about the price of power to a great degree. However, to have 30 or 40 workers sitting around doing nothing for two or three days certainly eats away at profits. The community of Collie has its fingers crossed. There will be a concerted push from people in the community to lobby the Government and Western Power very strongly to make sure it happens. At this stage I am quite confident that it will happen on price alone. The Minister for Energy told me that it would be done on price. I hope that others do not exert undue pressure and use the issue as a political football. We should do it for the State alone.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

There are other issues I must bring forward. For a long time the mining companies just sat and took their profits. They have finally come to the realisation that they cannot just sit there. They have started chasing the new technology and trying to expand the markets. They have spent large sums of money to try to make briquettes that may be able to be used in the Hismelt process. That will require two or three million tonnes of coal a year. It would certainly be a saviour to the industry. Griffin Coal Mining Co Pty Ltd is looking at a direct-feed kiln that will feed coal into the Hismelt process. Both companies in the area are working very hard. They are looking at exporting the briquettes. Apparently the quality of the briquettes has been well received in Europe. A pilot plant is being built at the moment. I hope it gets up and proves itself enough to expand our markets.

I have travelled through the Kalgoorlie area and, to be quite honest - my colleague from up that way will not agree - the rehabilitation in the gold mining areas is absolutely appalling. If anyone wants to see what rehabilitation is about, he should go to the old coal mining areas. Millions of dollars have been spent on rehabilitation. There is reforestation, and the lakes are being treated so that their acid content is not too high. Budgerigars are able to drink from the lakes. Up north, they fall in and drown after they have a drink! A lot of work has been done on rehabilitation in the area. I believe the area is heading towards receiving one of the top environmental awards in Australia for rehabilitation. Both coal companies are working very hard to ensure that it is a sustainable industry so that they can go out and say in all honesty that they can match it with the gas people and show people on the ground exactly what it is. I am therefore very happy that those companies are doing that.

I return to the budget. I am very pleased that Collie will receive a grant of \$215 000 to clean up the river - which is really a drain - in the middle of the town. In the early 1960s and early 1980s the river flooded the town on a regular basis. It was then dredged, but not a lot of thought was put into it and it turned into a drain running through the middle of town. I hope that it can be tidied up enough to make it look like the river running through Busselton and that it will become a major feature of our community. With that grant I hope that a couple of riffles - stone banks - can be put across the river to make the water deeper where the weeds grow. That will allow revegetation along the banks of the river and, hopefully, people who visit Collie will see a special feature of the town and not a muddy drain. It probably will not be as good as Busselton's river, but it might be similar.

There is also an allocation in the budget to upgrade the Collie library. I am sure most members of this place have been lobbied for library books and libraries in their electorates. I was pleased to go back to the Collie community and say that yet again the Gallop Labor Government has listened to the community and put money into Collie to bring the library up to a standard that is acceptable to the community. In addition to that, the Minister for Education and Training visited Collie earlier this year and opened the school library. I was disappointed, to say the least, that the library is not a joint facility; however, other people did not want that to happen. The high school also had its library upgraded this year, which is very good for the community. I am sure members opposite will have some jibes to make about library books in Collie, but I will not go into that.

Another thing I am pleased to say is that the Minister for Peel and the South West is probably the most proactive minister appointed to deal with the south west that we have had for many years. It takes only a phone call to the minister and a short wait to have him organise a visit to the south west and meet with groups there. He has been extremely well received.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: That might be the member for Warren-Blackwood's opinion. However, I have heard many people from further south than Collie, probably as far as Manjimup and Warren-Blackwood, say that he is one of the best ministers they have had in the area for his willingness to make himself available, to visit the area and to listen to what people have to say. I thank the Minister for Peel and the South West for being available and for being helpful at all times.

As I said earlier, it was interesting to hear from the member for Murray-Wellington. I hope most members of this place realise there is a difference between country and city communities. I thank my colleagues, including those who sit on the back bench and give us hell, and those members opposite who lend a hand to country communities that get a bit stuck at times in explaining themselves. Country people in the main get together and work through their problems. I thank my country colleagues, particularly my fellow Labor country colleagues, for their help over the years. It has been a bit tough at times and we have stood together in the face of adversity. Sometimes we have had to swear a couple of times, but we managed to get our point across.

I have just been reminded that when the Premier visited the Shire of Harvey he was well received. However, someone said that it was the first time a Premier had visited the "new" Harvey shire building. I was told that the building had been open for 12 years. It is appalling that in the eight years previous to this Government's term, when the Opposition was in power, no Premier visited one of the safest Liberal seats. I found it a little hard to believe but I was assured that it was true. That just shows that a seat that is too safe can be taken for granted by

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

either side. I therefore should get a lot of attention in the near future, given my 0.04 per cent majority, as I am sure will the Bunbury seat. That shows that this Government is willing to go out to communities and talk and listen to people. People do not always get the answer they want, as that is not always possible, but at least this Government is listening and pushing through on issues that are special in small communities. These facilities might not cost a lot, but people want them. These services are taken as normal in the city. Public transport is a classic example. Two buses a week run out of Collie. The member for Dawesville grizzles about buses taking too long to run from Perth to Mandurah. People take things for granted once they have the service. We do not take them for granted. The people of Collie will be happy to have a reasonable transport system.

I congratulate the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for having the ticker to stand up and say that boat safety training is needed. That proposal has taken a fair hiding in the Press. As a keen boater, a fisherman and a diver, I believe that training is needed. People are able to pick up dad's 40-footer on the weekend without any training, which is a disaster waiting to happen. It applies to the 16-foot and 17-foot boats that are increasingly affordable. They are nothing special any more; people do not say, "Look - he has a boat!" If people want a boat, they can get one. People are buying boats but cannot back down the ramp, do not know the first thing about boating, do not know about safety gear or about which side of the markers they should be on. How do I know? I was one of them when I first started. I bought a brand-new boat, and on the first week I went straight up to Port Gregory and went 30 miles offshore with no auxiliary motor, no flares and no compass - but a good esky.

Mr A.D. Marshall: Do you need a licence now? That's the point.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I need a basic refresher course. I do not think people who have been in the game for a long time need intensive training. Dinghies under 12 foot with a 10-horsepower motor probably should be exempt from the training to allow people who hire out boats in estuaries and such operations to be accommodated so businesses are not made bankrupt overnight. Some consideration must be given to people who hire out boats, as well as older people who have used small dinghies for a long time.

Mr A.D. Marshall: It has to be looked at, but experienced boat users do not need a licence. New people do.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: A prior-learning provision could be included. If a person can prove that he or she has had a boat for many years, maybe only a half-hour course is needed with a tick made in a box. In my town, a terrible tragedy occurred when a young man was run over by a boat that did not follow the laws of the water. The dive flag was up and he was hit. The worst part, I suppose, was that he lived for nearly 12 months, and his family suffered all the pain that went with that before he died. No-one owned up to that accident, so no insurance can be claimed. It could be a public liability insurance claim. The family could have received some compensation. It is small consolation. At least the two small kids' education would be secured into the future. It has not happened yet, but a police inquiry is still ongoing about what happened.

Mr A.D. Marshall: I'll tell you about the thoroughness of the sea rescue group in Mandurah. It ran a small boating course - it still does. Trying to be a good member and to set an example as a boat owner, I paid my money to do the course. The course was on Mondays and Wednesdays for 15 or 20 weeks. When I said to them after the second week that I would not be there the next Wednesday as I would be in Parliament, the person in charge said I should not come back if I could not do the course. I said that I knew most of what he was talking about. He said he had never had a failure, so I must do my lectures to do the course. I thought that was pretty good. That is how thorough it should be.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The member for Dawesville said that it was all right at his age, so many other people would have to agree! There is certainly a problem and I hope it is followed through so that our waterways become safer. Another terrible accident occurred down south recently, where the mix of boats has become a problem. Over the past two or three years, a huge fishing fleet has begun fishing in waters off the south west holiday areas during the summer period while, at the same time, the beaches are occupied by holiday-makers. Unfortunately, a couple of weeks ago a young child was killed. Not knowing all the circumstances, I should not say too much about it but we want to stop that sort of thing happening. Once when I was diving, a boat, about 60-foot long, went straight over me. I saw its propellers move above me while I was on the bottom of the sea in about 30 feet of water. The boat people were newcomers down there. When the crayfishers see divers, they run the sounder over them to see what they are diving on. However, because many of them were new they did not know that some of the divers use hooker diving gear, which generally uses 100 metres of hose. They calculated that they were within 50 metres of the boat. However, I was in 30 feet of water and saw a boat go over the top of me.

I then attended a code of conduct meeting with the fishing industry in Busselton. Unfortunately, only I and a young bloke turned up so the organisers said they would run another one. However, for some reason, I was not invited to it and my calls were not returned. Perhaps I was too outspoken at the first meeting. The same people have not returned my calls since that accident. I want the small boat community to have some input to

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

consultations, rather than only the shires and the professional boating community. The amateur fishing industry should be represented on a committee to work out a code of conduct that is stronger than that proposed when I was there. When the professional fishers attended the seafood night at Parliament House, I broached the issue with a couple of people. I told them that some people were still doing what the industry said they would not do under the code of conduct. My comments were laughed off with the remark that there are always a few cowboys around. That is just not good enough. I am not saying that the boat involved in that accident was owned by a cowboy. However, when the industry says that there is still a problem, I do not know whether there are one, 10 or 20 cowboys. It takes only one to cause an accident. That must be sorted out and we must work very hard to ensure that both parties comply with a code of conduct. I am not saying that professional fishermen should not be able to earn a living. However, they must be aware of their surroundings. They are used to working further up the coast where there are not many small pleasure boats. They are used to putting their boat on automatic pilot and heading out to sea. They must pay more attention because there are more boats in the south west, especially over the holiday period. Something must be done to get both parties to work together to make sure those accidents do not happen. That issue has been of concern to me.

Another initiative that the Government has taken and that the member for Wagin has mentioned already, is establishment of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority levy. By gee, I took a lot of phone calls and received some flak over that when it was first introduced. Now we do not hear a word about it, because the fire brigades are now well resourced with good equipment. If they are not yet resourced, they will be in the future. Those people have changed their tune. It gives us pride to be in a Government that takes the difficult steps when most of the cockies oppose them. One of the phone calls I received from an older gentleman from the Boyup Brook area was a classic. He said that we did not need this levy because his old petrol-driven Bedford truck started every time; it was only 30 years old and all he needed was a new pump on the back so that he could give the cows water and then use it for bush fires. I do not think any Government should pay for that sort of infrastructure for those people. To be honest, that man annoyed the hell out of me. When the rest of the brigades had received their new machinery they went quiet. The Boddington crash crew, which patrols Albany Highway - I have spoken about it in this House before - does a remarkable job. When they got that gear, they were so happy because they believed they could save lives with the more efficient type of machinery they had - the new jaws of life and the jacks that open up cars so that they can get to injured people more quickly. They were so happy and so pleased that the Government had taken that step. I did have some earlier complaints from that area, but it has gone quiet now. This is just another initiative for which the Government should be applauded.

The other issue in Collie is probably 60 years old and relates to the amount of state housing in the town. Even though the housing budget has been increased, still more must be done in that area. While those houses remain in that condition, the people who live in them do not take the time or make the effort to keep them in any sort of reasonable condition. They treat them as they find them, which is pretty rough at times. I know that Homeswest is working hard to get a program up and running, and some of the houses it has done up are certainly excellent. However, we need to put more effort into that area. Social problems are associated with the amount of state housing we have. At times, it annoys me and the community when there is a social imbalance because of the number of Homeswest homes there. While everyone should be allowed to have a house, there should be some sort of screening to make sure that the social imbalance is not put too far out of kilter. It does take its toll on small communities - I have been criticised for saying this in another place but I stand by it - because it is not hard to put the social balance out of kilter. It really makes things tough for not only the police but also the social workers, the hospital workers and everyone else in that town. I put on record that we have to be careful about how we deal with this issue. We must spend more money in those areas. I agree that everyone should be housed within our so-called rich State, and to have people without housing is wrong. However, we have to be careful about how we sort that out. If the people in Subiaco had to have some of the houses in their area that we have down in our area, I am sure they would make a lot more noise than they do at present.

I take this opportunity to thank the Shires of Boyup Brook, Donnybrook-Balingup and Capel, which will move south owing to the new electoral boundaries. Perhaps, they will also be represented by a new member. They have worked well with me and I appreciate what they have done over time. With the change of boundaries occurring, I will not forget about those shires in the next eight to 10 months before we go to an election; I will still work for them. Their residents are the people who elected me and I have a duty to finish off the job, but, at the same time, I look forward to working with the new electorate.

MRS D.J. GUISE (Wanneroo - Deputy Speaker) [11.27 pm]: I am happy to rise to participate in the budget debate tonight. I realise I am probably keeping members from going home - this is not a very pleasant place to be in - so I will try to make my speech reasonably quick.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I think they are taking bids on how quickly I can do this.

I am incredibly happy with the budget announcements that have delivered for my electorate. First and foremost I want to speak about the changes for first home buyers. Most people in this place will know that, as the member for Wanneroo, I have expressed my unhappiness about the situation with stamp duty. I have spoken about it in previous budget speeches. When a person is representing a fair proportion of what is called "the mortgage belt", something like stamp duty hurts.

Mr A.D. Marshall: I feel sorry for the real estate salesperson.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: When a member is married to one, it also makes it interesting. My main concern was for the first home buyers. I am very pleased with the changes that will be made come 1 July with the conveyance allowance duty being abolished for first home owners buying homes worth less than \$220 000 and being reduced for those homes valued up to \$300 000. This means that a first home buyer will save just over \$8 000 on a property valued at \$220 000. If we add to that the State's first home owners grant, we are looking at a total saving of about \$15 230. That is a substantial amount of money that will go a long way to helping young families. Trust me; there is a growing number of them in my electorate who are trying to establish their first home, with all the associated costs. This is very good news indeed for them. Now when some people come into my electorate office, they are somewhat happier about the circumstances in which they find themselves. I say thank you to the Treasurer.

Another important facet of this budget about which I want to talk is health. The increase in health funding of \$178 million is substantial. It is a real increase of 4.4 per cent. Part of that will go into the northern region of the metropolitan area. I am incredibly pleased to know that a new after-hours bulk-billing medical centre will be put in place near the Joondalup Health Campus - one of the four that will be aligned with the other hospitals in the metropolitan area. I have also spoken in this place before about the lack of general practitioner services, and in particular the impossibility of getting a locum service north of Burns Beach Road. This after-hours GP service is most welcome, as is the news about the extra beds to be opened at the Joondalup Health Campus, and ultimately the upgrading of the hospital to a 300-bed general hospital over the next decade. The hospital will then be well placed to service the demand in the northern suburbs.

Two areas will continue to be monitored; that is, mental health and aged care. I hope that the changes to be made at Osborne Park Hospital will adequately accommodate those areas. Osborne Park Hospital currently has a terrific unit for aged care assessment and care. I am looking forward to that being expanded. I am particularly eager to see an improvement in mental health services, particularly for youth. Many young people are finding things very difficult. The waiting list for assistance is less than satisfactory. Therefore, the changes that will be made and the additional assistance that will be given are most welcome.

Policing, of course, is of interest to everyone across the State. An amazing amount of money is being spent on making our community safer, including new initiatives that will focus on child abuse, on the release of police officer resources to focus on operational imperatives, which is most welcome, and on improved delivery service to the community. An amount of \$616 million is involved, which is an incredible amount of money when one thinks about it. It will be well spent and is welcomed by the community.

The police officers in my electorate do an amazingly good job. They are hardworking and very responsive to the community's needs and wishes, and are always aiming to do better. In fact, the latest published statistics show that they have improved their collective rates. The reduction in crime speaks well for the hard work and efforts of all those police.

I am pleased to see that the remaining amount of money required to build the new Wanneroo Police Station has been allocated in this budget. I look forward to the pad going down and the signs going up, and the officers who currently serve in the Wanneroo Police Station being moved into the new establishment. I have spoken before about the state of the existing police station. Quite frankly, I would not put a dog in it. It is appalling, and is long overdue for an upgrade. I am sure that the community will welcome that initiative, and we all look forward to seeing the new station built.

The other good news for us is that about the police stations that will be open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some stations such as the Joondalup district police station do provide a 24-hour service, but it is not the same as being able to walk into a police station at any time of the day. People want to know that they are able to do that, and they will do it. The police will use additional public servants to make that possible, and, frankly, I would rather have the officers out on the road. This will be very well received by the community.

Moving on to transport, the continued freeze on public transport fares is welcome news for my electorate. It is the fourth consecutive year that the Government has delivered on this. Rail and bus transport are very important to the people in my region, as is the freeze on fares, because many of them are finding it tough out there. It is

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

most welcome. Of course, the big news for the electorate is that we have been able to deliver, as promised, the extension of the Mitchell Freeway. Some \$30 million will be spent on the extension from Hodges Drive, and the freeway will ultimately extend to Burns Beach Road. The total project cost will be \$45.5 million. Frankly, I cannot wait to see the bulldozers move. This will ease a lot of pressure on the northernmost part of my electorate and ease the traffic build-up on Marmion Avenue. It will also help considerably to alleviate some of the pressure on Wanneroo Road, as cars will be able to deviate across onto the freeway. It is great news indeed for those in the northernmost regions of my electorate.

Another black spot that desperately needed attention will receive it. Some of the work on it has already started. It is the intersection at Gnangara Road and what is now called Rigali Way in Wangara. Rigali Way comes out of the big industrial estate to join Gnangara Road. An amazing number of trucks and heavy vehicles traverse Gnangara Road. Of course, the volume of traffic is increasing because of the development in the area. The intersection was a real problem that caused headache after headache. It was a shocker that had to be addressed. I am pleased to say that black spot funding has been made available.

I am looking forward to future assistance to extend Ocean Reef Road through to Gnangara Road, which will also help alleviate some of the pressure there. Further work on Wanneroo Road is of course essential. Part of that work includes not only a continuation of the dual lanes but also in the more immediate future work on two other areas that spring to mind. One is the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Joondalup Drive, where there is now a considerable build-up of traffic and which I am asking Main Roads to look at. The other is the situation in Kingsway around the shopping centre, where the traffic volume has increased. The shopping centre is perhaps not that well placed given the complexities of the road network, the schools, the aged care facility that is now on Kingsway and the very large sporting complex. It is a pretty bad mix when it is put all together. About 9 000 children alone are going through the sporting complex on any one Saturday. I think that is only for netball, so that is without any of the other sports. It is creating problems at Wanneroo Road and Kingsway.

I am also asking Main Roads to do something about another couple of spots further north on Wanneroo Road. Some extra road work is needed to bring it all together. This situation will of course in part be eased by the opening of the Clarkson railway station this year. People in the Wanneroo electorate use the railway, and use it well to the point where these days people are lucky to get a seat even at the first two stations. I can understand why my colleagues in Mandurah and Rockingham are keen to see the southern extension, because the railway is popular. Our line is so popular that its trains are full. The extra carriages that will be coming onto the system with the new train sets to operate from September will be welcome and will alleviate some of the pressure on the road network. We believe in rail first, road second.

The other part of the network is of course the encouragement of better east-west connections, particularly using bus and rail. I am pleased to see that Main Roads and MetroBus are starting to think along those lines. I think we will see the first east-west connection from Kingsway to Whitfords railway station, which is great news indeed. Those departments are to be congratulated for their lateral thinking.

I think I have become the member for opening schools, but it goes with the turf when there is growth such as that experienced in my electorate. Locally, more than \$14.9 million will be spent to complete the work on the four primary schools previously announced - Carramar, east Marangaroo and Landsdale primary schools and a replacement school in Wanneroo.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I note that the member for Girrawheen is very pleased to hear about the east Marangaroo school. There are great people in that area. I am sure that, as the new member for Marangaroo under the new seat redistribution, she will be very pleased to attend the opening of that school. It has been a long time coming. I know the member for Girrawheen also has been involved. It will be great news for the electorate. A new primary school will also be built at Two Rocks. With the growth that is starting to happen in the most northern part of the electorate, this is very good news, because it will alleviate some of the pressure on the Yanchep District High School. Wanneroo High School, which has done incredibly well for some time now but which is in need of some attention, has been allocated \$1 million in this budget for additions and improvements. That is fantastic news for the schools I have mentioned.

Of course, the demand has not gone away. I have just been advised by my staff that, since February this year, I have another 3 000 householders in my electorate. That is common news for the seat of Wanneroo. That indicates that the growth demand is there. The situation will have to be monitored closely. There are expectations that a couple of other schools will need to be built, and particularly a high school.

In my contribution to the budget debate, I have followed closely behind the member for Swan Hills, who is eagerly awaiting a high school in Ellenbrook.

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

Mr A.D. McRae: Work will start on the high school in Ellenbrook in this coming financial year, and I think that is fantastic.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: It is indeed. I am watching closely, because my schools will follow in due course.

Mr A.D. McRae: It has been interesting to see that people have not been able to understand that you have to go through a very comprehensive planning process, community consultation and architectural design before you do the building. The debate we had earlier was absolutely remarkable for its ignorance.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: People do have to go through that process. It is amazing. It takes quite some time to do all that, but it can all come together and schools do get built. I know that the residents of Ellenbrook are eagerly awaiting the high school.

Some important planning also needs to take place in the tertiary sector in the northern suburbs. I have been encouraging the West Coast College of TAFE to think about its future planning for the area and work with developers who have 30-year plans. It is important that that encompass the training component, which West Coast College of TAFE does well and will be encouraged to expand in the future. Of course, I share with my colleague in Joondalup and with others in the northern region the wonderful Edith Cowan University campus at Joondalup. Those tertiary institutions do a tremendous job and are worthy of support.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Quinns Beach Primary School. It is a relatively new school. It is doing a great job with a wonderful new initiative that is proving so popular with young parents that it is now running two sessions rather than the one it had originally planned. It is all about intervention in the early years of schooling and lives of young people, and parents also are involved. It is being run at the school effectively to bring the school and the home together in a very positive way. Those very early years prior to kindergarten, pre-primary and grade one are all being embraced. While I am on that subject, I think there is a need to embrace this one stop shop policy for some of our schools, particularly in areas in which the services perhaps have not been established and in which people can get ahead of the game a little. Community development, health in all its facets and education are all brought together to bring the services to where the people are. Sometimes it is a bit of a shock to find that people move into what we call greenfield sites that are on the fringe and do not realise that often they are way ahead of everything else. Yet they are the very people who need to be able to access the support services. It is imperative that we embrace this policy a little more closely. I am watching with interest what happens at Midland. I have heard only good things. I think there is a future for this. I was never that keen on losing some of the services that we used to deliver at schools, so it is good to see that some of the thinking is coming around on that.

Another community group that works closely with our schools is 6030 Community Connect, which has successfully implemented a number of programs and held events in the community. The work it has done has helped, supported and nourished the communities of Clarkson, Merriwa and surrounding areas in a wonderful way. They are a great team of people. Kay Abel was recognised by the City of Wanneroo in the Australia Day awards this year. She has led this group well. It is a great team that works together. I have nothing but good things to say about them. I went to an event earlier this year and it was astonishing to see the energy that everybody had put into the function and how well supported it was by the community at large.

I will also say thank you to the agencies, both government and non-government, that have seen the need to work together in the northern and eastern sectors to provide wonderful support to the community. In the past such people had traditional turf; they did not like to cross paths. A bit of territorial stuff sometimes goes on. However, I have seen no evidence of that in my electorate. They have put that to one side and have had the vision to work together in a cooperative way. The collaboration and cooperation is to be admired. I thank them for their efforts.

My electorate is quite varied. Another group of people who are to be commended on the work they do are the officers of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. They look after not only the regional parks but also the Gnangara park as it gradually returns to nature. That project will keep them busy for some years to come. It needs to be carefully managed as the pines are stripped from the plantation and the area is returned to nature. Careful thinning and replanting is required. That will be a big task. An amount of \$500 000 has been allocated to continue the improvements that they are making even at this early stage. Another wonderful body of work they are involved with is the Yanchep National Park. Part of that is to keep the rare critters alive and well. To that extent, the Government has allocated \$375 000 to complete emergency cave watering.

The Government has recognised a need in the north west coastal strip by allocating money for a new sports pavilion in Ridgewood. This is an issue of concern for me, because growth has been so rapid that we have forgotten about the need to have big enough ovals on which to have a decent game of Aussie Rules, soccer, cricket, T-ball or baseball, or the need for netball and basketball courts. We rely on those facilities, which are important for the wellbeing and nurturing of our young people. Some clubs are still operating further south. I

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

tell them that they need to look north, because that is where their prospective customers are. I encourage them to do so.

I am also pleased that the infill sewerage program is being continued in Quinns Rock and Yanchep to the tune of \$981 000. That program will replace septic tanks with deep sewerage, which I consider to be of utmost importance. I am pleased that it is continuing. It cannot happen fast enough for me, from not only an environmental perspective but also a much more personal one. I know of somebody personally who had a very serious accident and suffered horrible injuries when a tank gave way underneath him. It was just horrific. I do worry about the public safety aspect of some of these very old tanks that exist in parts of my electorate.

Another subject that is near and dear to my heart - I am glad the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection is present because he will know what I am going to speak about - is the decision about delivering power equity to the park home owners and permanent residents of caravan parks. This is a wonderful win for the people who have chosen this style of living. I have never believed that people should be punished for this decision, which they were. There was a serious inequity about the cost of power that was being on-sold to them. From now on if the owners of these establishments are on-selling power they will need to do so at the uniform tariff. That will mean a substantial saving for the residents and a big win for them. It is fantastic news. It will mean additional money in their hip pockets which is good to see. It will also be good for the region. I urge the minister to rapidly progress park home legislation. I have been encouraging him to do that since day one to ensure that we address the issue of security of tenure, amongst other things, for park residents.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Your representations have been heard very clearly.

Mrs D.J. GUISE: I am sure they have. I think it has been a weekly occurrence. Where is the legislation, she says? I will welcome it strenuously into this House.

I know it is getting late, so I will try to bring this to a close. The other two issues from which one cannot escape when one is the member for Wanneroo, and about which I am very interested and support, are the issues of land use and water management. Currently we are doing a lot of work, particularly in the southern section of east Wanneroo, where there is a more immediate need for change. At the end of May I am holding a planning forum for residents and landowners in this study area to get some feedback. We hope to be able to make a decision about what changes will be made in that area. We are also trying to provide some certainty about water supply for the remaining growers within the region. In a very bad year some \$98 million-worth of gross annual agricultural product comes out of Wanneroo catchment area. In a good year it is up to \$150 million. That is a considerable amount of money. This type of activity needs to have some certainty. The amount of water that is coming out of the Gnangara Mound to supply Perth currently has put pressure on the mound. I believe the bores have dropped four to five metres and even up to seven metres. We want to provide some certainty about the longevity of those businesses in that area. The other issue deals with the sheer growth. Recent discussions between developers, local government agencies and others is welcome news and everybody is talking about the need for a better approach. Planning will be staged in a far better way. On greenfield sites we are talking about perhaps bringing the town centres on at the same time to meet the railhead so there will be a better connection. Do not mind the pun. This bodes well for the future; it will not be so ad hoc and we can plan appropriately. We want to ensure that we can bring economic and urban development along together and not as separate entities. As I have said, I have a lot of McDonald's and Bunnings stores in my electorate. With all due respect to both of those businesses, I believe we need to do a bit better than that in the provision of real jobs for people.

I will finish on what I hope will be an announcement in the not too distant future to address some neglect within the Wanneroo townsite itself. Frankly, I have nothing but admiration for the people of Wanneroo who have hung in there and supported their local shopping centre. The shopping centre is a rather interesting establishment. It is not often that people would go into a shopping centre and see a hill inside it. That is always a bit of a challenge for the older members of my electorate. There is a substantial number of aged care facilities around that shopping centre. It is a bit of an ad hoc arrangement. We are working on a partnership agreement between the local government authority and the State Government. I am disappointed that it has been a bit slow in coming to fruition. However, I am hopeful that we will be able to pull it together and that funds will be allocated so that we can get on with it and the work will be done in the not too distant future.

Overall, I am very pleased with the budget. I think the northern suburbs have done well out of this budget. Despite a couple of tough years, and my disappointment about stamp duty, I believe the State Government will now be able to deliver a real social dividend due to the strong economic growth of the State, and its good management of the State. The Treasurer is to be commended for the work that he has done and the budgets that he has delivered not only this year but in the previous three years. I commend the Bills to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House).

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 12 May 2004]

p2802b-2842a

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Speaker; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Dianne Guise

House adjourned at 11.56 pm
