

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 2) 2001

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 November.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [9.48 pm]: It is a long time since this speech began so it will be the longest speech in the history of this House! It will take me a moment to catch up to where I left off. I spoke on a number of issues I thought were important at that time, a couple of which have lost their sense of urgency in the month that has transpired since I spoke about them. However, I will raise a number of issues tonight that are important.

On 23 October this year the Minister for Sport and Recreation launched a state sporting facilities plan, which was accompanied by a document that describes the framework for the development of sporting facilities in Western Australia. Having been the Minister for Sport and Recreation for some time, I think his decision to develop this facilities plan is courageous.

Hon Peter Foss: The demand for the facility is not big enough.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Exactly. I always found that when people came to see me about developing sporting facilities, in most instances they had a very worthwhile case, but the problem was that the facilities were all very expensive. As you know, Mr President, Governments do not have unlimited funds for building sporting facilities. Although I was quite happy to draw up lists of facilities that were considered by the sporting world to be important, I was never prepared to develop a priority list. The Western Australian Sports Federation always developed a priority list, and at the top of the list every year was a rowing course that cost about \$12 million for the cheapest version. As I could never raise \$12 million for the whole of the sports budget for sporting facilities on a regular basis, I had to keep advising the rowing fraternity that that sort of money was not available. However, that facility always remained at the top of the federation's priority list, I guess because the rowing group had either the numbers or the proper arguments. I was always happy to hear from the Sports Federation about what it thought were the important facilities, but I declined to acknowledge or accept its priority list. I think I was vindicated in taking that course of action by changes in circumstances as time went on. For example, the Western Australian Hockey Association was able to attract to Western Australia the World Women's Hockey Cup in 2002. The submission by Western Australia to host this magnificent event came out of the blue, and we would all be delighted to hold that event in WA. However, when we were told the submission had been successful, the Hockey Association came to me, as minister, and said the facilities in Western Australia were totally inadequate and a lot of money was needed to fix them up.

Members may be aware that the Perth Hockey Stadium was a gift to Western Australia from the Commonwealth in 1979, as part of the sesquicentennial celebrations. I think the funding was taken from our road grants, which was the way the Commonwealth always worked. I understand the Subiaco Oval southern stand was funded from the same source, but that is another story for another day. The facility at Bentley, which at the time was the best in Australia, is now not up to the level of some other facilities around Australia, so it was necessary for me to find the funds to fix up the stadium. To give the Hockey Association its due, it put forward a proposal to the then Government to assist in the funding. I think it is being funded by this Government in the same way that we provided support to the development of Subiaco Oval, when the Government and the sporting code worked together to develop the facility. That work has already resulted in the new pitches being laid at the Perth Hockey Stadium, together with new stadium facilities, change rooms and things of that nature. I use that as an example to illustrate to members that events happen from time to time that require priorities to be changed, and developing a list of priorities can cause a fair amount of bother.

I was interested to read this particular state sporting facilities plan, which has been prepared by the Department of Sport and Recreation. I also notice that this plan does not contain a list of priorities; it simply contains a list of facilities that we are told are required in Western Australia. Towards the end it contains a section headed "Priority Projects", but I suspect it is not a list of priorities; it refers to new projects, refurbishments and a number of facilities Western Australia needs. I did a quick calculation of the total cost, and a rough estimate is \$100 million for all these facilities.

Today I was interested to hear that Mr Paul McNamee, who runs the Hopman Cup tournament, has put a proposal to the Government to build a new facility for tennis, which I understand would also be suitable for basketball. I gather from what Mr McNamee is saying that that facility will cost more than \$50 million. That may well be the \$55 million facility that is listed at page 13 of this plan and is described as a sports-entertainment venue to cater for the Hopman Cup and the Perth Wildcats. Mr McNamee is talking about \$20 million being raised by the private sector and \$30 million being raised by the Government. Although I hope this facility can be built, I have doubts about those two sources of funding. I do not know where the Government

will get that \$30 million, because it is not in the budget; and I will come to that in a moment. I am also sceptical about the capacity of the private sector to deliver \$20 million for a facility of this nature. I went through the process of seeking to get for Western Australia a soccer stadium that would be built largely by the private sector, with a public sector contribution, and I was told that even with a private sector contribution of \$30 million, it would not be possible to make that work. Unfortunately, I was not part of the discussions at the final moment when Perth Glory decided not to be part of that project and the Government decided not to proceed with it.

It seems to me that this facility will cost the Government more than the \$30 million that has been outlined by Mr McNamee and may cost up to \$50 million. Colonial Stadium in Melbourne is a classic example of how the private sector cannot make a profit from running a stadium unless it has a monopoly on how it is used and can charge the sorts of prices that most people are not prepared to pay. The Government has made a courageous decision to develop this facility plan. However, it has told the sporting world that these are the sorts of things that are on the list, and it can anticipate that these facilities will be built at some time in the future; and because a facility is on a list and is illustrated in a glossy brochure, people will be tempted to believe it will be built sooner rather than later. When this plan was launched, I asked the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation, in question without notice 653 of 24 October -

- (1) Have any of the projects been given firm funding commitments and clear development time lines by the Government?
- (2) If so, which projects; how much state funding has been allocated; and when will the particular development occur?

The answer was -

- (1) Funding commitments are the subject of the current negotiations.
- (2) Not applicable.

During the budget estimates committee hearings, I also asked the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation a number of questions about sporting facilities. I asked whether any capital funds were in the budget this year for sporting facilities. The answer from Mr Alexander, the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Sport and Recreation, was to the effect that he understood that \$4 million in 2003-04 and \$4 million in 2004-05 had been earmarked for a stadium, and the money was to be transferred from tourism to sport and recreation. I asked a few more questions about that, and I discovered from the answer to question without notice 703 of 7 November that \$8 million had been allocated in the forward estimates for a rectangular sports stadium suitable for soccer and rugby, and that provision had been made for \$4 million in 2003-04 and \$4 million in 2004-05. However, I could not find those amounts in the budget. Therefore, I had to ask where in the budget had this allocation been made. It is interesting that I was told it was included in the global unallocated capital works allocated within the Department of Treasury and Finance's administered transactions budget. If we are trying to find funding for a sports stadium in the budget, we should not go to sport and recreation or to capital works under the Minister for Housing and Works. We should go to the global unallocated capital works allocated within the Department of Treasury and Finance's administered transactions budget. No wonder I could not find it; although I did appreciate the Government providing that information. The point I make is that the budget contains \$8 million for capital works for sport, \$4 million of which is allocated for 2003-04. The next election will be in 2005, so it is just in time for that. That \$8 million will not provide much when the Government's sporting facilities plan has expenditure estimated at around \$100 million.

I also asked some questions about the proposal to spend the \$8 million on a soccer-rugby stadium. I am aware of what those stadiums cost, because I spent a lot of time looking at soccer and rugby stadiums not just in Australia but overseas. The sort of soccer-rugby stadium that Western Australia needs would cost anything between \$40 million and \$200 million. The proposal attached to the convention-exhibition centre was a \$40 million stadium, and that provided the basics for a soccer-rugby stadium. It would have provided quite a good set of facilities with change rooms, office space, toilets, function rooms and all the things that are needed. However, it provided permanent seating for only 19 000 people, of which 5 000 or 6 000 seats would be under cover and the rest in the open. Perth Glory can expect to get 19 000 people on a good day. The \$40 million did not provide very much. Some of the stadiums I saw overseas, which in some cases seated a lot more than 19 000, were extraordinarily expensive. When we start talking about putting everybody under cover, it becomes very expensive indeed. That is why I am surprised that only \$8 million is set aside several years down the track for a soccer-rugby stadium, and somehow that will deliver a facility that will meet the needs of soccer and rugby into the future. I may be a bit out of date, but there was talk of a second Western Australian soccer team in the national competition. I hope that we do not get a second team for the time being, or at least until Perth Glory wins the premiership. There is also talk of Western Australia getting a team in the Super 12 rugby union competition. I am not sure what stage that has reached, but the last I heard it was encouraging.

To find out what we would get for the \$8 million, I asked question without notice 704 on 7 November of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, which reads -

I refer the minister to reports that Perth Oval is to be redeveloped as a soccer-rugby stadium at a cost of approximately \$12 million.

That was the proposal put forward by Perth Glory. My question continues -

- (1) Does the Government support this redevelopment proposal?

The answer is yes. To continue -

- (2) Will the Government be making a financial contribution to -
- (a) the capital cost of the development; and
- (b) the operating cost of the facility;
- and, if so, how much?

The answer is -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Yes.
- (b) To be determined through negotiations with the Town of Vincent and primary tenants.

The next question is -

- (3) Will Perth Glory be making a financial contribution to -
- (a) the capital cost of the redevelopment; and
- (b) the operating cost of the facility;
- and, if so, how much?

The answer is -

- (3) Contributions towards the initial capital costs and ongoing operational cost are yet to be negotiated with Perth Glory.

The next question is -

- (4) Will Perth Glory be given any exclusive rights to the venue; and, if so, what are they?

The answer to that question is no. I am pleased about that. The next question is -

- (5) Will the venue be suitable for, and available to, Super 12 rugby matches; and, if not, why not?

The answer is yes. I then ask -

- (6) What facilities will be provided at the oval for \$12 million?

The answer is -

- (6) Facilities will comply with requirements to host rectangular field sports at an international level.

For \$12 million - assuming the Government has worked out how to get the other \$4 million - we will get an average facility. I do not think it will be suitable for international competition at all. I suspect that one side of Perth Oval will be developed as a grandstand with undercover seating for 3 000 or 4 000 people, corporate facilities - boxes and the like - entertainment facilities and change rooms, and the other side and the two ends will have temporary seating. I cannot imagine that \$12 million will provide anything much more than that, bearing in mind that I know what can be built for \$40 million, having gone through a competitive tendering process to ascertain what can be delivered for that amount. It is a serious disappointment that we will be faced with a facility that, in my opinion, will not be up to scratch. I do not know why construction of a soccer-rugby stadium attached to the convention centre did not proceed. I have read in the media - and the Government has not suggested otherwise - that it did not proceed because Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd could not negotiate a deal with Perth Glory. I have been told privately that that was not the problem, that it was not a question of money but more a question of exclusive access and other issues that Perth Glory regarded as more important. I will probably never know the reason because I was not part of the final negotiations for the centre; however, it appears that the sticking points between Multiplex and Perth Glory were not great. I have a sneaking suspicion - I hope I am wrong - that the Government was not unhappy that that part of the project did not proceed so that it

could shove it up the nose of the Opposition and say that it could not make this work. That has been said, which may be vindictiveness on the part of the Government.

I suggest also that the Government should have considered contributing more money if that was needed, provided it was within the contract. It appears that the Government's contribution of \$10 million for a \$40 million stadium was a better deal for the Government than a contribution of \$8 million for a \$12 million facility. It would have been a better deal had the Government contributed \$15 million of the \$40 million, rather than \$8 million for a \$12 million facility. I shall wait to see what is delivered. I am sad that the centre will not meet the requirements of international competition. It may suit the requirements of Perth Glory for a regular weekend competition with Soccer Australia, but I do not believe it will be the type of facility that will attract international soccer matches. As you know, Mr President, Western Australia missed out on a soccer match in the Olympic Games because it did not have a suitable facility. Adelaide spent some \$40 million to build a controversial facility to host a soccer match as part of the Olympic Games. I am therefore very disappointed that Western Australia will not get the facility that I thought it would get, and probably could have got with a bit of lateral thinking on the part of the Government.

I shall talk for a few moments about the airline system in Western Australia. I have talked about this matter before, and I again draw the Government's attention to the need to make some hard decisions about airline services in Western Australia. I am not talking about interstate services; there is not much the State Government can do about them because it is in the hands of the major airlines. Currently people in Western Australia can travel to and from the other States on Qantas Airways Ltd, Ansett Mark II Pty Ltd or even Virgin Blue Airlines Pty Ltd, which is now operating in Western Australia. There is therefore some capacity for Western Australian passengers to fly in and out of other States, although the service these days is not what it used to be in the good old days of the duopoly.

Australia does not have the capacity to handle more than two airlines on interstate services. Each time a third airline came on the market it tried to undercut the major airlines and the major airlines took on that third airline and put it out of business. That happened twice to Compass Airlines Pty Ltd. As soon as Virgin Blue and Impulse Airlines Pty Ltd commenced operating the eastern States routes and undercut the major airlines, one airline had to go; in that case it was Impulse followed by Ansett Australia. The size of Australia with its small population and the distances to be travelled are not conducive to more than two airlines operating in Australia. I use the same argument for intrastate services in Western Australia.

I am a little concerned that there is not much direction from the Government about what will happen. Qantas Airways operates to most of the main regional centres and Skywest Airlines mark II operates to a number of centres, but I do not know how long Skywest will survive. It has very old aircraft and one wonders whether the new owners will be able to make it work. I certainly hope they can. The creation of Skywest mark II is being done in a vacuum. I have argued before that the State should have one airline and that the State's air services should be tendered to one airline. The State should decide what services are provided to each port and require airlines to submit tenders based on the State's requirements. For example, Exmouth requires a jet service. I received correspondence from people in Exmouth today complaining that they will be stuck with Skywest mark II flying Fokker F-50s to Exmouth, which is not in the best interests of developing tourism in the town. In my view, they need a regular jet service, even though it is a bit like the chicken and the egg when it comes to tourism and air services. A town like Exmouth needs air services first and further developments will follow. I continue to wait to see what will happen. I read comments of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in which she has sought to make capital from the fact that not all my colleagues agree with me on this proposal. If the Leader of the House is vaguely interested in this issue, I would be glad to know what the Government has in mind. I could write the minister a letter. I have raised this issue in the House a few times and I am anxious to know where the State is headed. The current system is not good for Western Australia. It seems that through attrition, Qantas will eventually have a monopoly of services in the State without going through any tender process. Qantas is gradually moving into most of the regional centres in Western Australia. Skywest will not be able to compete or, at best, will just have a couple of leftover routes. Qantas will be able to do what it likes. Qantas is not what it used to be. Its primary consideration is not that of a national airline; its primary consideration is to look after its shareholders. I have to say that when I see Geoff Dixon, the chief executive officer of Qantas, in action, I am sorry that I do not have any Qantas shares as he is a very impressive fellow. He is very hard and tough, although it is a hard and tough industry. I would hate to see Qantas get Western Australia in its entirety without some sort of a tender process being put in place. The problem is that no other airline would probably tender apart from some combination of Skywest and another airline because of the nature of the aircraft required. The Government could encourage Singapore Airlines or Ansett Mark II to be involved. It could also consider Virgin Blue, although I do not think its range of aircraft would meet Western Australia's requirements.

Hon Kim Chance: A number of European airlines might be suitable.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes. Jets with a capacity of 100 seats are needed. Aircraft such as Boeing 737s are needed. Fifty-seat turboprop Fokker F-50s would be suitable to reach regional centres such as Esperance, Albany and Geraldton. Distances further than that require jet services so that passengers do not have long journeys when travelling to more remote parts of the State.

When the issue came up in respect of Ansett, I was interested to read the views of Geoffrey Thomas, who writes on aviation issues for *The West Australian*. He argues strongly for the same sort of thing that I do. Obviously he is a sensible and intelligent fellow! He wrote in an article on 29 September -

It can be better argued that bigger, more economical planes such as Boeing 737s flying to Broome are much better than flying two 70-seat BAe 146s. It also can be argued that one set of overheads is better than two and so on.

He is saying that the system we had in place before the collapse of Ansett involved two airlines servicing a centre such as Karratha. Two BAe146 aircraft fly side by side from Perth to Karratha, each carrying between 60 and 80 passengers. This meant duplication of overheads, pilots, cabin crew, ground crew at both ends, marketing arrangements and so on. One Boeing 737 aircraft could have carried all the passengers, with one set of overheads. If that 737 were allowed to operate on that route following a tendering process, we would have the best of all worlds. I look forward with some interest to determining what interest there will be in this proposal.

When Ansett collapsed, it was indicated to me that the Western Australian Government had been a bit tardy in its response. I have asked a few questions about this, because the Department for Planning and Infrastructure advised the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure some weeks before the failure of Ansett, and drew particular attention to the ramifications for Skywest. I wanted to find out when these things happened. On 26 September, I asked question 406. I am told the Department for Planning and Infrastructure wrote to the minister on 5 September about the impending problems, and the minister's office received a briefing on 7 September. The minister was briefed on 8 September, and meetings were held on 10 September. When I asked that question in this House, for some reason the answer from the minister was not available, but Hon Tom Stephens provided me with an answer. He related how he had talked about the issue some time in September with Mr Toomey, the chief executive officer of Ansett. In my question to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I asked whether she would table any letter sent to the minister from any agency providing advice. Mr Harris, the acting director general of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, wrote to the minister on 6 September. Interestingly, this letter was received on 5 September. We obviously have a very good mail service, if letters arrive before they are sent! This letter outlines the concern of the agency about the impending collapse of Ansett and Skywest. Page 3 of the letter reads, in part -

It is understood that Mr Twomey sought a meeting with the Premier in early August to advise the Premier of the situation and possible ramifications to WA, but was unable to meet.

I know it was a fair while ago, and this speech should have been made about a month ago, but the issue has not gone away. The collapse of the airline took place some time in September - the exact date escapes me at the moment - but Mr Toomey, the chief executive officer of Ansett, was asking to meet with the Premier in August, and was unable to do so. It seems strange, then, that Hon Tom Stephens, who said that he stepped into the breach when he heard about this, did not do so until some time in September. There was a bit of tardiness on somebody's part, and I am a bit disappointed that the Premier of Western Australia could not meet with Mr Toomey, who wanted to talk to him about the problems facing Ansett. According to Hon Tom Stephens, when he talked to Mr Toomey in September, Mr Toomey said that there were no problems with Ansett. However, it seems a bit strange that Mr Toomey would seek a meeting with the Premier to advise him of the situation. I will not go through the situation that is described in the letter, but it talks about the serious problems facing Ansett at the time. For some reason, the Premier was unable to meet Mr Toomey, and Ansett went bottom-up. The Western Australian Government was not well prepared to deal that situation at the time.

I shall talk about one other thing before I conclude my remarks on the budget documents. I have not said much in recent times about the Perth convention and exhibition centre because I spent a lot of time talking about it when I was the Minister for Tourism. I was surprised when, shortly after the new Government came into office, the new Minister for Tourism tabled in the Assembly all the minutes of the meetings of the task force overseeing the development of the convention and exhibition centre and, in a statement, advised that the matter was before the Auditor General. I knew it was before the Auditor General because last year Hon Tom Stephens wrote to the Auditor General asking him to investigate the convention and exhibition centre process. The Auditor General never spoke to me about it. The new Minister for Tourism sought to score some points by implying that because the Auditor General was assessing the processes used to develop the convention and exhibition centre, there was something shonky about the project. He left that smell in the air. I spent a fair amount of time going through the minutes and explaining to journalists that at the very beginning of the process I had requested that the Auditor General be involved. I also recall, through the minutes, that it was a long time before he was available to meet

with the task force and the project team to discuss the process. The Auditor General was involved on a number of occasions during the couple of years it took to put the project together. On one occasion, that involvement was at the request of the Opposition.

The Auditor General released his public sector performance report last month. In it, he talks at length about the convention and exhibition centre. The controversy about the process was caused by complaints the Opposition received from some of the unsuccessful tenderers. I will not mention any names, but they know who they are. The impression was created that the process was unfair to one or two of the other competitors and that the Government had leant towards the Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd consortium. Interestingly, today's report of the Electoral Commissioner lists the companies and people who donated to different parties. Multiplex gave the Labor Party \$2 000, and us nothing. It is not as though there is a cosy relationship between the Liberal Party and Multiplex. In fact, the Liberal Party has not accepted money from Multiplex since it took the view of no ticket, no start. The Labor Party still gets its couple of grand each year. The suggestion was that there was some sort of deal between the coalition Government and Multiplex and it got the contract when it should not have. The process was criticised. One of the difficulties of going through a process like this is that it is a moveable feast. We went through the expressions of interest and request for proposals stages to a competitive relationship between the two final tenderers. Having to answer questions from the media and in the Parliament about that process made it very difficult to manage.

However, the Auditor General released his report in November, and he said about the process -

An audit of the project planning, the steps involved in selecting the successful consortium; and the final outcomes from the process found:

I am quoting selectively to make a point. I will come back to some of the criticisms. It continues -

a rigorous evaluation and selection process was followed.

I think that is a pretty good tick. It continued -

This process, which culminated in extensive negotiations with two consortia, maintained competition and resulted in a substantive assessment that the Multiplex consortium was best suited to deliver the project.

That is a pretty good endorsement from the Auditor General on the issue of process. The Auditor General criticised us because we did not arrange for the development of a model in which either the Government or the private sector would pay for the entire project. As I have explained to the Auditor General, neither of those possibilities was going to happen. He argues that we needed to do that to get a better assessment of value for money. He concludes in his report that he cannot tell whether we got good value for money. My view is that because it went through a rigorous and highly competitive process, the marketplace told us that we were getting value for money. At the same time as that was happening, whenever proposals were put forward, quantity surveyors from the old Department of Contract and Management Services were assessing what was proposed to make sure that we were getting value for money in the development of the buildings. The competitive process that the previous Government put in place, together with the quantity surveyors' assessment, told us that we were getting value for money. As I have said many times, if this project is compared with any other project in Australia, it is probably the best deal achieved by any Government anywhere in Australia for a convention and exhibition centre. Therefore, the Auditor General has given the previous Government a significant tick for the process it underwent to get this convention and exhibition centre in Western Australia.

If the Auditor General's report was derogatory of the Opposition - the then Government - I would have thought that the minister would be running around shouting his head off. He has said nothing as a result of this report - not a thing. That makes it clear to me that he had nothing to say because he would not bring himself to say that Labor apologised for the insinuations it made during the process. He could have said that, and I would have accepted that. However, what really galls me is that, since we became the Opposition, I have had to watch, first of all, the parliamentary secretary cut a chain to begin the program. There he was, standing alongside the Multiplex boss, Bill Wyllie and others, announcing that the project would go ahead, and making out that somehow or other the current Government had something to do with this project. That was bad enough, but just last week an unedifying television story showed the Premier with a shovel in his hand, digging up a lump of dirt - turning the first sod. I will not say that there is more than one sod in that, but I have never in all my life seen hypocrisy that matched that. He said that Labor had always supported the project; it just did not think that the process was right. Had he read the Auditor General's report, he would have known that the process was fine. He could have had the decency to say, "We had concerns about the process. The Auditor General has said that there is no reason to be concerned. Multiplex got the job on its merits. The process was rigorous. Therefore, we withdraw our objection and say that this is a good project for Western Australia", because that is what it is, and

that is what he said. He is so supportive of it because of his mate in the construction union, who has been saying that we cannot do without this project; thousands of jobs are attached to it.

Hon Kim Chance: I think it is stretching the point a bit to call Kevin and Geoff mates.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Comrades then.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Comrades.

Hon Kim Chance: I get your drift, but I think you are going too far.

Hon N.F. MOORE: When it comes to the crunch, if Kevin had a choice of voting for Geoff Gallop or Richard Court, I guess he would vote for Geoff.

The union movement put a lot of pressure on the present Government about a number of the projects that the previous Government had commenced. One of them is the convention and exhibition centre, because it is a major employer of people now, and will be when it is finished. I think it is wonderful that Dr Gallop is now saying that it will make enough money in two years to pay for itself, and the Government gets it back in 35 years, free of charge. It is a very good deal. I wish only that I had still been involved with it when it was concluded, because, as I said earlier, I am sure we would have got a stadium as well. However, that is a debate for another day.

It is encouraging, if I can be polite about this, to hear that the Premier is now convinced of the benefits that the convention and exhibition centre will deliver to Western Australia, and that he was so pleased, happy and smiling when he dug the first sod that he has now been persuaded to the view that this facility is very important for Western Australia. If, down the track, I am not the Minister for Tourism when the building is opened, I hope that I will be invited to the opening. One gets involved in these projects over a long time and develops a strong personal interest. I now might as well be dead when it comes to this project.

Hon Ken Travers: If I have anything to do with it, you will get an invitation.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I thought it was wonderful that the parliamentary secretary was there cutting the chain. Having put up with his criticism and carping for two years -

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Watching the putative powerbroker trying to claim credit made me sick, but I got over being sick when I saw the Premier doing it. I am delighted that the Government now supports this project. It will be terrific.

I was interested to hear the other day that the centre will include the Noel Semmens Banquet Hall. I announced that two years ago. Members opposite are on the bandwagon trying to ingratiate themselves. These things were all done a long time ago.

I referred to the unions putting pressure on the Government to deliver on these projects. The Labor Party hated the belltower and the convention and exhibition centre, but, for some reason, members opposite never criticised the maritime museum project at Fremantle.

Hon Kim Chance: There was criticism in the very early days.

Hon N.F. MOORE: No, there was not. I clearly remember a debate in this House during which no mention was made of it. It was omitted because the member for Fremantle is the real leader of the Labor Party.

Hon Kim Chance: There was opposition.

Hon N.F. MOORE: No, there was not. After the plan was released and it became evident that the people of Fremantle liked it, Jim McGinty said he also liked it. If his constituents liked it, so would he. There was not a word of opposition, even though the coalition Government proposed to spend \$30 million or \$40 million on a maritime museum. Now it looks fantastic and I am looking forward to its completion. It will be a magnificent building. I presume that Mr McGinty will be there for the opening. I hope Richard Court is invited.

Hon Kim Chance: We were very supportive of the maritime museum project at Geraldton.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Labor Party seems to be selective about the type of building project it supports. It was happy to support the construction of a building to house *Australia II*, which it said was a plaything of millionaires when Warren Jones and company wanted assistance to take the yacht to Cowes -

Hon Ken Travers: It went.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes, but not because the Labor Government provided help.

Hon Kim Chance: They did not need taxpayers' money. It was always going to go.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It went because those involved managed to talk an oil company into paying for it to go.

Hon Ken Travers: Exactly!

Hon N.F. MOORE: The people of Western Australia are the major beneficiaries of *Australia II*. If members opposite do not know what those benefits are, they should compare how Fremantle looks today with how it looked before the America's Cup was held there. They should also find out how much money came into the State as a result of the race. When they have done that, I challenge them to tell me that the taxpayers should not have spent \$200 000 to send the yacht to participate in one of the greatest yachting events of all time. The yacht went to Cowes, but no-one in Western Australia or anywhere else in the world knew about it. The Government could have set up an exhibition at Cowes, and the millions of people who attended the race would have been exposed to what Western Australia has to offer. Elle Macpherson could have been there for a day, because the Government still has a day's worth of her time to use. That would have been a magnificent way to promote Western Australia. This Government ignored the event. It says the yacht is the plaything of millionaires, but it is happy to support the building of a \$40 million maritime museum to house it. The Labor Party has inconsistent views about these things.

Hon Kim Chance: As long as Fremantle gives us back the *Batavia* timbers, I do not mind.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is for the Government to organise. We could not even get the *Batavia* to come here; it went to Sydney for the Olympics.

I have raised these issues because there is an element of inconsistency between what the Labor Party said in opposition and what it is saying now. I look forward to someone publicly acknowledging the Auditor General's comments about the convention centre and that the process was done properly and thoroughly. It was, and I kept telling everyone that was the case. The Auditor General has now said that it would be nice if the Government were to acknowledge that and get on with building the facility. We should be getting some pleasure out of the benefits it will provide to Western Australia over the years ahead.

I support the Bill. The budget is pathetic, but it is the Government's job to convince the public it is good. This debate is an opportunity for members to discuss a number of issues, and I have taken that opportunity tonight.

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [10.35 pm]: I will not take much time to speak on my support for the Bill, but I want to raise a very important issue. I had originally intended to raise it through an urgency motion today, but another member moved a motion before I did. This will probably be my only opportunity to raise the matter, apart from the adjournment debate.

Members will be aware that there is considerable concern among the local community about the proposal to make the Brookdale waste water treatment plant a disposal site for toxic or noxious waste. What has worried me most of all is the information about past practices at the site. I read in the newspaper about a week ago comment from a manager at the site that polychlorinated biphenyls, which had been found in a drain coming from the facility, are not a real problem, and that they had been part of a consignment of PCBs which had been in sealed containers in the early 1990s. My concern is that the site was not at that stage supposed to hold PCBs or any other toxic waste.

It appears from comments by former employees, some of whom I have spoken to, that a considerable amount of toxic waste was being processed or stored at the site. I understand it is still stored in tanks at the site and is not in appropriate types of storage facilities. It has not been properly dealt with in the past. I was told of an incident in which an employee, while not rendered unconscious, was unable to get up and move away and had to be assisted after two chemicals had been mixed at the site.

It appears that PCBs were being taken onto the site from 1989. It also appears that the Department of Health, which was the regulator, was made aware of this. At least one of the employees had reported the fact to the Department of Health, which took absolutely no action. In that person's words, it seemed as though the Department of Health had a nod and a wink arrangement with the operators of the site to allow these wastes to be processed or stored at the site. This is extremely worrying. Large amounts of waste have been going onto the site without the operators having the ability to properly handle them. There seems to be no record of where the waste was being stored. Industrial waste was being taken onto the site in a hush-hush manner, outside the law but with the knowledge of a government agency. I asked questions in this House last week and this week. I have been asked to put them on notice because I am told that it will take some time for the Department of Environmental Protection, which is now the regulator, to provide me with those answers. I am not happy about waiting for answers. It is no harder for the Department of Environmental Protection to go through its files and provide that information than it is for the Department of Health.

This issue shows that we need to look more closely at some of the regulators in this State. The other place is carrying out an inquiry into the Waste Control Pty Ltd incident. It is no darn wonder the incident occurred if

government agencies are turning a blind eye to illegal operations being carried out at such sites. It is my intention to at some stage in the future move to send this issue to one of our committees for investigation. This is a very serious issue. It is bad enough having industries that are breaching the regulations and the laws; however, if a government agency is turning a blind eye - in fact, even encouraging, from what I have heard - that illegality, we have real problems. The regulators responsible need to be brought before a committee of this House to explain exactly what happened at that time, what approvals were in place, if there were approvals, and what processes were carried out to ensure that it was a safe site. The people who worked there are telling me that it was not a safe site. Now a consultative environmental review process is under way and that is appropriate, even though it is probably at the wrong stage. No other site is being looked at. For some reason, the Cleanaway operation seems to be favoured by agencies to take over the role of toxic waste handling and disposal in Western Australia; nowhere else seems to be appropriate. I want to know why that is. Answers to these questions need to be provided. If we cannot get answers through questions asked in this place, it is time that one of our committees looked at the issue. I will be pressing in the future for an investigation into this issue by a committee, because I do not think we should be putting communities at risk by shoddy operations involving toxic and noxious chemicals.

Some people have set up what they call a toxic embassy outside the gates at this facility and have been intercepting trucks and looking at the material going onto the site. As the CER process is now in place, they are trying to see whether it is an adequate site. They know that it does not yet have the facilities to handle or store this material, but it is going in there already. What sort of process is it in which some sort of investigation is carried out to determine whether the site is appropriate while at the same time toxic wastes are being poured into the facility? It seems to me rather back to front. The Government should take a step back on this issue and consider whether the agencies that have been involved with the site in the past are telling it everything it needs to know.

The site is part of one of the important water catchments for both surface and underground water at Jandakot mound, and that is important for our future water supplies. As we have been told in recent times, our rainfall has decreased by 45 per cent over the past 25 years. Those water supplies are becoming more and more critical to us and we cannot afford to risk them by regulatory authorities making stupid decisions and bad regulations. I repeat: I will be seeking to send this issue to a committee of this House. The Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs probably would be the most appropriate. I will be bringing this issue to the attention of that committee, of which I am a member. This issue needs to be looked at to see why the Department of Health did not do the role that it was charged with. I support the Bill.

HON FRANK HOUGH (Agricultural) [10.44 pm]: I will speak briefly in this debate on an issue that has arisen in the past few days and on how I believe the Government is spending our money in an effort to take more revenue from us. I am referring to expenditure on Multanovas, which are now hidden along the side of the road to catch poor, unsuspecting motorists and cause them to pay a fine of \$50 for travelling at five kilometres an hour above the speed limit. Many of those people are probably driving in a vehicle with an inaccurate speedometer. I have a pecuniary interest in this matter because, much to my disbelief, I was fined twice in a row. The Government's use of Multanovas is causing it to act like a petty thief, and no-one likes petty thieves. The practice of taking \$50 from people could be overcome. I have spoken to the police, who do not seem to know whether the threshold between the minimum speed limit and the speed at which a fine kicks in is four, five or six kilometres. A fine of \$50 does not deter people from speeding. It is irrelevant to people of means, but could mean that someone with little or no money would be unable to buy Christmas presents or enjoy Christmas. We must consider the overall impact of these fines.

A set of Multanovas to catch people speeding five kilometres over the speed limit would not be a bad franchise venture. The Government could probably make a lot of money selling them to people as a franchise in the various suburbs. It would be a fairly lucrative business. The Government is operating Multanovas in that way now.

People are not deterred from speeding by a \$50 fine. I may be asked whether I believe it is all right to break the law. I do not believe that. However, it is petty to fine drivers travelling only five kilometres above the speed limit. People who take citizens' money for that reason are petty thieves. There are many solutions to this problem. I would not draw people's attention to a problem without suggesting a solution. Perhaps the Government can take a leaf out of the book of the football leagues and penalise people who are caught speeding by making them park around the corner and sit in the sin-bin for 15 minutes. People who have appointments would be late and fail to get a job or miss their plane or movie or whatever. That would have more impact than a fine of \$50. If offenders were asked to stop and wait alongside the road, they would have to sit and face the offence. The number of kilometres an hour above the speed limit would determine how long they sat there. It could increase for every additional five kilometres an hour. For example, someone travelling five kilometres an hour above the speed limit would have to wait 15 minutes; 10 kilometres an hour, 20 minutes; fifteen kilometres

an hour, 25 minutes. That would greatly increase drivers' awareness. Unfortunately, it would probably put a dent in the income of the petty thievery for which the "vending machines" are used. Multanovas are more like poker machines and, therefore, should be set up in the Burswood Resort Casino because, as with poker machines, people always lose money on them.

We should address this issue because I have spoken to police officers who say that at 60 kilometres an hour, a speedometer could be inaccurate by two, three or four kilometres an hour, and the higher the speed the more accurate the speedo. If a motorist challenged the Police Service about the accuracy of the Multanova or their vehicle's speedo, it could create a problem. If the police were really serious about keeping the speed of traffic down and assisting motorists, they would erect a sign informing motorists that they are about to pass a Multanova, before they travel past it. Anyone who would be stupid enough to exceed the speed limit in that circumstance should assist the Government by paying \$50. Multanovas should not be hidden behind trees or buildings. It is a crime in itself to catch members of the public, many of whom are Aussie battlers, by stealth and to rob them as they innocently travel to Parliament or to their jobs. It could create hardship for some people to lose \$50 in a day because of a Multanova.

My contribution to addressing the appropriation Bill is that we should look at franchising these units or selling them to shops, or we should be more realistic and more honest with the public and not punish the offender with a \$50 fine but send him or her to a sin-bin or appropriate classes. If the Government is not prepared to look at things like that, it is really a money-making exercise, which is not in the spirit of keeping speeds down or reducing deaths on our roads. The solution is education, and we are certainly not being educated by being whacked in the pocket for an amount of \$50. Joe Bloggs might be driving his little Sigma motor car and the \$50 he has in his pocket might be Christmas lunch for him and his 15 kids, and that would be a tragedy. This goes a lot deeper than the single item I am talking about, and it is something that should be addressed.

HON RAY HALLIGAN (North Metropolitan) [10.51 pm]: I wish to raise a few issues about this Government's budget and the rhetoric that has been used, not only in the original documentation but since that date. The Government certainly believes in the words it has used, but they do not contain a great deal of substance. Firstly, budget paper No 1 refers to seven "strategic objectives" -

1. honest, accountable and inclusive government;
2. sound, financial management;
3. a growing and diversified economy;
4. strong and vibrant regions;
5. safe, healthy and supportive communities;
6. an educated and skilled future for all Western Australians; and
7. a valued and protected environment.

I will not go into any detail about each of those seven strategic objectives, but time will tell - and not very much time - that although this Government is able to express sentiments that obviously got it into government in the first place, it will not be able to follow up on these "strategic objectives". I could choose from any number of areas to show the deficiencies in these strategic objectives. One that shows the deficiencies is the old-growth forest area. Just prior to the election, members of the Government suggested there was need, of course with the support of the Greens (WA), to stop all old-growth logging, even though it appeared to have enormous difficulty in identifying exactly what old-growth logging was. However, stop it they did! They stopped something. I do not know exactly what they stopped, but we do know that they have created turmoil in the south west of this State. The residents - the people who were working in the old-growth logging area - have expressed their thoughts on that turmoil, and all we get from this Government is, "Wait till early next year and we will have something in place." I am waiting and I am sure the people in the south west are waiting. However, what I found particularly interesting is that apart from 4 000 people in the south west not having any means of creating or generating income, the Government has placed some moneys aside in the budget - \$600 000 to be paid out over three years. Those moneys have been set aside to provide counselling for people in the south west. It appears that the Government has identified that it has caused these people mental anguish and has recognised that it needs to set aside moneys in the budget to provide counselling for these people. These people would not require counselling had there not been some major disruption to their income-generating power and some mental anguish in their lives.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That is outrageous! You sacked thousands of public servants and did not give them counselling. Give us a break! Get real!

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I am getting real. It is in the budget. That is exactly what I am saying. Members opposite are the ones who need to get real. The Government said it will be all right; we will have ecotourism,

and no jobs will be lost. However, now the Government has had to set aside moneys because it knows that it has created mental anguish for these people.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Don't you think we should provide support services? That is typical of you!

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Had the Government done the right thing by these people over a reasonable period, they would have no need for counselling. All that was required was some form of management, but that is what this Government lacked. The Government shut the gate very quickly. It said it would stop the logging of old-growth forests, and that is exactly what it did. Therefore, all these people who had made plans for their future, and even for their children's next school holidays, had to change their plans, because the Government had disrupted everything that they had wanted to do for their families over the next few years. The Government made sure that these people were not given time to cope with that change of direction; and it has proved that by putting aside \$600 000 in the budget to provide counselling. So much for strong and vibrant regions and safe, healthy and supportive communities!

We hear about all the moneys that are to be expended. However, to date we have heard nothing to indicate where the moneys will be generated to pay for that expenditure. We hear that \$25 million has been set aside for the creation of new national parks, and that will create 130 new jobs. Those people will need to be paid every week, every fortnight or every month. Where will that money come from? Where will it be generated? It will possibly be generated by increased taxes, such as a premium property tax and the like.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That is a stupid comment.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: It is not a stupid comment. The money has to come from somewhere. Why did the Government want to bring in that tax?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It will not come from that. That is a cheap political shot.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: It is not cheap at all. In fact, it is very expensive. It is expensive to the extent that 4 000 jobs have been lost in the south west. All I am saying is the Government needs to get the money from somewhere. It cannot just create new national parks and say that will provide 130 new jobs. The money must come from consolidated revenue. Who will put it into consolidated revenue? The Government is the financial manager. It needs to provide the answers. It all sounds very good: we will save all the trees; we will create new parks; and we will employ people to make sure others do not run around those parks with a box of matches. However, where will the money come from to pay their salaries? It is interesting that when the previous Government wanted to charge an entrance fee for the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, admittedly also for people who had to go through the park to get to the beach, the then Opposition decided that was not to be. It is a wonder the Government has not taken the entrance fee off Yanchep National Park as well. The point is that when the Government provides these facilities the user pays; that is, the people who use the facilities must contribute to the cost, although that is not the case in the Government's mind. The Government spends the money but does not bother to raise it.

The Government could spend money quite wisely in certain areas. However, I cannot see anything in the budget papers that suggests it has. One area is the blue light drags at the Barbagallo Raceway. That is run by some police officers in their own time. They receive very little from the budget to provide that service, which takes a lot of youngsters off the streets and away from shopping centres.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.